



European  
University  
Institute

DEPARTMENT  
OF HISTORY  
AND  
CIVILIZATION

## A new fashion: Polka wave in Europe 1844-1860s

Ewa Anna Augustynowicz

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to  
obtaining the degree of Doctor of History and Civilization  
of the European University Institute

Florence, June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016





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**Department of History and Civilization**

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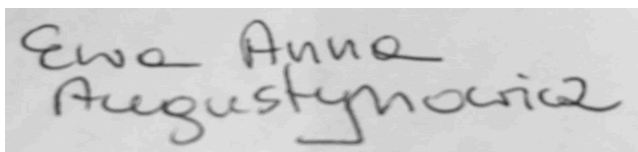
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"It is precisely this dramatic character, deficient in the waltz, that constitutes the principal charm of the polka, which is as full of incident as of grace; combining all the life and freedom of the peasant's unconstrained hilarity, with a tone of softness and refinement superadded in its passage through Vienna and Paris. Its universal adoption is indeed sufficient proof of its merit. There must be some touch of Nature in a movement, which thus, so to speak, 'makes the whole world kin'; spreading through Europe, from nation to nation; and kindling with a common enthusiasm the Court and the Cottage, the metropolitan Opera-house and the Village-green. On the green it may be danced as a mere gambol; but to the artist it presents a series of the prettiest vignette, embodying quite a little romance of joyous successful courtship. You may see in it all the balancing and hesitation; the alternate pursuing and retreating; the wish indicated-trifled with-encouraged; the flame lit-laughed at-fanned-retained the pretty boy tactics of feminine agacerie the assiduous ardour of male gallantry; and, last of all, the swift exhilarating whirl, with which the waltz undramatically sets out. We would by no means assert that all this succession of feeling is perfectly and definitely expressed in the polka...the polka goes further towards its representation than any of our ordinary ball-room dances; and so far is superior to them."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "The Polka" In: The Musical World, 1850: 466-467

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This is a thesis about the polka, a dance of women and femininity, love, passion, young and old, peasants, bourgeoisie and aristocrats. And, as I will explain and study in the following pages, it is about one of the spectres haunting Europe in the nineteenth century.

It is a great pleasure to express my deepest gratitude to Prof. Antonella Romano: my teacher, my friend in difficult moments, and a great and patient tutor who for many years has been my faithful supervisor. She was of the greatest importance in helping me to put together my ideas and giving them an analytical sense. Her passion, patience and energy for teaching were essential in pushing forward my work. Besides being a great pedagogue and teacher she also revealed herself to be a great, understanding and sensitive person.

My great thanks to Norbert Rubey from the music collection in Wienbibliothek who enabled and accelerated my research by allowing me to analyse his collection of press articles devoted to Johann Strauss II. Further thanks is due to the staff of Victoria and Albert Museum collections who were very helpful and kind by providing me with useful materials and assisting me with my research on Jullien and the polka in London. I would also like to express my gratitude to Janet Snowman from the Royal Academy of Music who showed great enthusiasm for my research and provided me with some useful contacts. Finally, my thanks go to Marie-Laure Pelle and Marie-Christine Muchery from the Bibliothèque nationale de France who very helpfully sent me different information on the polka helped me to organize my research during my stay in Paris.

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40. Picture from the Victoria and Albert Museum Collections dated to 8.04.1844 from the collection "*Haymarket 1844*", was probably taken from the playbill with the same date as it announces that '*La Polka, composed by Jullien will be performed for the first time as a preview to the 'Extravaganza'*'.
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- (1847): *Mrs Perkins's Ball*. By M. A. Titmarsh. London: Chapman & Hall
53. John Leech, "*The Dance*": available at: <http://www.cartoonstock.com>
54. MR PUNCH'S FANCY BALL Reduced from the Double-page Cartoon by John Leech (1847), showing the Staff of "Punch" as Orchestra. In: Spielmann M.H. (1895): "*The History of Punch*". London, Paris & Melbourne: Cassell and Company Ltd.: 261
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## INTRODUCTION

*"Politics are for the moment suspended in public regard by the new and all-absorbing pursuit - the polka - a dance recently imported from Bohemia, and which embraces in its qualities the intimacy of the waltz combined with the vivacity of the Irish jig. You may conceive how completely is the polka rage from the (I am assured) fact that the lady of a celebrated ex-minister desiring to figure in it at a soiree dansante, monopolised the professor par excellence of that specialite, for three hours on Wednesday..."<sup>2</sup>*

*"Die Polka macht...jetzt am meisten Lärm in der Welt"<sup>3</sup>*

*"Vieux ou jeunes, laids ou beaux, c'est tout un, ils bâillent tout le jour. Paris est pourtant bien bruyant, leur appartement a vu bien des générations de verres et de bouteilles; qu'importe!"<sup>4</sup>*

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A few years ago a short story called "*Polkomania*" by Joachim H. Stocqueler fell into my hands. This little farce, written in 1844, tells the story of Miss Woolgar, a young lady, who is dying to learn the polka. Then opportunely, a medical student arrives. He tricks the father into thinking that the polka is a new type of medicine that can cure the young lady of ennui. The historian's curiosity encouraged me to rummage among some dance books and internet websites to find out what was so special about this dance, which Poles usually dance at wedding parties and which contemporary American immigrants consider a part of their cultural and national heritage, to make it a theme of this short story. My curiosity derived not only from the fact that I am Polish but also because, as a musician, I always considered the polka a rather boring, traditional, peasant dance. My short investigation convinced me that it was time to change my mind about this dance form.

My first glance at the literature and sources connected with the history of the polka showed that at the same time as the waltz established itself as most popular social dance form, Europe was tormented by political and social revolutions. The polka - a Bohemian dance - was noticed and widely commented on in the European press. As a matter of fact, in 1844, the new dance fashion took Europe by storm and all classes of European society including peasants, working class people, the middle and upper classes danced it enthusiastically. The world was dancing and it was reported that:

*"The public dance floors are visited by all classes: these are the places where ancestors and rank seem to be forgotten and aristocratic pride laid aside. Here we see artisans, artists, merchants,*

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<sup>2</sup> The Times, March 14, 1844.

<sup>3</sup> Der Wanderer, 1844: 670.

<sup>4</sup> de Vives, Hippolyte (1853): *Histoire d' un Polka et d'un voyou*. In: Le livre sans queue ni tête. Paris: Allouard et Kaepelin.

*councillors, barons, and excellencies dancing together with waitresses, women of the middle class, and ladies. Every stranger who stays here for a while is infected by this dance malady.”*<sup>5</sup>

The above sources indicating the popularity of the polka come from contemporary press and journals. However, a deeper investigation of the scholar studies connected to the polka and social dancing culture reveals that the topic of the polka has been omitted or not properly treated of in academic studies.

There is a long tradition of historiography of dance. Many authors wrote about it in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The general study of nineteenth-century social dances is far richer than some would suspect, addressing at once musicology, cultural history, popular music history, ethnic history, immigration history, urban history, and working-class history. Such study therefore requires a broader, interdisciplinary approach. As a matter of fact, the dance history scholar Selma Jeanne Cohen confirmed this saying that „*dance does not happen in a vaccum. It exists as part of the tapestry of arts, culture, society and history.*”<sup>6</sup>

In order to give a clear historiographical framework to this research, I decided to employ a chronological approach. Even if the scholarly works on the polka can be divided into different categories, a chronological order can be employed in their analysis. In short, there are books written by authors born at the time of polkomania, works on dance written before World War II and scholarly works published after WW II. Within these categories, information on the polka circulated in general dance history and general ballroom history books and works focused directly on the polka, dance and ballroom manuals as well as biographies of musicians, composers and dancers.

First accounts of the polka were written by musicians or musicologists and only very few if any were formulated by dance historians. The dance historiography of this period is shaped mainly by dance and ballroom manuals and some general works on the history of dance. There is a great difference between dance history writing and ballroom dance writing. The former describes, analyzes and explains how the dance developed through the centuries from its early origins to modern times. It is usually based on historical sources and is written by historians or musicologists. By contrast, dance manuals usually have a descriptive character and were written by the dance masters themselves. Hence they are focused on the

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<sup>5</sup> Knowles, Mark (2009): *The Wicked Waltz and Other Scandalous Dances: Outrage at Couple Dancing in the 19th and Early 20th Centuries*. North Carolina: McFarland: 25.

<sup>6</sup> Kassing, Gayle (2007): *History of dance. An interactive arts approach*. USA: Human Kinetics: 4.

dance execution and etiquette, paying less attention to the history and origins of the dance itself. With regards to the polka, few dance manuals played a crucial role in its proper description and popularization. These were written by Cellarius (1847), Coralli (1845), Coralli and Coulon (1860), Dodsworth, (1900), Durang (1859) Ferrero (1859) and Gawlikowski (1859)<sup>7</sup>. In 1847, Henri Cellarius published his manual "*Drawing-Room Dances*"<sup>8</sup> and it seems that this was the first dance manual to describe the polka. However, it was in fact Eugene Coralli in "*La Polka enseignée sans maître*" (Paris, 1845)<sup>9</sup> - a book by Coralli, Perrot and Roberts - who set down the first fully acceptable description of the dance, describing five figures, which were published a little later, with figure drawings, in *The Illustrated London News*. This small booklet, written in French, was not a dance manual but rather a short history of the polka craze in Paris in 1844. These two short works are the first accounts of the polka and its execution. However, considering, that they were written by the contemporary dancing masters, and not scientists, who witnessed the polka craze and participated in the "*polkomania*" it is clear that their content is descriptive, their narrative is very often superficial, anecdotal and not based on the historical sources.

The first generation of scholars who belonged to the same generation of dance manual writers and constructed the current conception of the history of the polka were Gaston Vuillier (1846-1915) and Joseph Grego (1843-1908).<sup>10</sup> The polka itself, however, was not part of their research. They mainly studied dance history through the centuries. This is not particularly surprising when we consider the great importance of social dancing in the nineteenth century. Looking at three cities, which are in focus of this work, it seems that with regards to Vienna and London there are almost no scholarly and literary works written in the

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<sup>7</sup> Cellarius, Henri (1847): *Drawing-Room Dances*. London: E. Churton.

Coralli, Eugene/ Coulon, M. (1860): *Dance Instruction Manuals Ca. 1400-1920*.

Dodsworth, Allen (1900): *Dancing and its Relation to Education and Social Life*. New York: Harper.

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Durang, Charles (1856): *The fashionable dancer's casket; or, The ball-room instructor. A new and splendid work on dancing, etiquette, deportment, and the toilet*. Philadelphia: Fisher&Brother.

Gawlikowski, Philippe (1859): *Guide complet de la danse: contenant le quadrille [etc.]*. Paris: A. Taride.

<sup>8</sup> Cellarius, Henri (1847).

<sup>9</sup> Perrot, Jules, Joseph/ Robert Adrien (1845): *La Polka enseignée sans maître: son origine, son développement, et son influence dans le monde*. Paris: Chez Aubert.

<sup>10</sup> Vuillier, Gaston/ Grego, Joseph (1972): *A history of dancing from the earliest ages to our own times*. London: Milford House.

nineteenth century that are devoted entirely to the polka. The exception might be Paris. Here, it is possible to find some works devoted completely to this social dance. However these works rather than representing a proper academic analysis, employ an anecdotal approach to the polka and its development.

Another generation of dance historians was born in the nineteenth century after the polka was fashionable and before World War II. These are Philip Richardson (1875-1963)<sup>11</sup>, Reginald St. Johnston (1874-1938)<sup>12</sup>, Paul Nettl (1889-1972)<sup>13</sup> and Curt Sachs (1881-1959). The most important scholar, Curt Sachs, was a German musicologist. He wrote one of the most important works of dance history „*World history of the dance*“ (1952). All these scientists focused on the general history of dance through the ages without paying attention to details related to the history of the polka or any other social dance form.

After World War II, another generation of dance history scholars became prominent. This generation includes Selma Jeanne Cohen (1920-2005)<sup>14</sup>, Friedemann Otterbach<sup>15</sup> and Walter Salmen (1926-)<sup>16</sup>. This group of scholars however, did not bring anything new to polka research. Their interest in this dance was very limited and they wrote mainly about dance history in general terms, usually copying the information on the polka and other dances from earlier dance history books. To a certain degree, this issue also applies to the next group of scholars who wrote about the dance and the polka. They were all born and lived in the twentieth century and concentrated mainly on social dance and its relationship to different societies. Hence, the polka is clearly included in their works about ballroom dancing in the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century, some of the most important scholars were François Gasnault<sup>17</sup>, Elisabeth Aldrich<sup>18</sup>, Arthur Henry Franks<sup>19</sup>, Mark Knowles<sup>20</sup>, Frances

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<sup>11</sup> Richardson, P. J. S. (1960): *The Social Dances of the 19th Century*. London: Herbert Jenkins.

<sup>12</sup> St. Johnston, Reginald (1906): *A history of dancing*. London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent, & Co.

<sup>13</sup> Nettl Paul (1947): *The story of dance music*. New York: Philosophical Library.

<sup>14</sup> She edited the six-volume International Encyclopedia of Dance, completed in 1998.

<sup>15</sup> Otterbach, Friedemann (1980): *Die Geschichte der europäischen Tanzmusik*. Wilhelmshaven: Heinrichshofen's Verlag.

<sup>16</sup> Salmen, Walter (1997): *Der Tanzmeister: Geschichte und Profile eines Berufes vom 14. bis zum 19. Jahrhundert*. Hildesheim, New York: G. Olms.

<sup>17</sup> Gasnault, Francis (1986): *Guinguettes et lorettes: bals publics à Paris au XIX e siècle*. Paris: Aubier.

<sup>18</sup> Aldrich, Elizabeth (1991): *From the ballroom to hell: grace and folly in nineteenth-century dance*. Northwestern University Press.

<sup>19</sup> Franks, Arthur Henry (1963): *Social dance. A short history*. London: Routledge and K. Paul.

<sup>20</sup> Knowles, Mark (1954).

Rust<sup>21</sup> or Monika Fink.<sup>22</sup> They wrote about dance history and the practice of social dance, and frequently wrote specifically about the polka. In fact, many books, describe the ballroom, social dances and etiquette in the ballroom. However, most of them treat the ballroom, social dances and society in the nineteenth century in general terms. The polka is a part of these studies but it has never been dealt with by any of these scholars in an individual way.

Finally, there is a group of scholars such as Ann Hetzel Gunkel<sup>23</sup>, Victor Greene<sup>24</sup> Charles Keil<sup>25</sup> and Robert Walser<sup>26</sup> who focused on the polka in their research and devoted entire books to the polka. They, however, used the polka to explain and study the issue of ethnicity among Americans and European immigrants from Eastern Europe rather than studying the history of the development and fashion of that dance in the past. These studies tried to analyze the polka as an ethnic phenomenon and as a product of ethnic American music and culture. Hence, they are irrelevant to the questions raised in this work.

Finally, an important source of historiographic material on dance is constituted by the biographies of composers, musicians and dancers. With regards to the polka, these are mainly works on the lives of Jullien, Strauss, Musard, Lanner, Labitzky, Cellarius, Coralli, Grissi, Perrot, Laborde and others. Occasionally, the polka was mentioned in their biographies due to the fact that they lived, composed and performed in the period when this dance reached its highest popularity. These books, however, provide little detailed information on the polka and/or other dances.

Taken together, all of these works show that the main aspect of cultural studies related to the polka that has been studied is the origins of the dance. Further, studies were usually limited to analysis of one country. Thus, the works had a very narrow national approach. The main reason for this kind of focus seems derive from a lack of clarity as to whether the polka arrived first in Berlin, Vienna, Paris or another European city. Some historical sources support

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<sup>21</sup> Rustes, Frank (1969): *Dance in society: an analysis of the relationship between the social dance and society in England from the Middle Ages to the present day*. London: Routledge & K. Paul.

<sup>22</sup> Fink, Monika (1996): *Der Ball: eine Kulturgeschichte des Gesellschaftstanzes im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert*. Innsbruck: Studien Verlag; Lucca: Libreria musicale italiana.

<sup>23</sup> Gunkel, Ann (2004): *The Polka Alternative: Polka as Counterhegemonic Ethnic Practice*. *Popular Music and Society* 27.4: 407-427.

<sup>24</sup> Greene, R. Victor (1992): *A passion for polka: old-time ethnic music in America*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press.

<sup>25</sup> Keil, Charles (2005): *Deeper Polka*, *Ethnomusicology Forum* (14.1.1992) In: *Polka Happiness*, Philadelphia, PE: Temple University Press.

<sup>26</sup> Walser, Robert (1992): *The Polka Mass: Music of Postmodern Ethnicity*. *American Music* 10.2.



the idea that the polka rage started in Paris and that its principal exponents were Cerallius, Coralli and Laborde. On the contrary, Vuilier claims that the polka came from Bohemia and appeared first in Vienna, and that it was afterwards danced with brilliant success at Baden. As for Paris it was introduced here by Cellarius, the famous dancing master, among whose pupils were various Hungarians, Poles and Walachians, who played their national dances on the piano for the others to dance to. On the other hand, Hans Fantel wrote about the young Johann Strauss in his book "*Johann Strauss Father and Son, and Their Era*", who, on his journey to concerts in Leipzig, Dresden, and Prague, encountered a new dance that had just sprung up in Bohemia- the polka. It was during his journey through Bohemia that Strauss gained the impetus to write his own polka music, which later introduced this buoyant Czech dance to the Viennese ballrooms. By contrast, the note on the cover of the sheet music for the *Bohemian Peasant Polka Dance* composed for the piano forte, by Cellarius from 1844, is remarkable and suggests that the polka was first introduced in Berlin:

*"A new dance, bearing the above name, has lately been introduced into fashionable society in Paris, where it has created a furor equal to any great event that has agitated the French metropolis for the last half century, not excepting the "three glorious days." This dance, which much resembles the waltz in figure, is an original peasant dance of the Bohemian, and was first introduced into good society in Berlin. Baden-Baden, a celebrated watering place on the Rhine, initiated it into its salons last autumn; thence it travelled to Paris, where its merits and novelty have, in its mazy whirls, turned the heads of the French world of fashion"*<sup>27</sup>

According to Curt Sachs, the German musicologist, the polka was introduced in Prague in 1835, in Vienna in 1839, and in Paris in 1840.<sup>28</sup> In 1844 Punch's reader-John Green reported that he encountered the polka first in Vienna, then in Paris and finally in London:

*"Nearly twelve months ago, Mr. Punch, you must know that I was at Vienna. There I witnessed the first rise, progress, triumph, and apotheosis of the accursed Polka, and learnt it myself in self-defence. After I was completely sick of it, I went to Paris for the winter, and there to my disgust, found that I had to go through the whole process of rise, progress, triumph and apotheosis, for the second time. With prophetic eye I foresaw that in the next London season the whole series would be inflicted upon me once more; and I need not tell you how right I was."*<sup>29</sup>

Richardson wrote that it was probably first danced in Paris on the stage of the Odeon theatre in 1840 by J. Raab, a ballet master from Prague. As for Franks, the polka was taken on tour in Europe by a ballet master. Once the dance was seen on stage, at the Theatre de l'Ambigu, French dancing masters soon turned it into a cult, and before long it became a rage which has

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<sup>27</sup> the cover of dance sheet music for *The celebrated Bohemian Peasant Polka Dance* composed to the piano forte by M. Cellarius (1844). New York: Atwill's Music Repository, 201 Broadway.

<sup>28</sup> Sachs, Curt (1992): *Eine Weltgeschichte des Tanzes*. Berlin: G. Olms.

<sup>29</sup> Punch, 1844, Vol VII: 172.

not been surpassed by any other dance since. First, it was les petits rats, members of the corps de ballet at the Opera, who danced it at the public balls with their consorts, who waited for them at the stage doors. Not slow to see the possibilities presented by the dance, a number of excellent teachers in Paris quickly polished and refined it for the consumption of the upper classes. The dance they produced bore but little resemblance to the original.

Some sources suggest that, in the late 1830s and early 1840s, the polka became immensely popular among the upper classes and was most probably introduced to the ballrooms of England by Louis Jullien in 1844.<sup>30</sup> However, according to Richardson, it might have been the dancing teacher M. Coulon who first brought the dance to England. He visited Paris and learned it from Cellarius, Laborde and Coralli. Furthermore, possibly Arthur Saint Leon and Fanny Cerrito, eager performers of the Redova (polka variation), brought the polka to Italy in 1845. As for Dodsworth, the Polka reached the United States and was in vogue for a short time in the mid-1840s. This was effected by De Their, an important musical and theatrical personality at that time. He showed the music together with the description of the dance in manuscript to the owner of the New York Daily Aurora. It was then later presented to a ballet-master at the National-Theatre in New York, prof. L. De. G. Brookes. According to Dodsworth, the first official polka dance in America was performed by Mary Ann Gammon and L. G. Brookes in May 1844. It seems that Allen Dodsworth consequently presented this dance to his students in 1845.<sup>31</sup> Surprisingly, the first American audience for the polka was the elite New York public and its popularity was so extraordinary that clothes, hats, streets and even dishes were named after it. All in all, wherever the polka made its first appearance, there is no doubt, that in the middle of the nineteenth century, this was a very popular form of social dancing in Europe and America.

All these studies show clearly how the polka was and how it was used to analyze various issues such as ethnicity, politics and social relations. The common quality of all these works, however, is their focus on everything other than the history of polka in the nineteenth century. Some mention the polka in their analyses of general dance history, others explore the relationship to the problem of ethnicity in America or describe lives of famous artists. Finally some of them analyze the problem of the origins of this social dance. All of these studies show a lack of interest in the history of the polka fashion in Europe. Moreover, no scholars have ever analysed its development, popularization and initial circulation in the nineteenth century.

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<sup>30</sup> Punch, 1845, vol. VIII-IX.

<sup>31</sup> Dodsworth, Allen (1900): *Dancing and its Relation to Education and Social Life*. New York: Harper.

Thus, what I am going to discuss here is something that has never been studied. This is the cultural product, the polka, and how and why it was circulated and popularized in nineteenth-century Europe.

### *The polka as a genre*

*"There must be some touch of Nature in a movement, which thus, so to speak, makes the whole world kin; spreading through Europe, from nation to nation; and kindling with a common enthusiasm the Court and the Cottage, the metropolitan Opera-house and the Village-green."*<sup>32</sup>

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The most important problem in the general study of the polka would seem to be the scant interest in this Bohemian dance as a singular musical genre. On the one hand, it is rooted in the fact that the polka was not considered a separate musical genre but was rather described as a form of the waltz or treated in relation to the waltz. Undoubtedly, the diffusion and reception of the waltz at the turn of the century and its rise as an early nineteenth-century ballroom phenomenon justify this scholarly attention. However, measured by different qualities and social conditions the polka, that came after, was as important as the waltz. Secondly, there was a strong tendency to treat the entire social dancing culture as one phenomenon and thus, there are more general studies on dance for this period of time than separate works on particular dancing forms. This, as a result, produced more detailed accounts of the function of dance in that period, while still retaining the breadth of a general historical account. Little research has however been done on the history of the polka and its relationship to European societies in the nineteenth century. Lack of study of the period when it was particularly fashionable around 1844-1860 is particularly noteworthy.

It should not be forgotten that dance has often been termed "a mirror of society". It has been seen as a response to historical, political, economic, social and even religious events- no matter where and by whom it was performed.<sup>33</sup> Meanings, symbols, signs and representations are, and were, in constant flow, under circulation and change, "in a perpetual process of becoming".<sup>34</sup> Only recently, the study of dance and music has become a relevant part of cultural history reflecting the interest in the relationships between music and society. In the second half of the twentieth century the relationship between society and music started to interest anthropology and ideology-oriented dance historians. They started to pay more

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<sup>32</sup> Hood, Thomas (1844): *Hood's magazine and comic miscellany*: Tom 2. London: H. Hurst: 172.

<sup>33</sup> Kassing, Gayle (2007): 5.

<sup>34</sup> Salmi, Hannu (2008): *Nineteenth-Century Europe. A Cultural History*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

attention to the political meanings and representations of social dancing. This trend was influenced by Edward Palmer Thompson's and Natalie Zemon Davies' theories. According to them, cultural actions, such as dance, were perceived as politically oriented.<sup>35</sup> Thus, how and why people danced and the types of dances they executed are linked to society and historical periods. How, why and when individuals performed the dances are important components in understanding dance in a particular period.

As a matter of fact, it is quite obvious that the polka was politicized through the contexts in which its performances took place. Its popularization in Europe did not just coincide with a period of rapid social and technological change, but was directly related to some of its main social and cultural preoccupations and thus, it was a new cultural practice that shaped urban societies. In each of three cities, population growth was very rapid and provided a large market for entertainment. The power that was in hands of the upper classes became weaker first in Paris and then later in London. By contrast, in Vienna, where the bourgeoisie mingled least with the aristocracy, this tendency was slower. Both Paris and Vienna underwent major reconstruction in the second half of the century and in both cities working-class communities were uprooted and displaced. In all three capitals, the demarcation between private and public became increasingly rigid and their boundaries ever more strictly guarded.<sup>36</sup>

The close relationship between the popularization of the polka and European social development is perhaps not surprising, but the fact that the genre took such great flight precisely at the moment when various national movements evolved across Europe, when there was the rise of bourgeoisie, when the commercialization and technologization of life became very important factors and when women started to fight for their liberation suggests that there was a more direct correlation. As a matter of fact, the polka, especially in Paris and to some extent also in London, appears to have been particularly relevant to public discourse on the changing role of the bourgeoisie and women's role in European society. For all of these reasons, this thesis proposes that study of the polka and social changes at the midcentury is historically important and requires a closer investigation. Until now, no serious attempts have been made to explain the rise, circulation and subsequent fashion of the polka in Europe in

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<sup>35</sup> Suzanne, Desan (1989): *Crowds, Community and Rituals in the Work of E. P. Thompson and Natalie Davis*. In: Hunt, Lynn (ed.): *The New Cultural History*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.

<sup>36</sup> Samson, Jim (2001): *The Cambridge history of nineteenth-century music*. London: Cambridge University Press: 544.

the mid-nineteenth century. Where, there is the investigation of the polka, it is usually only in terms of general dance history or dance history in a particular country.

Continuing with the discourse on the polka as a genre, it is noticeable that within the literature related to this dance there are no studies that deal with international reception and meaning of the polka. I believe, however, that the success of the polka all over the globe indicates that an exclusively national approach is insufficient. In order to better understand the modes by which the polka was diffused and how the international success of this Bohemian dance was possible, one must adopt an approach of cultural transfer, comparison and *histoire croisée* within a transnational framework. Matthias Middell suggested that "*the absorption of foreign cultural elements cannot be decreed or even achieved by a deliberately expansionist policy adopted by the original culture*".<sup>37</sup> Hence, only by transcending the national scope is it possible to investigate how a cultural product - the polka - became a part of the international cultural market. Thus, what are the reasons for the adoption of elements from a different culture and why are they attractive to the receiving culture is an issue that can be addressed by means of study of the polka.

In summary, my focus is on the different and varying functions of one cultural product, the polka, as it moved through different European places and spaces and what sort of meaning it carried and by whom, how and where this was accomplished and in which way was it adopted in those places. By means of study of the polka I would like to offer a new context in which to explain how a cultural product - public dance - become fashionable and was circulated in the mid-century. On the other hand, working on fashion, dance and culture is another way to approach political, social and cultural issues of the time. This new approach helps to better understand how an urban practice shaped European capital cities and their societies in the midcentury. I also use this concept to challenge the current historiography on the polka, which focused basically on the the polka's mysterious roots and did not pay enough attention to the role of this dance in different European societies. In my opinion this is much more important for the academic field than the explanation of its origins. Additionally, due to the scarcity of historiographical literature related to the polka, I am going to fill this gap in cultural history by offering an academic study dedicated entirely to this dance form.

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<sup>37</sup> Middell, Matthias (2007): *Dimensionen der Kultur- und Gesellschaftsgeschichte: Festschrift für Hannes Siegrist zum 60. Geburtstag*. Leipzig: Leipziger Univ. Verlag: 26.

### ***How to investigate the public dance: transfer, comparison or cross history?***

How to structure a work on a topic that has so many different facets, that reflects the same phenomenon developing at the same time but was influenced by different factors? With regards to the polka the same process took place in different European cities, however it was differently fashioned and reshaped in various places depending on those cities' characteristics. Thus, in order to study the aforementioned developments, I have decided to follow different methodological approaches. Firstly, I "map" the spread of the polka through the perspective of *cultural transfer*. Then, I apply the approach of *comparison* which leads me to the use of *histoire croisée*. In brief, transfer study is relevant here only to a certain extent, instead a strong comparative tendency leads to *histoire croisée* which is of central importance in my methodological approach. *Histoire croisée* is a result of debates and exchange of ideas between transfer studies, comparative history and connected or shared history without diminishing the contributions of any of those. According to Werner and Zimmermann, "*Histoire croisée associates social, cultural, and political formations, generally at the national level, that are assumed to bear relationships to one another.*"<sup>38</sup> „Being process-oriented, *histoire croisée* is an open approach that takes into account, from an internal point of view, variations in its components and, from an external point of view, its specificity with respect to other possible forms of history."<sup>39</sup> Thus, through the use of *histoire croisée* I put an emphasis on crossing different national receptions to understand a topic with a Europe-wide dimension. I observe specific elements of a common phenomenon, in different cities, which gave the beginning to the process of the polka fashioning and analyze how these places communicate with one other. In the case of the polka, the application of *histoire croisée* helps to go beyond the local context and hence, to understand the European success of this dance.

It may help to lay out the structure of this research in somewhat more detail. The introduction gives an insight into current historiography of the polka. Moreover, it discusses methods and possibilities connected with research into this dance. To better understand the reasons why the polka appeared on the European scene in 1844, it gives a brief overview of the political, social and cultural situation in Paris, Vienna and London in the mid-century. Chapter I presents the evolution of the polka in Paris. It explores relations between dancing masters and the diffusion of the polka there. It takes a broad look at existing accounts of the polka fashion in Paris. It also examines how the polka was perceived and adopted in this city.

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<sup>38</sup> Werner, Michael / Zimmermann, Bénédicte (2006): *Beyond Comparison: Histoire croisée and the challenge of reflexivity* In: *History and Theory* 45, 30-50.

<sup>39</sup> Werner/Zimmermann (2006): 46

Chapter II is dedicated to the evolution of the polka in Vienna and the research here is carried through the person of Johann Strauss II, who composed a large number of polkas. Chapter III deals with the new fashion in London and all the analysis is based on the example of Louis Jullien, a great conductor of the time. Finally, Chapter IV concludes with a presentation and comparison of various phenomena related to the polka in all three cities. The entire research is based on the sources and literature, available in English, German and French and thus, not being restricted by linguistic barriers, it offers a broad, detailed and intercultural study of this dance.

The introduction and four chapters dedicated to single cities and compared in the last chapter explore various terms, concepts, and themes relating to the question of the polka's popularity in Europe. There is similar logic and feasibility for studying London, Paris and Vienna together. As the three most important national capitals of the time, they had great similarities in their social structure which derived from the functions of capital-city life. On the other hand, the different political situations in each of them make the research of the polka even more interesting. At this point, then, I would like to stress that this research focuses on three cities and not countries. The objective is to investigate where, how and why the polka was danced in these cities. In view of the fact that Vienna, Paris and London were the European cultural centres at the time and that the main cultural, social and political changes took place there, it seems important to start research into the polka in these three capitals. Moreover, cultural developments in those three cities had a significant impact on the popularization of the polka in other European cities and later all over the world. Firstly, with the emergence of the bourgeoisie and its growth in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a public sphere turned up a forum where private people gathered to form a public and this democratized the dancing culture in a certain way. This phenomenon was described in Jürgen Habermas' book *"The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere"*, which had a great impact on scholastic circles and therefore, the relationship between the emergence of the public sphere and the polka will be discussed in greater depth later in this thesis.

Secondly, some characteristic developments can be observed in each of the three cities. Paris was the city of fashion and it was also the most pretentious and most strongly admired city in nineteenth-century Europe. The French capital launched new fashions and its influential critics took over the right to decide what was of good and bad taste. Not surprisingly the intellectual Walter Benjamin called it *"the capital of the nineteenth century"*.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Walter, Benjamin (1972): *Paris, Capitale du XIX siècle*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag:

Everything seems also to indicate, that it was here where the polka became a "fashion" even if was becoming popular in other European cities at the same time.

Furthermore, the influence of political, social and cultural life in Vienna and London cannot be neglected when considering the diffusion of the polka. It seems that Vienna was the first place that the polka arrived, probably from Bohemia. Moreover, Vienna was known for its high musical culture. It was the capital of ballroom dancing where the waltz made a furore at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The popularization of the polka in the city where the ballroom dancing was an essential part of the social and cultural life and where dancing culture was dominated by the waltz was very important for the further diffusion of the polka in Europe among different social classes.

Finally, the research in London is essential for a number of reasons. Firstly, the British capital was the home of the Industrial Revolution and significant economic and technological changes started there and later spread throughout Europe. Communications improved significantly and it does not need to be mentioned that such changes had a great impact on cultural developments all over Europe. Furthermore, the social changes were wide-ranging causing the British class system to develop a complex social hierarchy with an emerging consumer society. These social variations influenced not only the United Kingdom but also the other parts of the world, which were under British influence in the nineteenth century. For all these reasons, it is important to focus firstly on Vienna, Paris and London. Consequently, the expansion of the following analysis into other European and Non-European cities could do nothing but enrich the current state of research on the polka dance. This, however, will not be developed in this thesis.

Referring back to the methodological tools used in this work, I would like to explain why the mix of different approaches with the dominance of *histoire croisée* is so relevant to the study of the polka fashion in Europe. I mentioned before that I intend to map the transfer of the polka. What I mean by mapping is not to create the maps of that transfer, but, instead to investigate where (theatres, ballrooms, gardens, salons etc.) and why the polka was performed by specific agents in specific cities. That is, I analyze how the fashion of the polka developed in the nineteenth century, what factors influenced that development and what were the main places and agents of this process. I realise that the number of agents who contributed to the spread of the polka all over the globe was huge. Moreover, in regards to the cultural practices the polka in the nineteenth century can be approached in two ways- as a



dance and as music; therefore, I decided to focus only on particular agents of this transfer. More specifically, I investigate two composers and a few dance masters whose contribution is, in my opinion, very relevant, if not the most important, for the diffusion and fashion of the polka in the nineteenth century. I am also interested in the effect they had on the social milieu of the polka as well as the way and reasons why they made the polka internationally fashionable.

Returning to methodological tools, the concept of *cultural transfer* has been used by historians such as R. Reichardt, M. Werner, M. Espagne, H. Kaelble, Ch. Eisenberg, J. Osterhammel and others who have studied processes of cultural change and mutual influences in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe. By using new interdisciplinary methods and transnational approaches, their works have influenced the research of cultural developments in England, the Netherlands, the United States and Asia. Therefore, the concept of cultural transfer has become more widely used in other languages in Western Europe (French: *transferts culturels*; German: *Kulturtransfer*; Dutch: *cultuurtransfer*; Russian: *культурный трансфер*). Research on cultural transfer is relatively young within the cultural sciences, which developed in the middle of 1980s in France and Germany. At the beginning, it focused on France and Germany, connecting studies on reception, intertextuality, translations and language teaching. The researchers of cultural transfer investigate mainly the relationships between cultures and the processes which accompany them. For Christiane Eisenberg, the achievement of the investigation through the concept of "transfert culturel" can be reduced to exploring the foreign in the known.<sup>41</sup> The transfer study is in that sense similar to the investigations undertaken by reception studies. Cultural transfer is understood as a dynamic process, where the shift and exchange of cultural elements take place. Followers of Michel Espagne interpret the cultural transfer as a linear model which connects together three elements: the starting culture, mediation authority and the target culture. The definition *cultural transfer* expresses the notion of inter- as well as intracultural relationships, including reciprocity, and directs attention towards the processuality of the phenomenon.

My second approach refers to the perspective of *comparison* through which I investigate the dynamics of the fashion and social reception of the polka. The transfer approach is traditionally seen as a challenge to the comparative approach, and the differences

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<sup>41</sup> Eisenberg, Christiane (2003): *Kulturtransfer als historischer Prozess*. In: Hartmut Kaelble (red.), *Vergleich und Transfer: Komparatistik in den Sozial-, Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften*. Frankfurt, New York: Campus: 405.

between comparative and transfer history has been much debated.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, it is common to position transfer and comparison as two opposites. The study of cultural transfers is the study of relations and transition phenomena between different cultural areas. Comparison, on the other hand, focuses mainly on the comparison of certain subjects, elements, cultures and similar. According to Kaelble, nowadays, the interdisciplinary debates about comparison concentrate around three topics<sup>43</sup>:

1. *the relationship between comparison and transfer*
2. *generalising or individualizing comparison*
3. *units of comparison*

Until now, the debate about the relationship between comparison and transfer has taken place among historians and literary historians. It reveals that there are three positions among the historians of cultural transfers. The first position is represented by *comparison*, which is understood as an opposition of two or more features in order to analyse the differences and similarities between them. It builds the units of comparison and focuses on the exploration of differences between them, without investigating the processes of interaction between them. In this narrow approach, transfer is used only in some extreme cases and is usually seen as a disruptive factor. Comparison is very often seen as the best method to explain cause- analysis in history and sociology.

The second position is the use of the *transfer without comparative aspects*. It is seen as an opposition to the first approach and investigates otherness without constructing the units of comparison. Therefore, it opens up and better explains the grey zones between the compared objects. Another advantage of the transfer approach is that it can highlight the historical dimensions such as experience, norms, values, inventions and changes, and places them at the centre of the analysis, much more than comparison does. In this sense, transfer investigates more intensively the process of historical changes and is understood as an adaptation of concepts, values, norms, attitudes and identities through the movement of people and ideas between cultures and through the encounters of these cultures. Finally, transfer can explain similarities and differences. All similarities between cultures, analyzed through the comparison, come into being through transfer. On the contrary, many differences can be explained either through transfer, that is, through changes of norms and values, or as a

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<sup>42</sup> Middell, Matthias (2007): *Dimensionen der Kultur- und Gesellschaftsgeschichte*: Festschrift für Hannes Siegrist zum 60. Geburtstag. Leipzig: Leipziger Univ. Verlag. 49ff.

<sup>43</sup> Kaelble, Hartmut (2003): *Vergleich und Transfer: Komparatistik in den Sozial-, Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften*. Frankfurt, New York: Campus: 471.

counter-reaction to transfer.

The final position tries to find the golden mean by *combining both methods- transfer and comparison*. It seems to be the method most widely adopted by scholars dealing with cultural transfers, such as Eisenberg, Siegrist, Khamsi and Brockmeier or Kaelble. Using this strategy, the comparison can analyse similarities and differences as well as transfers between several case studies. From this perspective, there are no particular differences between comparison and transfer. The construction of the units of comparison takes place in the same way. The only issue is that they face the same problems when it comes to the problem of the construction of categories. The transfer approach is susceptible to the construction of oversimplifying categories as much as the comparative method is. This happens because the transfer approach is always based on certain notions of cultures, i. e. the values and norms of the places involved in the transfer. Thus, both approaches complement each other and cannot do without one other. To understand transfer and to determine the differences and otherness that transfer has to bridge, one must know how great the differences between the point of origin and the point of destination of that transfer were. Moreover, through comparison, it is also possible to say whether transfer indicated a large or a small change. As stated above, the third kind of approach seems to be adopted by most scholars.

Christiane Eisenberg argues that research on cultural transfers without comparison is impossible. Firstly, the differences between cultures (between known and foreign) where the transfer takes place need to be analysed and secondly the processes of transfer must be investigated. According to Siegrist, transfer is a basis for reflection on the comparison. Last but not least, Peter Brockmeier does not separate either terms at all. In the last twenty years the debate among researchers has been heated with regard to the question of generalising and individualizing comparison. From the beginning of the eighteenth century, there have been two comparative perspectives. The first is individualising comparison, which explores the peculiarities of a specific case, its internal logic, its contexts and assumptions and, finally, its individuality. On the other hand, there is also a generalising comparison that traces general developments, sometimes of a few people, a few countries or even the entire world. The question of what should be compared, the specific or the general, is answered by Hannes Siegrist. In his opinion, both aspects should be compared, as comparison has a generalising aim and focuses on the universality of a phenomenon; at the same time it is interested in the individual specificities and historical differences of a given phenomenon and how it is

embedded in a local context from which it derives a specific meaning.<sup>44</sup>

Finally, the question of the units of comparison has not been yet debated as explicitly as the other two aspects. That is, it has been debated more in the connection with the critique of the nation state as the basic unit of comparison. There are a few arguments for the nation as a comparative unity. Firstly, it is said that research objects are to be found only on the national level; therefore, it is very difficult to carry out a comparison between entire civilizations or small, geographical units. Secondly, the nation is seen as a relatively easy distinguishable unit with defined borders and a clear self- definition. By contrast, civilisations and regions have undefined and unclear borders and are less clear in the selfidentity of their citizens. Finally, the strongest argument for the nation as a unit of comparison is the view that the nation is as one actor in the sense that it has one government, constitution, administration, social and cultural identity. The critique of the nation as the basic unit of comparison has aimed at different issues. One such emphasises that the comparative approach fails to deal with the grey zones that exist between the units of comparison, in this case - the nations.

Another objection can be found among cultural scientists, who claim that entire cultural, economic and socio-historical processes cannot be explained only through comparison between nations. The same point of view is held by historians of industrialization or religion. Secondly, the scholars of transfer studies argue that the undefined borders, grey zones and transition points can be explained through a wide comparison that includes the transfer approach. Espagne makes a further objection, in his claim that the semantic content of concepts, which form the basis of the comparison, becomes less effective through numerous applications. This causes a danger of making the specificities of the empirical foundation they are meant to reflect unintelligible. Espagne's solution to this problem is to abandon the national level and to concentrate on the regional level of investigation. Finally, arguments are made that transnational units are as important for an investigation as the nation.

According to Werner and Zimmermann, one of the relevant weaknesses of the comparative method is the tension between the method and the object. It results from the fact that comparison is a cognitive process that relies on binary opposition between differences and similarities. Thus, five difficulties occur when considering this method. The first one is related to the position of the observer which means that the comparative method applies perspective that is external to the objects that are the focus of comparison. Theoretically, its

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<sup>44</sup> Kaelble (2003): 434.

advantage should be a precisely equal distance from the objects that would produce a symmetrical view. However, this point of view is difficult to achieve, because the researcher is always in the position of an observer and his or her position is never central. Moreover, this position is influenced by time and space, hence it is never perfectly identical. The second question is related to the choice of the scale of comparison. Whether region, nation-state, or civilization, no scales is absolutely univocal or generalizable. They all have their place in the history, contain a specific content and thus are difficult to transpose to different schemes and frameworks. The third difficulty is connected with the object of comparison. The scale chosen for one object of study does not have to be necessarily the same or have the same relevance for the other. This brings us to the question of the historical and situated constitution of the objects of the comparison. The fourth problem might reflect the tension between synchronic and diachronic logics. Hence, for example the focus on the description of a chronological sequence of events leading to specific changes might limit the scholarly justification of the use of different elements in the process and emphasis on some of them or neglect of others. The consequence is a search for balance that very often ends with fiasco. Finally, there is another difficulty related to the interaction among the objects of the comparison. According to Wernier and Zimmermann *“when societies in contact with one another are studied, it is often noted that the objects and practices are not only in a state of interrelationship but also modify one another reciprocally as a result of their relationship. This is often the case, for instance in cultural activities such as literature, music, and the fine arts.”*

As was discussed, the comparative method tends to focus on synchrony, by contrast transfer approach is clearly situated in a diachronic perspective. It concentrates on analyzing phenomena of displacement and appropriation through the reconstitution of chains of events. Consequently, inquiry into transfers is a dynamic process in which the units of analysis are not static but undergo various processes of transformation. Even if transfer studies provide answers to questions left unresolved by the comparative approach, they also create their own blind spots. One of these concerns frames of reference. Thus, any kind of description and any analysis of transfers considers that there is a beginning and an end through which the research process can be interpreted and studied. Another difficulty regards invariability of the categories of analysis. The categories used to analyze a transfer differ according to national perspectives, thus the entire process of study is associated with and apprehended through concepts elaborated within national traditions. All of these issues lead to the next one which is a reflexivity deficit. Hence, on the one hand the study of transfers underlines foreign contributions and helps to historicize the concept of national culture. However, as the

representation of culture itself is not really considered, it results rather in the strengthening of the national bases of historiographies than weakening them. The last question regards the issue of reciprocity and reversibility that engages the process of transferring the object of study from one culture to another following the logic of introduction, transmission, and reception. However, the same movements can undergo various kinds of interrelationships and crossings and hence the simple situation of an analysis of relationship between a point of departure and a point of arrival, becomes more complex and requires additional or new methodological tools. In these kinds of situations one can apply the method of *histoire croisée*.

As shown by Werner and Zimmermann, both cultural transfer and comparison have weaknesses which can be overcome by the use of *histoire croisée*. According to them, there are three factors that distinguish the *histoire croisée* approach from comparison and transfer when examining different historical relational connections:

- the study based on the links between various historically constituted formations that takes into account a variety of possible viewpoints
- mixture of different approaches: comparative; transfers; and more generally socio-cultural interactions
- its own historicity developed through the historicization of the object, the categories of analysis and the relationships between researcher and object.

The basic principle of *histoire croisée* is the notion of intersection. It favours a multidimensional approach in which objects of research are not merely considered in relation to one another but also through one another, in terms of relationships, intersections, and circulation. The second aspect pays particular attention to the consequences of intercrossings, thus it is not bound only to an analysis of the moment of intercrossing or contact, but it takes into consideration the processes that happen in between or are consequences of different intersections. Third, crossing is also called interweaving “*studies resistances, lack of activity, modifications – in trajectory, form, and content – and new combinations that can both result from and develop themselves in the process of crossing. Finally, the entities, persons, practices, or objects that are intertwined with, or affected by the crossing process, do not necessarily remain intact and identical in form. Their transformations are tied to the active as well as the interactive nature of their coming into contact.*”<sup>45</sup>

*Histoire croisée* is concerned on the one hand with the new and original processes produced by the intercrossing and on the other hand it is interested in the way they influence

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<sup>45</sup> Werner/Zimmerman (2006): 38.

one other. The intercrossings can be divided into a few types depending on the way they appear. They can be an essential part of the object, thus becoming the object of research. In this case, the inquiry focuses on moments and phenomena previous to the intercrossing, on its modalities, and sometimes takes into consideration what happens afterwards, focusing on the results and processes more or less directly brought about by the intercrossing. Furthermore, the intercrossings can concentrate on points of view, thus it becomes an area of intersecting fields, objects, and scales, that the researcher crosses. In short, *“the construction of the object of study is the adoption of one or more particular points of view on the objects is already the result of various acts of crossing which are socially structured, reflecting particular positions in competition or power struggles.”*<sup>46</sup> Intercrossing depends also on the relations between observer and object and it is especially relevant where the scholar is required to work with a language, concepts, and categories that are not a part of his or her sphere of socialization. Finally, the empirical and reflexivity can be articulated within a perspective of *histoire croisée*. Reflexivity is one of the characteristics that distinguishes *histoire croisée* from both comparativism and transfer studies.

Taking into consideration the above possibilities for carrying out research on the polka, different methods can be used to investigate its reception. As I see it, combining all three methods- *transfer*, *comparison* and *histoire croisée* is one of the best ways to research the spread and reception of the polka in nineteenth-century Paris, Vienna and London. However, whereas comparison favours the implementation of a synchronic reasoning, and transfer studies tend towards an analysis of diachronic processes, cross history, in contrast, enables the synchronic and diachronic registers to be constantly rearranged in relation to one other and puts emphasis on inextricable interconnections. Being process oriented, *histoire croisée* is an open approach that takes into account, from an internal point of view, variations in its components and, from an external point of view, its specificity with respect to other possible forms of history. Furthermore, *“as a general rule, empirical objects relate to several scales at the same time and are not amenable to a single focal length. Thus, constructors of this category act, simultaneously or successively, on different levels: municipal, national, even international, in such a manner that these varying scales are in part constituted through one another.”*<sup>47</sup> The notion of scale does not refer to the micro or macro level, but rather to the various spaces within which the interactions making up the process analyzed are rooted. *“From a spatial point of view, the scales refer back to the multiple settings, logics, and interactions to which the*

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<sup>46</sup> Werner/Zimmerman (2006): 40.

<sup>47</sup> Werner/Zimmerman (2006): 43.

objects of analysis relate. From a temporal perspective, they raise the question of the time frames of both observer and object and of their interferences at the confluence between the empirical and methodology."<sup>48</sup> Thus, this method seems to be the most efficient to analyze and understand the European success of the polka.

According to Werner and Zimmermann, "*Histoire croisée can open up promising lines of inquiry for the writing of a history of Europe that is not reduced to the sum of the histories of member states or their political relations, but takes into account the diversity of transactions, negotiations, and reinterpretations played out in different settings around a great variety of objects that, combined, contribute to shaping a European history 'à géométrie variable'.*"<sup>49</sup> The adoption of one or more particular points of view on the polka, enables the study of the social reception and appropriation - or handling - of the polka in particular places. Thus, through the use of *histoire croisée*, I put an emphasis on crossing different national receptions to shape a topic of a Europe-wide dimension. I do this through the selection of cities as the main unit of investigation. The advantages of this kind of choice have been already mentioned. Furthermore, inspired by *histoire croisée*, the agents of the transfer of the polka such as musicians, composers, dancers, critics, publishers, lithographers, journalists, writers and/or intellectuals and intercrossings between all of them play a crucial role in my analysis. I analyse how the fashion of the polka was carried out by agents with respect to the routes of transfer and how the new cultural product- the polka - was received and furthermore reshaped in various ways in different places within three different cities. Here „*histoire croisée plays a role in this undertaking by opening up lines of inquiry that encourages a rethinking, in historical time, of the relationships among observation, the object of study, and the analytical instruments used.*"<sup>50</sup>

Finally, all these considerations related to the use of *histoire croisée* to study the polka lead to the question of how to study or objectify various forms of intercrossing, situated in time and space. Considering the necessity of starting the process of study with the object of research and its actual situation, one has to employ an inductive and pragmatic approach. *Histoire croisée* relies on its inductive orientation which aims at limiting the effects of prefiguring the results through pre-existing national and generally accepted categories and by contrast it employs modes in which categories, objects and schemes are adjusted and rearranged in the course of the analysis. The induction is a process in which the production of

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<sup>48</sup> Werner/Zimmerman (2006): 43.

<sup>49</sup> Werner/Zimmerman (2006): 43.

<sup>50</sup> Werner/Zimmerman (2006): 46.



knowledge undergoes various modifications depending on relations between intercrossing of the elements constituting part of the object of study and if necessary, repositioning in relation to one another. „*Pragmatic induction thus implies starting from the object of study and the situations in which it is embedded, according to one or more points of view – previously defined, it is true, but subject to continual readjustments in the course of empirical investigation.*”<sup>51</sup> Thus, *histoire croisée* integrates into the operation of contextualization carried out by the researcher the referential dimension of the objects and practices analyzed, taking into account both the variety of situations in which the relationships to the context are structured and the effect that the study of such situations exerts on the analytical procedures.”<sup>52</sup> For all these reasons, it seems that the application of *histoire croisée* is the best way to study the fashioning process of the polka in Europe, which occurred simultaneously in different European capitals but which entailed different processes in those places. The differences arose from readaptations and remodifications of the adoption and reception process caused by the intercrossings of different agents of the polka transfer in different spaces and moments. The approach of *histoire croisée* allows a constant readjustment and revision of the relationship between these diachronic and synchronic registers of the object of study.

In summary, the main research questions of the following thesis are as follows:

- 1.) *How and why the polka, a Czech cultural product, found its way into the main European cultural centres of the nineteenth century and what was it about this dance, per se, that provoked disquiet and, subsequently, discourse.*
- 2.) *How was the polka circulated and how did it influence different parts of European societies.*
- 3.) *How did the polka fashion develop? What were the differences in execution, appropriation and adoption of the polka in Paris, Vienna and London?*

My preliminary study also allows me to formulate the hypothesis that composers and dancers played a crucial role in the process of making the polka fashionable in Paris, Vienna and London. The polka was made a fashion in Paris and almost at the same time it was transferred to Vienna and London. Further, the happy, free, erotic and exotic character of the polka influenced its popularity in Europe. Hence, the composers and dancers, also referred to as agents, form the focus of this investigation.

The main core of the case studies, to test my hypothesis, is constituted by research into the performances of two composers and two dancers: Johann Strauss II and Louis Jullien; and

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<sup>51</sup> Werner/Zimmerman (2006): 47.

<sup>52</sup> Werner/Zimmerman (2006): 48.

Henri Cellarius and Eugene Coralli. Both, Strauss and Jullien were composers, musicians and conductors, and thus have much in common. However, they came from different cultural backgrounds, had different origins and marked the different routes of adoption of the polka implicit in the spread of the dance. Johann Strauss, the Viennese composer, seems to have been the most important agent in promoting the polka in Vienna, and later in other European cities. The King of the Waltz, as he was known, wrote so many polkas that there is no doubt that he could also be described as "the King of the Polka". At all events, there is no doubt that he was the master of both; moreover, his activity in Vienna and the very likely transfer of the polka from Prague to Vienna, led the city to become a hub for the dance and further transfer of this dance may have originated there. Our second composer, Louis Jullien, who was French, played an extremely important role in popularising the polka in London and to a certain extent also in New York. According to *The Illustrated London News*, he was the first person to perform the polka in London in public, in 1844.<sup>53</sup>

Instead, Henri Cellarius and Eugene Coralli were two dancing masters who lived, taught and performed in Paris. Preliminary studies show that they were particularly important for the adoption of the polka in Paris, which was one of the main cultural centres in Europe.<sup>54</sup> Henri Cellarius is thought to have brought the polka from Prague to Paris and to have been the first to describe its steps and features in his dancing manual of 1847. The manual was written in French and was later translated into other languages.<sup>55</sup> Another interesting slant is the report of contemporary dancers Perrot and Robert, who wrote about the rivalry between Cellarius and Coralli in Paris.<sup>56</sup> They were the most fashionable dancing masters of the period and both had their own versions of the polka. As the list of the names of dancing masters of the polka is very long, I decided to choose these two names which are particularly relevant for the research on the polka, since Cellarius and Coralli were the dancers who gave the polka the shape and form which facilitated its use by other dancing masters.

Considering all these agents of the polka circulation, no doubt, there was indeed a peak of cultural attention to dance music in the nineteenth century. First of all, it is suggested by their number and the amount of their performances as testified by theatre and ballroom posters as well as newspaper advertisements and comments. At the same time, the rise in

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<sup>53</sup> *The Illustrated London News*, April 1844.

<sup>54</sup> Scott, B. Derek (2008): *Sounds of the metropolis: the nineteenth-century popular music revolution in London, New York, Paris, and Vienna*: Oxford University Press.

<sup>55</sup> Cellarius, Henri. (1847).

<sup>56</sup> Perrot / Robert, after Coralli (1845): *La Polka, enseignee sans maitre*. Paris: Aubert.

printed sheet music and dance manuals does suggest an increase in the status and quality of the performances and their cultural importance. The nineteenth century also witnessed the expansion and diversification of the places and occasions where dancing took place, from theatres and royal palaces, to ballrooms, taverns, private houses, gardens and parks. Thus, I look at different localities ranging from cities to the specific places where the dancing took place to see how these venues shaped the cultural product. Moreover, I also look at different cultural practices embedded in these places.

In summary, the scope of this thesis is to analyze how the rise of a new public dance - the polka - influenced the consumption, commercialization and popularization of dance music among various social classes in Paris, London and Vienna. I examine why dancing and listening to dance music was such a popular occupation in mid-century Europe and the role of the polka in it. By analyzing the development and growth of the new types of venues such as public concerts and balls I adopt the stance towards the theory, according to which the commercialization democratized dancing in all these capitals. In case of the polka, what I mean by the democratization is the possibility that was given to all classes to entertain themselves and pursue leisure in different forms which not necessarily meant social mixing and dancing all together or at least not under the same conditions. Furthermore, I try to explain how and to which extent the polka mirrored the social and political changes of nineteenth-century European cities, including the position of women in European societies and the rise in power of the middle classes.

#### *Different types of sources*

It is not easy to choose sources offering information on the polka in the nineteenth century. On the one hand, the richness of these sources is such that it is difficult to decide which is the most important. On the other hand, looking at different agents and cities imposes constraints on the range of sources. The nineteenth century was a time not only of political, social and cultural change but also of great technological developments. England was the main pioneer in the process of industrialization and technologization of life. New printing techniques and new means of communication developed. Therefore, with regards to culture, in the nineteenth century, the musical product was not only widely advertised in trade journals, but also in periodicals for general circulation. For the first time in history, the same cultural product was

also turned over to expert appraisers for their professional judgement.<sup>57</sup> Not only was a vast amount of articles, critics and travel writings concerning culture and music produced during this period, but also guides and personal memoirs in which the everyday life of people was described. On the one hand, this richness of different types of materials offered by the nineteenth century is a great possibility, as it provides an opportunity to address and respond to various aspects and questions. Nevertheless, it is challenging because there is a risk of losing the focus and being too general. On the other hand, the importance of source materials in dance history study cannot be overstated. All academic disciplines have their essential features, and in dance history one of these is its source base. According to June Layson, source materials in themselves do not constitute dance history but as the remnants of and commentaries upon the past they provide the basic starting point for study.<sup>58</sup>

Two types of source materials were relevant to me in this study: written and visual. With regard to written resources - advertisements, autobiographies, bills, critics, reviews, dance sheet music, diaries, journals, newspapers, literature, magazines, periodicals, ballroom programmes, etc - have been examined. Visual sources are primarily the dance itself, but they also include costumes, instruments, images, sculptures, sheet music covers, photographs, etc. For my analysis the most relevant were images, caricatures and lithographs. Thus, I use a mix of different sources mentioned above because they complement each other and enable clear and reliable analysis of my topic.

As for the first group of sources, I focus mainly on newspapers, journals and periodicals. One of the reasons for this kind of choice is that from the second half of the century there was a boom in the development of the press and hence, it contains a full range of valid and important information related to social, political and cultural events of the time. Nowadays, most local libraries in European capitals hold back copies or else issues can be consulted at the newspaper sections of national libraries. Digital archives such as JSTOR, Nineteenth Century British Pamphlets, Google Books, The British Library, The Times online, ÖNB or Gallica offer very good access to some of the digital versions of nineteenth-century newspapers. The most important newspapers and journals considered in this study were (i) Vienna: *Der Wanderer*, *Wiener Zeitung*, *Wiener Theaterzeitung*, *Fremdenblatt*, *Der Humorist*; (ii) Paris: *Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris*, *Le Ménestrel*, *La France Musicale*, *La France Théâtrale*

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<sup>57</sup> Ringer, Alexander, L. (1974): *Musical Taste and Industrial Syndrom. A socio-musicological problem in historical analysis*. In: *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* Vol. V, No. 1, 1974.

<sup>58</sup> Layson, June (1983): *Dance history source materials*. In: Adshead-Lansdale and Layson June (red): *Dance History*. London and New York: Routledge.

and *La Sylphide*; (iii) Germany: *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*; (iv) London: *The Illustrated London News*, *Musical Times and Singing Circular*, *Musical World*, *The Times*, *The Era*, *The Morning Chronicle*, *The Examiner*, and periodicals: *The Punch*, *Bentley's Miscellany* and *Hood's Magazine*. The dancing in the period of the "polka craze" was not only commented on in the daily press but it was also widely announced and discussed in magazines that specialized in music and culture or that were devoted to fashion and manners. The target audience of the latter were usually women. Here, *Lady's Journal*, *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* and *The Musical Journal* are some of the examples of such a type of contemporary press.

As aforementioned, these kinds of sources allow exploration into the ways in which the polka was advertised, criticized and commented on in the contemporary press directly after the events and performances of the agents who are in focus of this research. Furthermore, it enables investigation into the places where it was performed and shows what kind of influence it had on audiences and society. A preliminary examination of these materials shows clearly that social dancing and the polka were widely commented on in the contemporary press in the middle of the nineteenth century across the globe, thus to better understand their role and importance in the process of the polka fashioning, a short presentation of each will be given in the appropriate chapter.

I mentioned before that biographies constitute another type of source that is relevant for my study. Of the biographies that I have looked at, the most useful in connection to my project are Adam Carse: *The Life of Jullien*, Hans Fantel: *Johann Strauss. Father and Son*, Anton Mayer: *Johann Strauss. Ein Pop-Idol des 19en Jahrhunderts*. Carse's biography is organised chronologically and divided according to the places where Jullien lived, which is a useful feature in connection with my project, since it makes it possible to follow the life of Jullien. This book also provides details about the people and institutions that he interacted with and was a part of. The same relates to two above mentioned biographies of Johann Strauss. The books on the family Strauss often include information about numerous polkas, composed and performed by both father and son Strauss. As for other agents such as Corelli and Cellarius, there are no biographies, thus it is very difficult to trace their life and careers. Scant information can be found in the contemporary press and literature.

Some interesting information on the polka can be found in theatrical writings of the time and this is the result of a strong interconnection between nineteenth century-stage practices and theatre and dance. The conscious use made of the polka - through performances of the works themselves, the journalistic and literary writings as well as litographic presentations of them - in the intertwined discourses about music, nationhood, society and

gender - rendered all aspects of the genre ideologically charged. The first attempts to apply the use of polkas in the theatrical context use were the following pieces: a farce "*La Polka*" by C.Z. Barnett or a one-act piece "*Polkomania*" by Joachim H. Stocqueler. Later, these plays formed part of the research of scholars of theatre studies such as Smigel.<sup>59</sup> Even more theatre plays and poems, using the polka as the main topic were written in Paris in 1844 and later. Examples include: "*Polkistes et Polkés*", "*La Polkomanie, folie en un acte*" by M. Paul de Kock. "*Polka en Province*", "*Les Polkeuses*", "*M. Gustave et la Polka*", "*Polkette et Bamboche*", "*Polka des Sabots*", "*Les Oiseaux de la nuit et les polkeuses des scènes publiques*" or "*Voyage autour de Pomaré*".<sup>60</sup> Vienna seems to be the only city where almost no theatrical literature related to the polka was available at the time of its popularity.

Back to written materials, another important primary source for this study are dance manuals. The nineteenth-century dance manuals can be considered a cultural product of its time and are rich in information. According to Gretchen Schneider,

*"the tremendous social diversity and cultural pluralism of the industrial era - with its immigrations and geographical mobility of populations - present social dance historians with complex issues of historical causality and group interrelationships in society. Those problems of community, family, and mass audiences must be the dance historian's concern in using nineteenth-century dance manuals for reconstructions that strive for re-creation of expressive forms of communication close to the lives of real people."*<sup>61</sup>

Hence, on the one hand dancing manuals hold clues to finding the additional documentation needed to solve notational and verbal puzzles in reconstructing its dances, as well as those questions of precise audience for the dances, performers, and performances style. They describe how contemporaries probably danced and what kind of steps, figures and techniques they used. They give an account of the contemporary interpretation, description and reception of a particular genre. On the other hand, they don't provide too much valuable information on the real life of contemporaries. To a certain degree they are limited to particular groups of society. Thus, the polka can certainly be a clear aesthetic form when taken directly from a book such as Cellarius's *Drawing Room Dances*; but it does not say anything about the real performance of people living in a small town in the suburbs of Paris or London? Hence, dance manuals constitute only one of many sources that allow the polka

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<sup>59</sup> Smigel, Libby (1996): *Minds Mad for Dancing: Polkomania on the London Stage*. In: *Journal of Popular Culture*, 30:3, 197.

<sup>60</sup> Malbert, G (1844): *Voyage Autour de Pomaré. Reine de Mabilie, Princesse du Ranelagh, Grande Duchesse de la Chaumière, Par la grâce de la Polka, du Cancan et autres Cachuas*. Paris: Gustave Havard (Edit.).

<sup>61</sup> Schneider, Gretchen (1981-1982): *Using Nineteenth-Century American Social Dance Manuals*. In: *Dance Research Journal*, Vol. 14, No. 1/2: 39-42.

fashion to be traced and understood with regards to social and political relations of the time.

The number of dance manuals written in the second half of the nineteenth century is rather scarce. As stated above, the polka was described for the first time by the dancing master, Cellarius, who published his dancing manual *La danse des salons* in 1847, providing clear descriptions of numerous social dances such as: waltz, polka and different mazurka forms. In 1847, the book was translated into English with the title *Drawingroom Dances* and its content was then later incorporated into and used in many other dance manuals subsequently published all over the world.<sup>62</sup> It seems that the diffusion and use of this book have played an extraordinarily important role in the spread of the polka among dancers across Europe.

For my research, a certain amount of information on the performances of Jullien, Strauss, Cellarius and Coralli was available in the archives of the capital cities. Some sources were found in the archives of the theatres and dance halls where these agents performed. As for Johann Strauss, the main information on his performances was found in Vienna. In this respect, there are excellent libraries and state archives such as the Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs, Wiener Stadt und Landesarchiv and Wiener Stadt- und Landesbibliothek, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek- Musiksammlung and, finally, Archiv der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde. Here, for example the newspapers and playbills from the theatres as well as the critics and comments on performances by Strauss can be found.

To trace the movements of Louis Jullien, the British archives were the most important. Any survey of dance in Britain now has to take note of sheet - cover printing company archives as well as collections in libraries, museums and other academic centres. These very specific archives usually complement national collections. Among many materials, playbills, critics and comments on performances by Jullien and partly by Strauss were found in the Victoria and Albert Museum Collections. In respect to Jullien, there are playbills from Drury Lane, the Haymarket, Her Majesty's Theatre, Lyceum Theatre and Covent Garden. The main library which was important for the research in connection to Jullien was The British Library, which holds the collection of the contemporary British press. The study was enriched by exploration of the collections from the Drury Lane Theatre and Exeter Hall, where Jullien performed, and which have been placed in the London Metropolitan Archives

In regard to Paris, the main archives and libraries that were visited for this research

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<sup>62</sup> e.g. the 1875 Melbourne publication by Roberts, *Manual of Fashionable Dancing*.

were: Bibliothèque Nationale de France- Estampes et Photographie, Opéra, Arts du Spectacle, Musique, Arsenal; Archives Nationales de France; and Archives de Paris. The National Library of France has a great archive online (Gallica) this was also used to research the polka in Paris.

Until now, press, biographies and national archives were referred to when mentioning the study of the polka in three capitals. However, it should not be forgotten that novels and memoirs of contemporary writers and artists such as Charles Dickens, Thomas Moore, Henry Mayhew, Mark Twain, Honoré Balzac or Franz Grillparzer contain interesting and often reliable accounts of social life and social dancing. Historical novels often contain references to traditional dances. However, these cannot be regarded as primary sources for the particular period in which the novel is placed unless the author was recalling a personal experience and setting it in the appropriate timespan. Although these kinds of sources are important they must be checked against contemporary accounts since the novelist is not necessarily concerned with presenting a faithful record of remembered events.

A final and highly relevant source through which I investigate how the fashion of the polka developed in these three European capitals are images, lithographs and caricatures presented on the covers of the sheet music and balls advertisements as well as these published as illustrations in various journals across Europe. They depicted the different ways in which the polkamania was commented, criticized and satirized.

### ***Cultural preconditions for the introduction of the polka***

While this thesis is concerned with the polka in the mid-century, there are good reasons to start with a closer look at the cultural and musical practices of the first half of the nineteenth century, which formed the backdrop to the phenomenon. In a certain way, the feeling of a common instability during the early nineteenth century was reflected at the same time in national politics and musical culture. Certain themes stand out in any analysis of European musical and cultural life during the decades around 1800. Firstly the diversification of concert life into new markets provided by an ever-expanding public. Here, the development of the so called „promenade concerts” began an obvious revolution in terms of both audience and program. In this sense Jullien was a musician who was responsible for opening up a whole new area of concert enterprise, in this case releasing a market whose existence had scarcely been considered before. Furthermore, the ballroom dancing practices were revolutionized by a new phenomenon „the closed hold”, introduced with the waltz. Finally, sweeping changes in the commercialization of sheet music intensified the differences between music written for the more and the less well educated; hence the middle classes started to play a more



important role in cultural life, dictating the new musical tastes, participating in and organizing different cultural events and performing music at homes due to the availability of cheap scores.

To discuss how the fashion for new dance forms and new cultural practices developed in the nineteenth century and why these and others were popular, one has to ask what made a social dance in the nineteenth century an important cultural practice?

*„Cultural practice generally refers to the manifestation of a culture or subculture, especially in regard to the traditional and customary practices of a particular ethnic or other cultural group. In the broadest sense, this term can apply to any person manifesting any aspect of any culture at any time.“*<sup>63</sup>

According to Storey *„dance is a form of artistic practice but it is also a social practice, a leisure activity, a ritual form of sexuality, a method of exercise and a means of communication, a way of speaking through the body“*<sup>64</sup>

In other words, to understand how and why the polka became fashionable within the round and couple dancing culture<sup>65</sup>, how it was appropriated in different cities and how it changed in the first half of nineteenth-century Europe, one has to examine the historical background to the cultural life before introducing the polka. The following introduction to cultural life in Vienna, Paris and London seeks to give only a brief overview, which will be then developed further in the next chapters and in association with the polka and places where it was performed.

According to William Weber, professor of history and author of numerous publications on nineteenth-century musical life, the increase in the number of concerts during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries differed in the three cities in ways that influenced their later development significantly.<sup>66</sup> In London, events increased earlier than in Paris or Vienna. In Vienna concerts came into being later than in the other two cities and with a greater participation of the middle class. At the same time, composers were under the patronage of the aristocracy and acted either as private institutions or as civic employees who had scant control over their professional opportunities. Very often their audience was small and composed mainly of members of the upper class. The middle classes had minimal formal authority over concerts and exercised little influence over musical taste.

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<sup>63</sup> Storey, John (2003): *Cultural studies and the study of popular culture*. University of Georgia Press: 136.

<sup>64</sup> Storey, John (2003): 136.

<sup>65</sup> it refers to dancing in the couple in the ballrooms with the steps choreographed precisely to the music.

<sup>66</sup> Weber, William (1975): *Music and the middle class. The social structure of concert life in London, Paris and Vienna*. London: Croom Helm London: 3.

Over time, several kinds of concerts developed. Virtuoso or benefit concerts were usually organized by one or two musicians and attracted wide public interest in the first half of the nineteenth century. The organizer performed as a soloist and his aim was to demonstrate his skills, musical talent and virtuosity. From the 1820s onwards, benefit concerts changed a great deal and became commercial undertakings. Musicians moved rapidly from one city to another and performed in opera houses several nights in a row.

A visible change which was the abandonment of vocal music in some repertoires and the focusing on programs consisting of instrumental music in others. This occurred in the first half of the nineteenth century. First exponents of this tendency were string quartets that excluded vocal music completely and considered their public a sort of cultural elite different from the general public.<sup>67</sup> Later, orchestral concerts moved gradually toward programs devoted to instrumental music.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, the most fundamental division with regards to the cultural life in the three capitals was social class. The prices charged for tickets created a sort of hierarchy of concerts and listeners. In each city, prices fell into three main categories which can be termed the lower, middle, and upper brackets.<sup>68</sup> In Weber's opinion, while the kinds of concert found in each city differed, the social standing of people who could afford them corresponded closely. The year 1848 marked a turning point not only in political history but was significant for changes in musical life. A transformation occurred within musical culture through the change of fundamental issues relating to taste, repertory and musical values as well as kinds of concerts such as music halls, venues with programs of opera excerpts and songs, cafe-concerts and ballad concerts organized for the general public. The most obvious marker of these changes was the rapid growth of public concerts<sup>69</sup> together with more widespread professionalisation of musical life, embracing the conservatory, the music shop and the manufacturer's sale, as well as the benefit concert and the subscription series.<sup>70</sup> As a consequence, by 1848, each city had a commercial concert scene, over which the middle classes and/or bourgeoisie exerted powerful control.

Cultural practices connected with couple dancing and balls were very important in the mid-nineteenth century. National dances appeared both in ballrooms and on stage. The public

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<sup>67</sup> Weber, William (2008): *The great transformation of musical taste. Concert programming from Haydn to Brahms*. New York: Cambridge University Press: 7.

<sup>68</sup> Weber (1975): 7.

<sup>69</sup> public concert - a concert taking place outside of the church or theatre and open to the public.

<sup>70</sup> Samson (2001): 11.

dance halls were visited now by the masses who twirled and jumped on the dance floors in outbursts of robustness and vital energy. Largely as a result of the great interest throughout Europe in various forms of national dance, and because of the need for the several famous ballet dancers of the time to find new variety (a contrast to the classical ballet which sent them round the capitals of Europe and beyond to make their fortunes), a number of national dances were taken to the stage. There they were stylized and made more spectacular for public consumption and - gaining sufficient acclaim - were simplified for use in the ballroom.

This interest in national dances was the result of romanticism. This movement in Europe brought in its wake a rise in the cultural independence and autonomy of the smaller nations. In the field of music, it was the Czechs who first arrived at a form of national renaissance. They were the first to turn back to their national past, to the old songs, legends and myths, finding in them inspiration for further national music. The Czechs, however, were not the only small nation which won universal recognition on the outskirts of the cultural world of Europe but also the Spaniards, Hungarians, Poles, Russians, Rumanians, Jugoslavs, Finns and Norwegians found a place in this development. The melody, harmony and rhythm of the inhabitants of these areas had definite folk qualities.

At the same time as ballrooms and dance halls resounded with dance music, the authors of dance and etiquette manuals started to pay more attention to the growing importance of ceremonial details in the home and ballroom.<sup>71</sup> A range of activities such as the use of the proper fork while eating, the right way of organizing and giving parties and balls and the correct way of delivering calling cards and issuing party invitations, developed and were defined and described. In every European country balls were organized for every occasion from town hall vice-regals receptions, outdoor forester's fete, goldfield miners' dance to railway goods - shed openings. They all would be made up entirely of couple dances. Ballroom guides not only took care of the proper description of gentlemen's and ladies' activities but also provided written instructions for how the dances should be executed.

With regards to dances, in 1815, the quadrille, originating from older French contredanse and cotillon figures was the most popular new dance in England and France. There were also other English country dances, as well as the mazurka and Scotch reel. Consisting of complex steps they enriched an evening's dancing. Assembly rooms, ballrooms,

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<sup>71</sup> De Garmo B., William (1875): *The dance of society: a critical analysis of all the standard quadrilles, round dances, 102 figures of le cotillon ("the German"), &c., including dissertations upon time and its accentuation, carriage, style, and other relative matter.* New York: W. A. Pond & co.

and Vauxhalls - outdoor theatrical performance spaces such as shady groves and caves that offered a cool retreat in the summer - proliferated in Europe and the United States to support the dance boom, as did dancing masters and their instruction books. The popularity of public dancing was manifested in France where, by 1789, it was claimed that there were some seven hundred dance halls in Paris alone.<sup>72</sup> Throughout Europe, social dancing had achieved an exceptional popularity and great innovation took place in social dancing.

Into the atmosphere of the early nineteenth century dance scene a breakthrough came with the advent of the waltz, an extraordinary novelty executed by couples. With the waltz, the closed hold, which has exerted a powerful influence upon most social forms of dance ever since, was introduced into the social dance. The waltz, which most probably had peasant origins, spread to society assembly rooms. Not for nothing was it observed that instead of deliberating, the Congress of Vienna danced. The fact that Congress danced is an indication of the extreme popularity of dancing with both the aristocracy and the middle classes throughout Europe. In her *Memoires des autres* (1840), the society authoress Comtesse Dash talks of the beau monde, declaring: "*Every day during the season there were two or three balls. During that winter one could go dancing for 63 nights in succession, never returning home until five or six in the morning...*"<sup>73</sup> Although the waltz was strongly criticized, it slowly arrived into the ballroom, supported by the occasional performance by a notable society figure. In the course of time waltzing was fully accepted. Nevertheless its sensuousness was tempered by other social dancing forms such as the galop, the mazurka and the polka.

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<sup>72</sup> Clarke, Mary/ Crisp, Clement (1981): *The history of dance*. United States of America: Crown Publishers: 101.

<sup>73</sup> de Dash, Comtesse (1840): *Memoires des autres*. Paris. In: Clark, Mary/ Crisp Mark 1981: 101.

# 1. Paris: The polka vogue in the city of myth, art and fashion

One of the Parisian fashion magazines used the following words to describe Paris in the mid-century:

*"the rendezvous of all celebrities, the dream-star of all young and ardent imaginations, the paradise of luxury and pleasure, the capital par excellence of the fashionable world, the queen of civilization...Above all, Paris amuses itself..."*<sup>74</sup>

In fact, life without enjoyment, comfort, and pleasure was nothing to the Frenchman of the nineteenth century. For Balzac, who lived in Paris and wrote many books and novels dealing with the realities of life in this city, Paris was *"a monstrous miracle, an astounding assemblage of movements, machines and ideas, the city of a thousand different romances...a restless queen of cities"*.<sup>75</sup> Furthermore, Walter Benjamin called Paris *"the capital of the nineteenth century"*. Paris was important to the process of shaping the nineteenth century and hence, its choice as a case study for the polka is entirely justified. But the city where the polka became a mania (as will be shown in the chapter), where fashions played a crucial role, would not have had this character if it were not shaped by the events of the previous period.

In the first half of the nineteenth century France was dominated by revolutionary movements. Starting from the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815), through the July Revolution (1830) and the Revolution of 1848 Paris changed from a city ruled by the upper classes to a capital city shaped by bourgeois power and furthermore, into a city where fashions constituted an essential part of life. The fashions of the Restoration (1815-1830) and the July Monarchy (1830-1848) started with a wave of aristocratic reaction but the dominant theme throughout was the triumph of the bourgeoisie and this class became an integral part of the image of Paris. Interestingly, the French middle class looked for support not upwards, but downwards, towards the petty bourgeoisie of traders and artisans, and to the poor, but on the other hand it also fraternised with the lesser aristocracy.<sup>76</sup> Thus, even if the fashions of the eighteenth century were essentially aristocratic, those of the nineteenth century were principally bourgeois and hence, the popularity of the polka in Paris must be analyzed in relation to the development of this new social class.

The face of Paris changed dramatically over the course of the nineteenth century.

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<sup>74</sup> La Corbeille, 1 December 1854: pp. 1-2 In: Steele, Valerie (1988): *Paris Fashions: A Cultural History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>75</sup> Balzac, Honore (2009): *History of the Thirteen*. USA/UK: Serenity Publishers: 32.

<sup>76</sup> Carew, Derek: *The consumption of music*. In: Samson, Jim (2001): *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music*. Cambridge: University Press: 238.

Firstly, it grew outwards, in a series of concentric circles. Secondly, the city was inundated by new arrivals; the population doubled between 1830 and 1860, from half a million to a million.<sup>77</sup> Nevertheless, its class structure remained clear. At the bottom was the proletariat, the class which had no property and which worked for the members of the other classes. This part of society developed mainly from the eighteenth century peasants and labourers who migrated to cities. The second sphere was dominated by the lower middle class that was composed mainly of wholesale merchants and their staffs, government employees, small bankers, clerks, notaries etc. Then there was the third circle and this class was the stomach of Paris, namely the upper-middle class or the so called bourgeoisie. It consisted of lawyers, doctors, advocates, businessmen, bankers and large traders and others.<sup>78</sup> At the top there was the nobility. There was a great difference between most members of upper and lower middle classes. It depended on the fact that different class levels were continually developing within the middle class. Some bourgeoisie could achieve a high standard of living and wealth, through specialization and occupational opportunities, comparable with that of the aristocracy. Others belonging to the same class made some more money than peasants and thus, this diversity deepened the distance between the aristocracy and the working class more than ever.<sup>79</sup>

In the first half of the nineteenth century, the working class made up some 75 to 80 percent of the total population, the bourgeoisie only about 15 percent.<sup>80</sup> Even though at the beginning of the nineteenth century in most parts of Paris members of different classes lived in the same buildings, on different floors: the bourgeois on the second floor, the working classes in the attic, there was increasing class segregation, sharper distinctions between wealthy residential districts in western and central Paris, and the working-class. Step by step the lower classes found themselves in constant and increasing confrontation with the middle class, that chose to portray the proletariat in ways that differentiated them from themselves.

Besides the original Parisians, Paris contained a population of foreigners which was a significant feature on the landscape of the capital. Furthermore, the city attracted visitors, enticed by the variety of physical and visual pleasures. Of these the majority were English,

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<sup>77</sup> For ex. Steele, Valerie (1988): *Paris Fashions: A Cultural History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 136 or Higonnet, Patrice (2002): *Capital of the world*. London, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 77.

<sup>78</sup> Harvey, David (2003): *Paris. Capital of Modernity*. New York and London: Routledge: 36-37.

<sup>79</sup> For the information on social classes in France see for example: Peter McPhee (1992): *A Social History of France: 1780-1880*. London: Routledge.

<sup>80</sup> Steele (1988): 137.

who, as the contemporary critic commented in a humorous way, were "*that class of restless English, who, having acquired a little money, now aspire to what they cannot attain in the strongly defined circles of their native country, consideration, distinction and fashion.*"<sup>81</sup> As a matter of fact, for the English, Paris became not just an adjunct, but a focus of English life. British travellers often noted features of daily common life which Parisians considered true. Interestingly, the descriptions of Paris in British guidebooks, diaries, letters and novels of this period form the most detailed portrait of a city ever drawn by writers of another nation.<sup>82</sup> This information is quite relevant in terms of the popularity of the polka in London, hence it will be discussed in the next chapters.

By 1830, Paris was a cultural and entertainment centre without rival. Continual carnivals, concerts and dances were staged there, and it boasted many more theatres than London for a population half the size.<sup>83</sup> With regard to spectacle, one of the factors that influenced nineteenth-century Paris becoming the capital of fashion was the social relationship between performers and spectators. The fashions acquired meaning at popular venues such as: the theatre, the park, the racetrack. In these places fashion, performers and spectators interacted: "*To be in Paris without seeing fashions, you have to close your eyes. The scenes, streets, shops, carriages, clothing, people, everything presents only that...*"<sup>84</sup> Thus, ordinary people participated in making fashion and the scenes of modern urban leisure were precisely those where fashion was displayed to greatest effect. Modern fashion emphasized erotic power and the charm of novelty and display. My study of the polka will show this clearly.

In nineteenth-century Paris, the pursuit of pleasure was an important key to fashion behavior. The city became a place of new, more expensive, and more bourgeois pleasures. For example Balzac wrote that in Paris "*people of all social statures, small, medium and great, run and leap and caper under the whip of a pitiless goddess, Necessity: the necessity for money, glory*

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<sup>81</sup> de Marguerittes (1855): *The ins and outs of Paris*. Philadelphia: Wm. White Smith: 321-322. Madame de Marguerittes, an English dramatic critic, was born in London in 1814, lived for many years in France and later moved to the United States. After successfully appearing in the opera of „La Gazza Ladra“, she retired from the stage and became the dramatic critic of the Philadelphia Sunday Transcript. She was a voluminous writer for the press. Among her books are „The Ins and Outs of Paris“, „Italy and the War of 1859 and „Parisian Pickings“ In: Warner, Charles Dudley (1896): *A Library of the World's Best Literature*. New York.

<sup>82</sup> Mansel, Philip (2001): *Paris Between Empires 1814-1852*. London: John Murray: 41.

<sup>83</sup> Wilson, Elizabeth (2000): *Bohemians: The Glamorous Outcast*. London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd: 29.

<sup>84</sup> Steele (1988): 25.

and amusement."<sup>85</sup> Although Balzac, a contemporary novelist and intellectual opportunist, believed in a "remedially organic conception of society"<sup>86</sup>, he was quite correct in his statement. Paris was volcanic city and it was "the biggest temple ever built to material joys and the lust of the eyes"<sup>87</sup>. In the early nineteenth century, Parisian boulevard theatres became the place for the middle and upper classes to make their appearance. People did not only go to the theatre to see the performances on stage. It was also a social ritual, and there were fairly strict rules concerning who could sit where and what was the appropriate mode of dress. On the other hand, people of all but the poorest classes attended the theatre, and there existed a wide range of theatres.<sup>88</sup> Another important social ritual was provided by the balls, in which participation followed strict rules of propriety. Usually balls involved group dances and the waltz. In middle and upper class balls the quadrille and other group dances were preferred to the waltz. There were balls for about six weeks in the year, and occasionally in the summer a bal champetre and balls at a village fete.

The outcome of the year 1844 was something that was very expected in the ball-room and public entertainment. The crisis in the repertoire, that began in the salons after the Restoration, resulted in the evolution of the public balls. In consequence there was an increased appetite for novelty. Thus, the arrival of the polka was enthusiastically welcomed. This dance was a total break with the rules of contredanse, which was no longer popular among the public. Music historians and musicologists mentioned in the introduction wrote that the success of the polka was so resounding that it caused the invention of words such as: polkomania or polka-morbus. Gasnault wrote that when the polka appeared on the Parisian scene there was a big celebration but nobody realized that this spectacular phenomenon of the season would cause a great transformation in the Parisian mentality and behaviour.<sup>89</sup> Therefore, it seems to me that a mix of different political, cultural and social changes made it possible for the polka to become fashionable and thus, to become a protagonist of some developments which took place in the Parisian society at that time.

The following chapter consists of three sections that analyze the polka fashion in Paris. Initially, the introduction of this new dance in Paris and its evolution through the years is

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<sup>85</sup> Balzac (2009): 311, 325.

<sup>86</sup> Higonnet (2002): 262.

<sup>87</sup> James, letter to Edmund Warren, cited In: Leon Edel (1977): *The Life of Henry James*. New York: Penguin, vol.2: 306.

<sup>88</sup> Steele (1988): 154.

<sup>89</sup> Gasnault, Francis (1986): *Guinguettes et lorettes: bals publics à Paris au XIX e siècle*. Paris: Aubier. 185.



studied. The main focus here is on the questions of how and why the polka was danced in Paris and where and by whom it was usually performed. Later, it deals with different trajectories such as the political and moral context of the new dancing fashion and its relation to women. The following research is based mainly on analysis of the activity of dancing masters and courtesans (lorettes) in Paris and on the comparison of the contemporary dancing manuals and books on Paris dances and the polka. The other very important resources for this study are the journals and contemporary writings and plays dealing with the polka dance. Finally, contemporary lithographs and caricatures are used to complete the research on the polka fashion in Paris. The chapter starts with the presentation of the ballroom scene in nineteenth-century Paris, introduction of the polka in the French capital and first reactions to the new fashion.

### 1.1. 1844, Polka fashion in Paris

*“A new dance, bearing the above name, has lately been introduced into fashionable society in Paris, where it has created a furor equal to any great event that has agitated the French metropolis for the last half century, not excepting the “three glorious days.” This dance, which much resembles the waltz in figure, is an original peasant dance of the Bohemian, and was first introduced into good society in Berlin. Baden-Baden, a celebrated watering place on the Rhine, initiated it into its salons last autumn; thence it travelled to Paris, where its merits and novelty have, in its mazy whirls, turned the heads of the French world of fashion.”<sup>90</sup>*

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These words were published on one of the music sheet covers of the polka composed by Cellarius in 1844. What seems clear from this comment is that the introduction of the polka turned Parisian heads and that it was an important event in the French capital. But is it possible that a simple Bohemian dance could have had such an effect, as described in this short contemporary remark, on the inhabitants of mid-century Paris? A closer look at the first months of its introduction in Paris should shed some light on this aspect.

The polka came to the French capital in 1844, in the time of the so-called July Monarchy and it took Paris by storm, this is at least how it was reported by the contemporary press and dance scholars. It was written, that it came out of nowhere and was accepted almost straight away. As was discussed in the introduction of this work, there is a sort of mystery surrounding the polka’s origins. Moreover it is not entirely clear which agents brought this new dancing fashion to the European cities. As for Perrot and Adrien, the polka was first encountered in Serbia. It is, however, not clear who danced it there and how it reached that

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<sup>90</sup> the cover sheet music of *The celebrated Bohemian Peasant Polka Dance composed to the piano forte by M. Cellarius (1844)*. New York: Atwill's Music Repository, 201 Broadway.

country. According to the same source, Cellarius, invented it and brought the choreography of the polka to Paris but the dance itself originated in Germany. Whoever brought the polka to Paris, one thing is clear - it seems that the introduction of the polka in the French capital did not have any signs of prior excitement, or lesser rejoicing and no kind of miracle preceded its arrival. The polka arrived suddenly in Paris and the same evening it was buoyantly applauded among Parisian society as indicated in the introductory quotation. It was also commented that „the demon of the polka took hold of all Parisians and it could be found on each street corner”<sup>91</sup> and „no sooner did six people get together, than for want of ideas and conversation and the young people took the giggling and polking”.<sup>92</sup> Furthermore, the media - brochures, feuilletons, prints, manuals, theatrical displays and vaudevilles etc. - promoted the polka, informing Parisians about the new dance and publishing guidelines and advices about how it should be danced. Also the literary scene was flooded by new theatrical plays and literary writings that represented the polka as the main theme.

According to *Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris*, the most important French musical journal of the time, the polka was brought to Paris by an Austrian dancer called Raab who spent a few years in Prague, working at the ballet du theatre of the Bohemian capital. He noticed a new dance among some Bohemian peasants and brought it on the Prague stage. Later he went with the polka to Paris and presented it to the French capital at the theatre l'Ambigu-Comique already in 1840. Illustration No. 1 presents him and his partner dancing the polka at this theatre. Clearly, Raab introduced the national, Bohemian and yet unmodified polka, performed in traditional Bohemian clothes. It seems, however, that in 1840, Paris was not yet ready for this new dance and in fact no more advertisements or information about the polka performances from that period are available. It is more probable that the Bohemian dance made its first appearance at the noble balls where it was presented as a kind of a salon joke.<sup>93</sup> Nevertheless, even if the polka had to wait another four years to become popular in the French capital, I strongly believe that its success at these kinds of balls favored its vogue and popularity.

Understanding of the polka’s evolution through the years can be achieved only by looking back into the cultural developments of the first half of the nineteenth century. Thus, before going into the details of why and how the polka became fashionable in nineteenth-

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<sup>91</sup> Perrot, Jules/Adrien, Robert (1845): *La Polka enseignee sans maitre, Son Origine, son developement, et son influence dans le monde d'apres M. Eugene Coralli, de l'academie royale de musique*. Paris: Aubert.

<sup>92</sup> de Marguerittes (1855): 360.

<sup>93</sup> *Revue et Gazette Musicale*, May 20, 1844.

century Paris, I would like to shed some light on the ballroom scene and concert life of this city.



Illustration No. 194

<sup>94</sup> Bibliotheque de l'Opera No. 1.924, the image presents the dancing master M. Raab dancing the polka for the first time in 1840 in Paris.

### ***Ballroom scene and concert life in nineteenth-century Paris***

Paris in the nineteenth century was the dance capital of Europe. Dancing was exceedingly fashionable and it occurred in a wide variety of contexts including official, charity, and embassy balls, public and private social occasions, as well as stage performances in multiple theatres throughout the city. By 1794 numerous public balls had opened and they catered to a certain clientele which was either constant, or rotated depending on the day of the week.<sup>95</sup> The most fashionable young men and the most elegant women decided that they would dance at the public balls since these were the only places where dancing was happening. There they amused themselves and socialised with one another. Nevertheless this mixing did not dissolve the boundaries of class. To disguise their social status, they preferred to dress as carelessly as possible and to attend in large parties. Also, in 1795 setting up of the Société des Concerts du Conservatoire<sup>96</sup> was established. It saw itself as a group of élite players performing for an élite audience. Its concerts were carefully rehearsed, its repertoire was confined to the orchestral works of the classical masters and attendance at its eight annual concerts was limited to the 1.100 subscribing members of the Society.<sup>97</sup>

Those who were not too particular about the quality of the music they heard had plenty of opportunities to gratify their tastes at the *popular concerts* promoted by hard-headed entrepreneurs on a strictly commercial basis. These were given in ballrooms during the winter and sometimes in parks during the summer. Admission fees were kept low enough to attract large audiences which included artisans but, more characteristically, younger unmarried members of the lower middle class, shop assistants or clerks from counting-houses. Though such concerts did not qualify for government assistance they were tolerated by the authorities as a means of providing harmless amusement for the masses. Among the various impresarios the most prominent was Philippe Musard. Before 1830 he lived in London, learning his trade as an orchestral director and organizer of balls. Returning to Paris, he came to the fore during the carnival season of 1832, when he organized a series of fancy-dress balls at the Théâtre des Variétés.<sup>98</sup> The subject of promenade concerts will be dealt more in depth in the chapter devoted to the polka evolution in London, because in fact it was in London that the polka became very popular at this kind of venues.

Back to the Parisian ballroom scene, during the carnival there were masked balls at

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<sup>95</sup> Gasnault, Francis (1986): 13-14.

<sup>96</sup> a symphony orchestra established in Paris in 1828 by F. A. Habeneck.

<sup>97</sup> Hemmings, F.W.J. (1987): *Culture and Society in France 1789-1848*. Leicester University Press. 288.

<sup>98</sup> Hemmings (1987): 289.

every theatre, besides those at public rooms, such as Musard's, Valentino's, the Casino, etc. Of all these, the bal Musard was the most remarkable and the most characteristic. An immense space, well decorated, brilliantly lighted - a delicious orchestra, which, for certain kinds of music, had become proverbial, and which, before the Strausses and Julliens had risen in imitation, had no equal, give Musard's ball room great advantage over all its impure fellows.

*"Here, men and women were all in fanciful, gay, and even rich costumes - the women with very bare shoulders, and the slightest apology for a mask, biding but just enough of the face to give the piquancy to the rest. The women here were noisy, rough, and bold...With a loud crash, the orchestra began. Then, in mad whirl, eighty or a hundred couple started, with shouts and yells, as if impelled by the infernal power, that sent Dante's damned in one eternal whirl, through the murky air..."<sup>99</sup>*

The bal de l'Opéra was very different. Around the end of the eighteenth century the balls de l'Opéra, that were cancelled after the Revolution, were reinstated. Since the bal de l'Opéra was the model for all Carnival balls, the public exacted the highest standards for its yearly incarnations. The contemporary Jules de Marguerittes described it with these words:

*"Though here, after your curiosity is gratified- unless you have inspired some secret passion which is waiting this opportunity to declare itself - or unless you are gifted with that conversation which keeps with afloat, and throws rapartee from one to the other as jugglers do their balls- I question whether you will not yawn at the end of the first hours. Before the second is over, you will be fast asleep...For whom a bal masqué is still what it used to be, in more corrupt, perhaps more courtly times - a medium of intrigue, of love, and of wit - all this is only to be seen in the saloon, or foyer...there are many great ladies- ladies of historical names and reputation - brought here by some overwhelming passion, or bitter jealousy. There are many giddy young married women of the Chaussée d'Antin here, because les grandes dames are here. All the very great actresses are here..."<sup>100</sup>*

Between 1815 and 1830, the public of the bal grew increasingly varied: rich, bourgeois, dandies, tourists and actresses, dancers, some of whom had turned courtesans, as well as lorettes and grisettes, who could afford the necessary attire, joined old and new aristocrats at the Parisian carnival of the Opera. Social dancing played no part in the bal de l'Opéra and the police in attendance at these functions enforced the official ban. Sometime between 1815 and 1820, the event gained the appellation of bal d'usage. People walked about in the foyer, at least when the crowds permitted such freedom of movement.<sup>101</sup>

During the latter half of the 1820s the bal d'usage at the Opéra was criticized and consequently, by 1831 masqued carnival balls were authorised at nine of the capital's theatres, and the clientèle bourgeoisie, which had begun to attend the Opéra ball regularly,

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<sup>99</sup> de Marguerittes (1855).

<sup>100</sup> de Marguerittes (1855): 128-137.

<sup>101</sup> Cordova, Davies Sarah (1999): *Paris Dances. Textual Choreographies in the nineteenth-century French Novel*. San Francisco, London, Bethesda: International Scholars Publications. 117.

defected, thus aggravating the institution's loss of prestige. On two separate occasions the Opéra witnessed a danced riot. One event took place in 1833 when the audience - bored with the programme performances - called on the orchestra to play a lively galop and invaded the stage forcing the professional dancers to abandon their performance and space. This demonstrated how important dancing was to Parisian society.<sup>102</sup> The second expression of love for dancing appeared in 1837 when Mira<sup>103</sup> and Musard announced a *mardi gras ball* with dancing for all at the Opéra. Five thousand people waited impatiently for the opening of the doors to the Opéra. In fact the ball had such an appeal that the other theatres found themselves empty and the dancing finished at 6 a.m.<sup>104</sup> From 1840 to 1847 the bals de l'Opéra reigned as the chief Parisian attractions of the year. Three balls were particularly well-attended: the first of the season, samedi gras and mi-carême. Often, thousands of people queued to participate in the event and even the high price of tickets did not prevent them from attending the ball. Costumes and masks continued to disguise identity. The dancers ruled the floor and police raided to bring order when the dancing appeared too raucous and dissolute.<sup>105</sup>

Despite the bals de l'Opera other kinds of venues survived all around Paris. By the 1820s, the public participated weekly in the balls present in most quartiers of Paris. The location of any given public ball tended to determine its clientele. The dancing calendar divided the year into two seasons and the great variety of public balls meant that they were not all bals populaires. During the winter (October to mid-April) the *cabarets-dansants* or the *salles d'hiver*<sup>106</sup> opened in the centre or in the suburbs, whereas during the summer (from the beginning of May to the last days of September) the *guinguettes*<sup>107</sup> in the outskirts of the capital, and the *bals champêtres*, which replaced the *jardins d'agrément* during the late 1820s and early 1830s, enjoyed the greatest popularity.<sup>108</sup> Opening hours varied also according to

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<sup>102</sup> A.N., AJXIII 182, lettre du ministre des beaux-arts au préfet de police 8 janvier 1833 In: Gasnault, François (1986): *Guinguettes et lorettes: bals publics à Paris au XIX siècle*. Paris: Aubier. 67.

<sup>103</sup> the contractor of the balls in Paris.

<sup>104</sup> Gasnault (1986): 80.

<sup>105</sup> Cordova: 142.

<sup>106</sup> The salles d'hiver sought a distinguished clientele, although few succeeded. They ended up falling between the bals champêtres and the guinguettes (Gasnault 91-92).

<sup>107</sup> Guinguettes were other establishments, courting a poorer urban population and charged for each dance. Gasnault asserts that the term probably derived from "guiguet" or "guinguet" which signifies a sourish wine. The Parisian guinguette was indeed a place where one drank and danced.

<sup>108</sup> Gasnault (1986): 91-92.

the season. Three specific days defined the public balls' weekly rhythm. Sundays were generally family occasions. On Mondays, when the workshops closed early or the workmen chose not to work, deciding to "*faire la saint-Lundi*," the balls were mostly frequented by the working classes. Instead, shop assistants preferred Thursdays, which they shared with students, who also danced away their Monday evenings.

After 1830, the capital's theatres offered Parisians other venues apart from the bal de l'Opéra. At the time, the theatre Variétés was very popular and there the young bourgeoisie met for theatrical performances and the patrons actively participated in the ball led by the accompaniment of Musard's orchestra. By 1837 the public was tired of the bals-spectacles at the theatres and at the Opéra, but not of dancing. The deluge of publicity, revues, guide books, entrepreneurs and dancing masters fostered the popularity of all public balls to such an extent that during the decade preceding the revolution of 1848, the Parisian public ball reached its apogee.

Back to types of venues in Paris, *musical soirées* were also a constant feature of social life under the July Monarchy, as contemporary engravings testify. Their quality varied roughly in accordance with the social status of the hostess. In the best houses, professional musicians would be engaged to play when the company was particularly brilliant.<sup>109</sup> At the very beginning of the nineteenth century a few *private balls* began to take place and socially elite drawing rooms (salons) reopened. Private balls, splendid and dazzling, suddenly flourished and a real passion for dance and virtuosity took hold. By 1805, the demand for dancing lessons was such that, although the city was home to over four hundred dancing masters, there was a shortage.<sup>110</sup>

The repertory of social dances at Paris balls in the first half of the nineteenth century included: the waltz, the béarnaise, the sauteuse, the fandango, the boléro, the montférine imported from Piemont, the viennoise, the cosaque, and the rond de Rochas.<sup>111</sup> Moreover, the

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<sup>109</sup> Gasnault (1986): 294.

<sup>110</sup> Guilcher, Jean-Michel (1969): *La Contredanse et les renouvellements de la danse française*. Paris: Mouton. 155.

<sup>111</sup> Béarnaise - the traditional dances in Béarn, French town located in the Pyrenees.

Sauteuse - a type of waltz, also called the Hop Waltz. It became popular in the 1820s and later had a resurgence around 1856.

Fandango - a lively couple dance traditionally accompanied by guitars and castanets or hand-clapping. By the late eighteenth century it had become fashionable among the aristocracy in Spain and elsewhere in Europe.

Boléro - a slow Latin dance which originated in Spain in the late eighteenth century.



minuet, a seventeenth-century ceremonious and graceful French dance, experienced renewed interest, but the three most popular dances were: the gavotte, anglaise and contredanse, known as quadrille.<sup>112</sup> The gavotte takes its name from the Gavots, the inhabitants of Gapençais in upper Dauphiné and was first described in the late sixteenth century. In the baroque time it became very popular as a court dance. It's rebirth of popularity took place in the nineteenth century, but it had almost nothing in common with the sixteenth century version.<sup>113</sup> Anglaise was a term used in eighteenth century France to distinguish the English style of contredanse in which couples faced each other in rows.<sup>114</sup> Finally, the contredanse known as French quadrille of four couples in a rectangular formation has already been anticipated among the primitive peoples as a fertility charm. In the nineteenth century this form of dancing became very popular and evolved into forms that used elements of the waltz.

All in all, a common quality of most of these dance forms, despite the waltz, was the rather formal and distant hold and treatment of a partner. In fact, many of them were performed at the courts, used in ballets and danced by the aristocracy. In consequence, there was a great emphasis on technical accomplishment and so salons began to offer dance spectacles in addition to general dancing. Professional male dancers were invited to perform at these salons and the execution of their steps took precedence over the choreography of the dance. Thus, they were not only in a certain way officially accepted and repolished but the technical aspect and brilliance of their performances reduced most guests to the role of spectators, for at least part of the ball.

During the Empire (1804-1814) and the Restoration (1814-1830), on the ballroom floors of the salons, the dance served a new and different function. It cemented social ties between the noblesse d'épée<sup>115</sup>, the noblesse de robe<sup>116</sup> and the haute bourgeoisie. Dancing

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Montférine – simple and elegant Italian dance which originated in Piedmont but was popular also in the Nice region. Style of bourree danced by the Milanese ladies in a very charming and graceful way.

Cosaque – in Ukrainian Kozachok is a fast Ukrainian folk dance. It was often performed in the eighteenth century in French ballets and became very popular after the Russian troops occupied Paris in 1813.

Rond de Rochas – under the name les ronds is concealed the ancient circular movement of one or all dancers, clockwise or counter-clockwise (Sachs: 422).

<sup>112</sup> Guilcher (1969): 156.

<sup>113</sup> Sachs, Curt (1963): *World History of the Dance*. translated by Bessie Schönberg. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. : 389.

<sup>114</sup> Craine, Debra/ Mackrell, Judith (2010): *The Oxford Dictionary of Dance*. UK: Oxford University Press.

<sup>115</sup> the class of traditional or old nobility in France during the Middle Ages and the Early Modern periods.



was a convenient leveler and became a sign of social acceptance and even of education:

*"People who are set apart by learning and education can compete on the basis of talent in a contredanse, as long as their training and disposition are equal, and have the same chances of distinguishing themselves. By the logic of historical conjuncture, dancing naturally becomes the first of the arts and is of the first necessity".*<sup>117</sup>

Furthermore, after 1821, the high society balls' emphasis on technique diminished: people had to be kept occupied and needed to be involved in the activity of the ball.<sup>118</sup> In this period, the quadrille was the most popular dance. It was danced by eight dancers and initially meant the placement of a group of dancers in a square formation. By 1830 the form of this dance finally seemed fixed, meaning more emphasis on changing places and moving through space with different patterns.<sup>119</sup> But it was in fact the waltz that gained an extraordinary popularity across early nineteenth-century Europe. It was loved as much by Parisians as by Viennoises and was high in favour in Paris in 1830.<sup>120</sup> A German writer and traveller commented that *„this love for the waltz and this adoption of the German dance is quite new, it has become one of the vulgar fashions since the war, like smoking".*<sup>121</sup> It is therefore not surprising that court circles resisted the waltz.

In his novel *Le Bal de Sceaux*, Honoré de Balzac emphasized the importance of balls during the 1820s. They fulfilled the social function of offering women an arena where they could dance in group formations, rather than alone before the assembled guests. This space enabled meeting and touching other participants who were not necessarily of the same social origins.<sup>122</sup> Thus, the widespread popularity of the waltz during the nineteenth century can, in part, be gauged by numerous references to the freedom it gave performers and spectators alike in literary texts, memoirs, travel guides, dance instruction manuals and the press. The couples danced facing one other, in closed couple formation and they held one another tightly so that their legs passed between their partner's. This continuous touching of the other's body exhilarated the dancers. It seems that this same quality that made the polka fashionable in the

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<sup>116</sup> person or family made noble by holding certain official charges.

<sup>117</sup> *"Des gens que séparent les connaissances et l'éducation peuvent rivaliser de talent dans une contredanse avec, à entraînement et disposition égaux, les mêmes chances de s'y distinguer. Par la logique de la conjuncture."*

<sup>118</sup> *Journal des dames et des modes*, February 20, 1822: 80 qtd. in Guilcher: 170.

<sup>119</sup> Cordova (1999): 54.

<sup>120</sup> Vuillier, Gaston (1898): *A history of dancing from the earliest ages to our own times*. London: William Heinemann: 289.

<sup>121</sup> E. M. Arndt (1804) in: Nettle, Paul (1947): *The Story of dance music*. New York: Philosophical Library.

<sup>122</sup> Cordova (1999): 57

French capital and this will be analyzed in the next sections which are devoted to the first reactions to and developments in the polka fashion in Paris.

### *First reactions of Parisian society to the polka fashion*

The French history of the polka starts with its official arrival in Paris. It was already shown in the previous section that it was a very spontaneous arrival and it had two main characteristics. On the one hand it was almost simultaneously accepted in both salons and public balls; thus it was danced by almost all social strata. On the other hand its rapid and elegant introduction in Paris was articulated almost immediately in the so called media. Most probably, never before had a dance benefited from such great media support in form of feuilletons, brochures, engravings, vaudevilles, literary works, theatrical plays and press articles.<sup>123</sup> Everybody spoke about the polka, lesser and greater journals wrote about it and it flooded the literature of almost all social classes.<sup>124</sup> All these writings about the polka aimed, on the one hand, at informing and teaching people how to dance the polka in a pleasant and proper way. On the other hand they made fun of the new Parisian fashion and treated it as a commercial good. In a certain way, this kind of literature became fashionable together with the polka.

Without a doubt, the polka became fashionable at a time when the development of press and the explosion of cultural goods of consumption was taking place. Thus, the economic dimension of the cultural history of nineteenth-century Europe has to be taken into consideration when analyzing fashions of the period. After all there were but three countries that can be said to have had a newspaper press - England, France and the United States. In France the press had more influence and more importance than anywhere else, and the members of the press were more respected, more highly thought of, than in almost any other country. The editor of the French journal had to be well-informed, educated, and well read; he had to possess superior knowledge to the public who read his publication.<sup>125</sup> Though the circulation of newspapers in France was not to be compared to that of newspapers in America, they were read by a larger portion of educated and informed people and thus were of great importance in shaping the public taste.

Three important French journals used in this research are: *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris*, *La France Musicale* and *Le Ménestrel*. It can be noted that they were all specialist journals focused on music and they have been intentionally chosen for this project. With the

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<sup>123</sup> Gasnault (1986): 186.

<sup>124</sup> Almanach de la Polka 1845: 48.

<sup>125</sup> de Marguerittes (1855): 287.

development of specialist press the popularity of the polka became one of its main subjects. As a matter of fact, never before has the polka evolution been analysed by using press sources. Below I present the main specialist journals used in this work.

The founding of the *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris* was part of a sudden expansion of the musical press in the 1830s, triggered in part by the success and example of Fétis's *Revue*, which first appeared in 1827. Earlier attempts to set up a specialist musical press were sporadic and mostly short-lived. *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris* was founded by Maurice Schlesinger in 1834 as the *Gazette musicale*. It was the most powerful music journal in France and was published until December 1880. It did not have only one main editor, but was edited by no less than fifteen well-known personalities including Joseph Mainzer, Adolphe Adam, Berlioz, Liszt, Castil-Blaze, and Adolph Bernhard Marx. The journal's readership was, however, small by the standards of daily newspapers and it produced 875 copies per issue. Anyway, as a document of almost half a century of musical thought it is unrivalled.

Its main competitor *La France Musicale* was by far the most popular weekly music journal with 1662 copies per issue and it was published from December 1837.<sup>126</sup> It was founded by the Escudier brothers who wrote several works of musicography together. It also included musical biographies and essays. The third important newspaper used in this research was *Le Ménestrel* with 500 copies per issue.<sup>127</sup> This journal, published by the Heugel publishing house, equalled the *Revue* in breadth. From the 1860s the two journals, both published weekly, vied one other in terms of quality and scope; after the *Gazette*'s closure, *Le Ménestrel* took its place as France's most prestigious music journal. *Le Ménestrel*, became the longest-running and most prestigious weekly journal of them all, closing finally in 1940. Its first issue, on 1 December 1833, contained little which augured such status. It aimed to tempt the purchasers with samples from collections of salon pieces, and to provide an urban readership with new items concerning Parisian musical life, with brief and innocuous reviews of major premieres.<sup>128</sup>

Returning to the readership of these journals, the figures given before do not necessarily reflect the exact number of potential readers. By paying a token entry fee, members of the public could read the latest issues of newspapers and periodicals in a cabinet de lecture (reading room). Newspapers and periodicals were also available in cafés,

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<sup>126</sup> AN, Paris, BB17 A 145/1 In: Elli, Katharine (1995): *Music criticism in nineteenth-century France*. La Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris, 1834-80. Cambridge: University Press.

<sup>127</sup> Elli (1995): 1.

<sup>128</sup> Elli (1995): 45.

restaurants and reading circles. This, however, makes it obvious that only a certain type of people could read them there. All in all, it is clear that these specialist music periodicals reached a limited and specific audience. Therefore, to provide a plausible picture of the development of the polka in Paris they need to be complemented by additional sources such as novels, memoirs, lithographs and dance manuals.

Besides these three main journals another few of lesser importance were used for this research and these are: *La France Théâtrale*, *La Sylphide*, *Le Mercure des Théâtres* and *La Presse Musicale*. Again, they are all specialist magazines focused on cultural, theatrical and musical life in Paris. *La Sylphide* was founded as a weekly magazine on fashion, literature, theatre and music in 1839 by Hippolyte de Villemessant.<sup>129</sup> This magazine enjoyed an enthusiastic but short popularity and lasted only until 1844. Thus, it is only an additional source used mainly to analyze initial reactions to the polka in Paris. A further three magazines were journals of lesser significance, therefore no additional description of them is needed. They were devoted mainly to theatrical and some musical events and hence, they partly enable tracing of places (theatres and ballrooms) where the polka was danced and performed.

Another important source to trace the fashion of the polka is provided by contemporary literary writings such as poems, feuilletons and treatises on the polka that regulated its usage and exercise. They show that the polka motif attracted not only readers, but also the media. The authors of this kind of literature were attracted by its popularity and used the polka to make themselves fashionable and more commercially viable, increasing in this way the saleability and popularity of their products. For example, *Le Mercure des théâtres* reported that as the first edition of "*La Physiologie de la Polka*" appeared and disappeared, so did the second edition of this short story written by Auguste Vitu and Paul Farnese.<sup>130</sup> Another example of press and media self-fashioning through the use of the polka is a brochure with 150 epigrams about it in the same year of its appearance in Paris. Hence, the same writings were not only published but also advertised by the press to guarantee quick consumption and sale, and consequently financial profits. However, in spite of its commercial usage, they reveal also different aspects related to the polka and its execution.

Furthermore, it can be noted that the polka also became also a leitmotif for various theatre playwrights across Paris. For example, on April 28, 1844 *Le Mercure des Théâtres*

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<sup>129</sup> D'Aurevilly Amédée Barbey, Jules (1973): *Premiers articles, 1834-1852*. Presses Univ. Franche-Comté: 321.

<sup>130</sup> "*La seconde édition de la Physiologie de la Polka de MM. Auguste Vitu et Paul Farnèse ne fera sans doute, comme la première, que paraître et disparaître. Le succès de ce charmant opuscule est inouï.*" In: *Le Mercure des Théâtres*, February 21, 1844: 4.

announced the performance of a vaudeville in one act *"Polkistes et Polkés"*. On May 30, 1844 it already advertised another new play with the polka as the main protagonist: *"La Polkomanie, folie en un acte"* by M. Paul de Kock. Writings about the polka mushroomed and further plays and literature including the polka that became fashionable were: *"Polka en Province"*, *"Les Polkeuses"*, *"M. Gustave et la Polka"*, *"Polkette et Bamboche"*, *"Polka des Sabots"*, *"Les Oiseaux de la nuit et les polkeuses des scènes publiques"* or *"Voyage autour de Pomaré"*.<sup>131</sup> It is not my aim to discuss each of these works but this vast literature is mentioned here to show, on the one hand, how skilfully the current, popular topics were marketed as consumption goods. On the other hand it also proves that the Parisian society was very interested in the polka and hence, not only was it danced but people also read anything that dealt with it. Finally, the titles of these works, being often ironic, point to dissatisfaction with the socio-political situation in the contemporary Paris.

It is already known that poets, writers and artists criticized political, economic and social issues in their works. Indeed, a short glance at the titles presented above confirms how skilfully the new fashion for the polka was used to criticize the socio-political situation in nineteenth-century France. Among many things the opinion-making bodies criticized the reign of the „bourgeois king“ Louis-Philippe I (1830-1848) who was at once progressive and conservative. On the one hand, at the beginning of his reign he had strong sympathy for the French Revolution. He had very liberal ideas and was usually surrounded by merchants and bankers and was much loved by the people. This was in contrast with his government which was very conservative and monarchical. This divergence had an impact on the change to his ruling strategy and hence, he became more rigid in the course of time. This resulted in his unpopularity as king over the years. His reign witnessed a widening income gap, deterioration in the living conditions of the working class and economic crisis in 1847. This instability concluded with the 1848 Revolutions and the creation of the Second Republic with the reign of Napoleon III whose regime was authoritarian in nature and limited freedom of the press and assembly.

With reference to the aforementioned works, they were not only the expression of unhappiness with the political situation, but they put into words many concerns related to social issues such as gender and morality. Most of these titles referred to women and eventually to their relation with men. They evoked mainly negative, critical and immoral connotations. Women, polkistes, polkettes or “night birds” who seduce men through the polka

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<sup>131</sup> Malbert (1844).

were represented as dangerous and almost wicked. Furthermore, the immoral dimension of the polka was so strong that it was not only expressed in the contemporary literature and press but it was also clearly reflected in lithographs and pictures made by different artists and caricaturists of the time. It seems that this feature of the polka was very important in the process of making it fashionable therefore I decided to devote the entire last section to it.

Positively, it was said that the polka was created for humanity as much as the steam engine or the roads<sup>132</sup>. According to Eugène Sue, the sudden and boisterous eruption of the polka had an enigmatic aspect.<sup>133</sup> Le Menestrel commented that the polka made a furore in Paris, became a sort of „religion” and that no lady, whether noble or haughty, would refuse to initiate it.<sup>134</sup> People demanded the polka noisily and loudly and bombarded the dancing masters from morning to evening with request to be taught this new vogue. Cellarius - an important dancing master - declared that he earned 30000 francs from polka teaching.<sup>135</sup> There was a funny story published on that in the *"La Psychology de la Polka"*. A certain Gabriel Delessier who was a prefect of the police offered to write a list of regulations for the polka exercises and on how to drive the car to the great dancing master Cellarius. According to Delessier, the cars were to be decorated with an inscription "l'étoile polkaire".

Until now it was shown that the polka generated great enthusiasm and its positive reception was used by different media making it a consumption good. However, besides the enthusiasm, some journals and authorities expressed negative opinions about the polka. It remains to be seen whether these negative views influenced the development of the polka's popularity in Paris. The same press that praised the polka, repeated continuously that it was a rage, mania, contagion, exposition of femininity and madness. It was written that the word "polka" in itself caused palpitation of women's hearts<sup>136</sup> and in consequence it created a rage and a universal epidemic that no one could stop. It was commented for example that:

*"Since the last November, this miserable polka is danced everywhere, in Ranelagh, at Chaumière, in the Mabille, by Cellarius, in Palais-Royal, at the Vaudeville, Gymnase, l'Ambigu, la Gaité, Variétés and at the Opéra. It is danced even at the Concert Vivienne. At the Palais de l'Industrie thousands of polkeurs of both sexes dance the polka-monstre."*<sup>137</sup>

Moreover, the press described the polka as an *"insipid"* dance, imported to the Parisian salons from abroad. It was commented for example that it was *"a ridiculous dance, devoid of*

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<sup>132</sup> Polka Almanach 1845: 60.

<sup>133</sup> Eugène Sue (2004): *The Mysteries of Paris*. London: Kessinger Publishing, 2004.

<sup>134</sup> for ex. Le Menestrel, March 10-16, 1844: 4.

<sup>135</sup> Perrot/Adrien (1845): 14.

<sup>136</sup> Polka Almanach 1845: 546.

<sup>137</sup> Journal des débats politique et littéraires, August 26, 1844: 3.

any charm and those who danced it, resembled small mannequins bouncing in its rhythm".<sup>138</sup> Perrot described the phenomenon as a complete epidemic that took Paris: "men roam Paris in search of the polka, women swoon over it and the young people grow sickly".<sup>139</sup> Le Mercure wrote with fear that the invasion of the polka is dangerous to all its pupils and that it would soon dethrone the waltz, the galop and the quadrille.<sup>140</sup> Some of the journalists were even afraid that the polka heralded the end of the world. They feared that it would make the sun stop shining and that without light everything would die on earth.<sup>141</sup>

It was reported that in the dancing schools there were no more accidents in the forms of painful tensions of ligaments or feet obstruction caused by polka dancing, instead, there was the so called polka-morbus. It was a fashionable sickness and it was of a good taste to be affected by it. The main characteristics of this illness were: pale appearance, melancholy and despondency. According to a young doctor that dealt with this plague, the polka morbus or the epidemy of the polka-morbus would take place for at least 5-6 weeks and the only medicine against it was dancing the polka all day long.<sup>142</sup> The doctors studied the case of the polka-morbus to become specialists and thus, to have rich and elegant clientele. This is a good example of the way in which the polka was commercialised.

Another interesting reaction to and commercial use of the polka in Paris was the quick development of variants of names for the dance. Charles-Francois Lhomond wrote in his "*Eléments de Grammaire française*" that within six weeks of the arrival of the polka in Paris, the verb "polker" was enthroned: "*Je polke, tu polkes, je polkai, vous polkâtes, je polkasse*"<sup>143</sup> which would be a simple conjugation of the verb „to polk“. In the meantime other three important words came into existence: „Polkeur, Polkiste, Polkant“. Certain M. Auguis, who was

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<sup>138</sup> „La polka, l'insipide polka, date de cette même année 1841. Elle fut importée dans nos salons par des étrangers qui déjà y avaient naturalisé la valse à deux temps, et nous offraient aussi la mazurka, - danse nationale au moins, celle-là, - dont le nom seul fait palpiter d'aise toutes les jolies poitrines polonaises. Pendant longtemps on fit cercle, dans beaucoup de salons, pour voir exécuter cette polka ridicule, danse entièrement dépourvue de charme et qui fait ressembler ceux qui la sautent à autant de petits mannequins à ressort...” In: Grenville, E. de (Vte). Histoire du journal la Mode. 1861: 546.

<sup>139</sup> „Les hommes couraient Paris à sa découverte, les femmes se pâmaient, les jeunes filles s'étiolaient: c'était une épidémie complète.” In: Perrot /Adrien (1845): 12.

<sup>140</sup> „La Polka déborde (...) Elle nous envahit, elle nous assiege et nous tenaille! (...) Voyez la drôlesse! Ella a forcé Mercure à déposer ses ailes, et à prendre des éperons pour aller danser cette nouvelle cracovienne qui vient de détrôner d'un seul coup la valse, le galop et le quadrille.” In: Le Mercure des Théâtres, March, 14 1844: 3.

<sup>141</sup> Polka Almanach (1845): 55.

<sup>142</sup> Physiologie de la Polka (1844): 262.

<sup>143</sup> Physiologie de la Polka (1844): 258.

the president of the Linguistic Society in Paris at the time, carried on a semantic analysis of these three words and gave definitions of them. The Polkeur was supposed to be a good polka dancer. The Polkiste both danced the polka and studied its history, theory and method. Finally, Polkant was the adjective of the word polka.<sup>144</sup> As a matter of fact, it seems that from the very moment the polka appeared in Paris, a great discussion started whether one should use the word "polkeur" or "polkiste" and many people used them interchangeably. However, according to the authors of the article in *La Revue de la Presse*, the real difference between these two words was the same as the difference between "virtuoso" and "amateur". A Polkeur was somebody who just danced the polka, the polkiste was one who dedicated his life to the study of this dance, to know its nature and different forms including local and national variants.<sup>145</sup>

Without doubt, the exaggerated and ironic tone of many of these comments was used for a reason. As a matter of fact it could be asked why there was so much exaggeration in relation to the polka. Even if the content of all these stories should be taken with a pinch of salt, their exaggerated tone indicates something about Paris and its inhabitants and should be afforded great attention. Parisians loved fashion and hence, it is highly possible that many of the above phenomena, most probably mainly among bourgeois and aristocratic ladies, really existed. Moreover, all these forms of irony and exaggeration give the impression that the Parisians were fed up with the old fashions, politics and social situation and thus the exotic polka heralded a new era of change and modernity. Many issues such as public morality, sexuality, health and freedom were in question. Hence, through the polka Parisians expressed their desires for a better and more liberal life with equality for men and women. On the other hand, the exaggeration was a way to increase the popularity of the polka and popularity of the media that published this kind of news and information. Thus, the exaggeration is one of the ways to study the polka fashion in nineteenth-century Paris and as it also has been shown, the same exaggerations are used in relation to negative as well as positive reactions to the development of this new dance fashion.

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<sup>144</sup> "1.) *Un polkeur et une polkeuse se disent des individus qui exécutent une polka: Voici un bon polkeur.*

2.) *Un polkiste ne s'emploie que pour celui ou celle qui étudie la polka plus dans sa théorie, son histoire et sa méthode, que dans sa pratique: C'est un polkiste qui entend merveilleusement...*

3.) *Polkant, est l'adjectif du mot. Une danse légèrement polkante, il y a quelque chose de polkant dans sa désinvolture, etc...*" In: *Physiologie de la Polka* (1844): 259.

<sup>145</sup> "*Recherches historiques sur la Polka*" In: *La Revue de la Presse*, July 1844: 144-145.



***Contemporary dance manuals and Henry Cellarius' "The Drawing Room Dances" as a topos: the way the polka was executed***

As shown in the previous sections, the introduction of the polka caused the explosion of polka lessons and it seems that almost each quartier and street had its own dancing master. The newspapers reported on the queues of people outside the houses and studios of the polka dance masters waiting for a class with them and it seems that the most desirable was Cellarius.<sup>146</sup> This new fashion for polka lessons, however, was often criticized, for an incredible number of foreign dance masters offered the polka courses to vast clientele of all levels but also taught in a very eccentric and not always appropriate way. Furthermore, many of them were not real and experienced polka teachers but rather swindlers who tried to make money from the new fashion. All in all, it seems that dancing masters were crucial for the polka popularization in Paris, therefore in this section I mainly study its success through dance teachers, schools and manuals. Indeed, according to the contemporary sources there were only three dancing professors who really had a reputation to teach the polka: Cellarius, Laborde and Coralli. The last two were former members of the corps de ballet of Paris Opera, hence their position was very significant. Thus, in Paris there developed two schools of the polka: the one of Laborde, that made a furore and where Coralli taught noble ladies different polka steps and the one led by Cellarius<sup>147</sup>, who gained his popularity due to the fact that he claimed to be an authentic Pole in exile. In some way, his mysterious and fashionable person managed to attract the noble ladies, vendors, actresses, milliners, marquises, dukes, barons, stockbrokers, merchants, artists, comedians, scholars and thus, his studio was full of polka students day and night and it was a place for elegant rendezvous.<sup>148</sup>

As a matter of fact, the dancing schools of the reknowned dancing masters were usually visited by elegant ladies and people from the middle and upper classes. It can be seen for example in illustration No. 2 where elegant men and women observe Cellarius' polka lesson. The poor could not afford to take the lessons because they were too expensive. These dance teachers not only gave polka lessons but also gave polka performances in famous dance halls and theatres all over Paris and it looks like thanks to them the Bohemian dance gained great popularity in this city. Obviously, there were differences in the way of teaching and dancing by these great dancing masters. According to Perrot and Robert, the teaching and dancing method of Laborde was healthier. Labordiens executed their steps in a more elegant

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<sup>146</sup> see for ex.: Almanach de la polka 1845 or Physiologie de la Polka 1844.

<sup>147</sup> Almanach de la Polka: 85.

<sup>148</sup> Almanach de la Polka 1845: 83.

and softer way. By contrast, Cellarius jumped with ecstasy, beat his feet with alarming passion, and lifted his heels so high as though he would like to hide them in his pockets. The author, however, mentioned mainly the shortcomings of that school to show how ridiculous it was.<sup>149</sup> Therefore, it is also obvious that he supported the rival dance school and hence, we cannot fully rely on his opinion. Anyway, it seems that even if Cellarius was much more criticized than Coralli for the way he executed the polka, people were more attracted by his way of teaching, which was most probably more exotic and also more exciting.



Illustration No. 2<sup>150</sup>

<sup>149</sup> Perrot /Adrien (1845): 23.

<sup>150</sup> Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris, Département de Estampes No. Danse Ris. 27 Polka (II).

In fact, this exotic and fresh mode of dancing the polka is clearly described in the *Polka Almanach*, another contemporary source that compared Cellarius to Victor Hugo of the polka and Laborde to Racine. According to this source, The Cellarian-polkist agitated like a demon, showing constantly his heels up to the hips, kicking his feet intensely and turning around with boldness and courage. For the Cellarians, the passion, whim and inspiration of the moment were the rules. The Cellarian dancing was a sort of delirious squirming to exhibit various effects on the theatrical stage, on the other hand its convulsive movements made it almost unsuitable and impracticable in the dancing rooms and salons.<sup>151</sup> By contrast, the Labordien dancers moved with lightness, grace and elegance, almost modestly. They balanced on the toe with grace and showed the heel moderately and without any affectation.<sup>152</sup> This way of dancing was thus very suitable for the aristocracy. In brief, it seems that the Cellarian polka contained more qualities of the foreign cultures of Bohemia, Hungary or Poland and thus it was to a certain degree more exotic. By contrast, the Labordian one, which was more elegant and disciplined, resembled certain national characteristics of French people and thus, was in a certain way more French in its execution.

Mr Laborde civilised the polka and transformed it into a sort of French national polka dance. For example, *Le Menestrel* reported that Coralli, who was a Labordian teacher, was in charge of adjusting the polka for the l'Académie royale de Musique.<sup>153</sup> In March 1844 it was officially introduced by Coralli and Mademoiselle Maria on the scene of the l'Académie Royale de Musique.<sup>154</sup> This is highly important and means that the method of this school was officially accepted and this might be one of the reasons why the Labordian school lasted longer and enjoyed the honors of the fashion.<sup>155</sup> The way of dancing and teaching in the school of Cellarius was more passionate and he was therefore more successful at the beginning. However, the world soon forgot about him and he disappeared as quickly as he appeared. In fact, there are no biographies or information about Cellarius; nothing has been written about this mysterious dancer. It seems also that he had never performed the polka in public. It looks like he focused mainly on teaching and writing the rules of good and proper dancing. It would not be surprising, if his person was invented only for commercial reasons. Due to the lack of information on his life, it is possible that a mysterious Parisian dancer recognized the potential of the polka as a consumption product therefore, he nicknamed

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<sup>151</sup> Almanach de la Polka 1845: 87.

<sup>152</sup> Almanach de la Polka 1845: 87.

<sup>153</sup> Le Menestrel, March 17-23, 1844: 3.

<sup>154</sup> Le Menestrel, March 31 to April 6, 1844: 4.

<sup>155</sup> Almanach de la polka 1845: 88.

himself Cellarius and using the French passion for unknown and exotic invented his way of dancing the polka to make money and gain fame.

Not only dancing masters but also dance manuals were crucial for making the polka fashionable and as a matter of fact, though defeated (his school survived for a short time), it was Cellarius who published his 1845 *La danse des salons* and triumphed over all contemporaries in the field of publishing. In this dance manual he provided a very detailed descriptions of numerous polka, waltz and mazurka variants and it became an excellent historical source on the mid-nineteenth century ballroom dancing. The work begins with an introduction to the history of dance and continues with a description of the French quadrille. Later, round dances such as the polka, numerous waltz types and steps and figures of mazurka quadrille are explained. The work contains also a description of a series of dance games, called the cotillion consisting of eighty-three figures and is enriched with eight full-page prints designed by Paul Gavarni.

At this point it is important to reflect on the social function of dancing manuals. Why should they have played any role in the diffusion and popularization of the polka and who was their readership? At the beginning of the nineteenth century it became common to establish categories of precise rules, which directed at the uninitiated, which left nothing to chance, and to use terminology everyone could understand. In the period between 1820 and 1850 many manuals were written and they clearly reflected the social changes taking place in European society. Etiquette was reduced to a series of numbered rules and was more focused on the ceremonial details of life. In the mid-century, the majority of the manuals was devoted to descriptions of dances and dance steps and little space was left for the etiquette of the ballroom such as for example: dress for ladies and gentlemen and of manners and behaviours in the ballroom.

Furthermore, in the nineteenth century peasant dance became very popular and there was a great interest in the peasantry. Those peasant dances, on the one hand were perceived charming and energetic, but on the other hand their original forms were seen as too rough and uncouth for upper class society. In spite of this they were still of significant interest to artists in search for new ideas and material for the ballrooms and for a public hungry for novelty. Therefore, these lively and often scandalous dances were polished and smoothed by city and court dancing masters and given polite manners by writers of etiquette manuals. Thus, the wildly popular polka also underwent some changes to make its bouncy Bohemian steps more acceptable to the public and it was given variations more suitable to ballrooms. In

the salons for example, many dancers glided the step instead of jumping it.<sup>156</sup> Nevertheless its speed and energy continued to reveal its peasant origins even more than in the case of any other ballroom dance and most likely, it was one of the qualities that made it so attractive to the Parisians.

Back to Cellarius' work, as mentioned before, it was translated into English in 1847 with the title *The Drawingroom Dances* and its content was later incorporated into many dance manuals published in Europe, the United States and Australia<sup>157</sup>. The media recognized his contribution to the polka development and commented:

*“Cellarius! nom symbolique  
Jetant coome un reflet biblique  
Sur le berceau de la Polka,  
Dans quel océan de pensées  
Incohérentes et pressées,  
Ta consonnance le flanqua!”<sup>158</sup>*

With this citation, one could find a connection with the renaissance scientist, Andreas Cellarius, who was known for his *Harmonia Macrocosmica*, a major star atlas and who spent some time working in Poland. This reference to Cellarius might have a symbolic dimension, meaning that as Andreas Cellarius' work was a watershed for humanity, something similar could be said about Henri Cellarius' work, which for the first time gave a formal shape to the polka, that at the time caused such an interest. In this way, this manual contributed indirectly to the changes and transformations of Parisian society of the time.

Interestingly, the analysis of sources on music written at the mid-century shows, that this manual, which for the first time described the polka, was the only dance manual written by a dancing-master after the introduction of the polka in Europe. The next manuals were written by: Charles Durang in 1850 and 1856, Edward Ferrero in 1859 in the United States and they basically copied each other using what already was written by Cellarius. As for the European dance manuals, Philippe Gawlikowki, who was a Polish dancing master in Paris wrote in 1857 *Le guide complet de la danse*. It was written in French and translated into Spanish, becoming a great manual for explanation of mid-nineteenth century social dances. Gawlikowski, being a specialist in the mazurka discussed steps and figures for it and also other popular dances such as the waltz, schottisch, polka, polka-mazurka, and redowa. These manuals were often aimed at the author's own students. In the mid-century, they went into

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<sup>156</sup> Desrat (1864): *Methode de danse de salon*. Paris: Heugel: 17.

<sup>157</sup> the 1875 Melbourne publication by Roberts, *Manual of Fashionable Dancing*.

<sup>158</sup> Le Mercure des théâtres, March 21, 1844.

mass circulation, becoming a cultural product of consumption, and often they did not provide anything new. In fact, it is commonly known, that many nineteenth-century dance manuals borrowed from other sources or simply copied them.

At this point, I would like to highlight that this research takes into consideration only the dance manuals written by the contemporary dancing masters. These kinds of manuals contained more consistent information and were better written than ballroom guides and etiquette manuals produced by random authors or specialists in other disciplines. With regards to Cellarius, his manual can be considered as the most important source in the hierarchy of the materials related to the polka dance in the mid-century. Moreover, the fact that his manual was translated into English meant it was significant for the international diffusion and adoption of the polka all over the world. In fact, Cellarius' name was very often mentioned in the British and Austrian press such as: *Musical World*, *The Times* or *Wiener Theaterzeitung*. It seems that the polka description in Cellarius' manual became a model, a sort of a topos for further explanations of the polka and the methods of its execution, thus the way the Cellarius polka should be danced, is presented below.

#### ***How the polka was danced in Paris***

According to Cellarius, the polka was to be considered French, because it owed its fashion to France. Indeed, it seems that this dance, even if presented earlier in Vienna than in Paris, gained its greatest popularity in the French capital. Later, this fashion was in a certain way copied in the other countries. As for Cellarius, the polka should be danced rather slowly and in two four time to a march movement. The step of the polka consisted of three movements:

*„Initially, the left heel should be raised to the side of the right leg without passing it behind, and so as to slightly touch the calf. In this position the dancer jumps upon the right foot, in order to give the spring to the left, which makes a glissade forward, in the fourth position. The second and third times are composed of two short steps made lightly by either foot, care being taken that both feet should find themselves nearly in the same line.”*

Cellarius maintained that:

*"the polka presents in execution many peculiar evolutions, which contribute much to vary it, and which as skilful dancer will not fail to be thoroughly master of. He must in every sense turn his partner, sometimes to the right, sometimes to the left [...] In the polka, the position of the lady and gentleman is almost the same as in the ordinary waltz, the gentleman nearly facing his partner. He must support her with the right hand extended about the waist. The arm destined for this purpose is the only part of the body, into which there should be flung a certain degree of vigour; self-abandonment, flexibility, and extreme ease, should be perceptible in all the movements. The gentlemen should hold the lady, neither too close nor too far from him. Too close an approximation would be alike apposite to the laws of grace and of decorum; too great a distance would render very difficult, if not impracticable, the turns and evolutions, that form so*

*considerable a part in the execution of the dance. It is of the gentleman according to his own taste to settle down the distance between his partner and himself.*"<sup>159</sup>

Indeed, this holding by the waist and jumping were the most controversial parts of the polka execution and as written before, were very often criticized in public. As this aspect of polka dancing was crucial in making it fashionable in Paris, it will be discussed in the last section of this chapter which is devoted to the immoral consequences of the polka dancing.

It seems that there was a difference between what Cellarius wrote about the polka in his manual and how he taught at his school. His way of teaching was usually described in much more vigorous way, instead his description of the polka in his "*La danse de salons*" is much more qualified and elegant. One of the reasons for this difference was probably that his manual became the first official polka description and thus, it had to be accepted by the authorities before going into international circulation. Summarizing, Cellarius contributed to the popularity of the polka in two ways. On the one hand he did it through his lessons, teaching a Bohemian polka, full of vigour and eroticism. On the other hand, by publishing his dance manual with a description of the polka steps, suitable for the ballrooms and dance halls he encouraged its adoption by elegant people mainly coming from the middle and upper classes.

Just like Cellarius' execution of the polka differed from its description, it varied depending on the types of environments in which it was danced. It was for example commented that the polkists of the Bal Mabille were more reserved and thus, more rigid. Those of Chaumière, were more flexible; they led themselves to delirium and therefore their movements and steps were more thrilling. The common quality of both types of dancers were the same manners.<sup>160</sup> Consequently, the way the polka was executed depended not only on the location but also on dancers and their characteristics. From time to time, the press published some descriptions or pictures which displayed how the polka should be danced or showed its character and style. For example, in October 1844, there was an illustration published in *Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris*, introducing the polka des salons. This lithograph (Illustration No. 3) showed upper-society couples dancing the polka in an elegant and educated way. Obviously, this journal, which was read by a very specific readership such as specialists and intellectuals, could not present anything that would not be appropriate.

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<sup>159</sup> Cellarius (1847): 22-26.

<sup>160</sup> Almanach de la Polka 1845: 74.



Again, in July 1844 the article called "*Theorie de la polka*" was published in the French journal *Le Menestrel*. It described the polka as a dance on the two-quarters measure. The partner held his lady by her hand and executed consecutive steps with grace and elegance.<sup>161</sup> As for *Le Menestrel*, there were two kinds of polka. The first one was more rough and vigorous than graceful and maintained some of its original harshness, the other one was the one that was never danced in the Bohemian villages but was polished in the elegant salons of Germany. This polka was graceful and loved by everybody all over the world.<sup>162</sup> Finally, for Perrot and Robert the good dancers of the polka should not only be skilled but they had to love each other or they had to be loving with one other.<sup>163</sup>



Illustration No. 3 <sup>164</sup>

<sup>161</sup> "*La Polka se danse sur une mesure à deux quatre un peu lente, da manière à ce que chacune des croches compte pout un temps. Le cavalier tient d'abord sa dame par la main. La pointe du pied jetée en avant marque le premier temps. Au second, on avance l'autre pied pour rassembler les deux talons sut la même ligne. Le troisième temps se glisse en avant du même pied qui a servi de point de départ. Le quatrième marque un repos pendant lequel se réunissent les deux chevilles pour préparer la mesure suivante. Cette danse devient surtout gracieuse par de légers mouvemens d'épaules: elle s'exécute tantôt par quelques tours de valse à gauche et à droite en décrivant un triangle.*" In: *Theorie de la polka* In: *Le Menestrel* July 14-20, 1844: 2.

<sup>162</sup> *Le Menestrel*, March 10-16, 1844: 4.

<sup>163</sup> „...pour bien danser la Polka il ne faut pas seulement que le cavalier et sa dame soient également habiles à son exécution matérielle, il faut que leurs âmes se confondent, il faut qu'ils soient AMOUREUX l'un de l'autre." In: Perrot/Adrien (1845): 32.

<sup>164</sup> "*La Polka des Salons*", Lith. Thierry Frères, Rue Richelieu 97 In: *Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris* October 27, 1844.



To conclude I take the liberty of quoting the words by Perrot and Robert, which in my opinion, summarize very appropriately the way the polka should be danced:

*"The polka can be translated as love. The first figure, the promenade, requires coquetterie, grace and delicacy; it's the first rendez-vous of two lovers who meet one evening and secretly roam in the green alleys of a park: somewhat slow animation at the same time expresses the happiness and the embarrassment of being together. They turn neither right nor left...they walk quickly on a straight line...but bit by bit they hold their hands more tightly, their chests move closer, their breaths mix up and all the love fever pass through the step of the three walses that follow all the way to the Bohemian step that brings back the cheerfulness of the promenade, but testifies also to the triumph of love through the small kick of the heel that makes everything meaningful. Love, poetry and liberty, that is the Polka in three words: it remains to be seen if, for that very reason, it is not a misconception of our age. - Alas!"<sup>165</sup>*

## 1.2. Polka: how, where, why and by whom was it danced?

It was mentioned before that the polka developed alongside the emergence of the bourgeoisie. Social revolutions caused cultural revolutions that precipitated changes on the musical scene. Nineteenth-century audiences, no longer exclusively aristocratic, had less appreciation for instrumental music in the traditional styles; and composers, no longer supported by individual patrons, felt compelled to accommodate the new audiences. In fact, the bourgeoisie were the main agents of Parisian changes. Even if the polka was first very popular among the French aristocracy (as analysed before its popularity began at the nobility balls) and was danced also by the working class, in this chapter I show that shaping of the polka as a cultural good was aimed at the bourgeoisie. Moreover, the dance itself was used to criticize this social class. One of the ways I carry on this study is by examining places where the polka was danced and performed in Paris. Furthermore I do it through the analysis of the polka fashion development in the years between 1844-1860 and its connection to the political and social issues of the time.

It seems that the main official places where the polka was danced and performed could be divided into three categories: dance halls, theatres and gardens. In dance halls and theatres

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<sup>165</sup> *"La Polka est la traduction interlinéaire de l'amour. La première figure, qui se nomme la promenade, veut coquetterie, grâce et pudeur; c'est la premier rende-vous de deux amants qui se rencontrent le soir à la dérobée dans les vertes allées d'un parc: l'animation un peu lente de la mesure exprime en même temps la joie et le trouble qu'ils éprouent de se trouver ensemble; ils ne s'égarer ni à droite ni à gauche; ils ont peur d'eux-mêmes: ils marchent en droit chemin et vite. Mais peu à peu les mains se prennent plus étroitement, les poitrines se rapprochent, les haleines se confondent et toutes les fièvres de l'amour passent dans les trois walses qui se succèdent et deviennent à chaque fois plus passionnées, jusqu'au pas bohémien qui rapelle les premières joies de la promenade, mais témoigne en outre le triomphe de l'amour par de petits coups de talon tout à fait significatifs."* In: Perrot/Adrien (1845): 63.

it was performed at the balls and soirees dansantes whereas in the gardens it was executed in the forms of open air concerts and balls. Very often, dance halls were great establishments with gardens, coffee' rooms and other buildings where people could walk and chat freely. Usually, in the dance halls the polka was made fashionable by the female dancers who were what might be called the „queens” of these places, even though they were simply Parisian courtesans; instead in the theatres the polka was performed mainly by the famous male dancing masters such as Coralli, Laborde, Raab, Perrot and their partners. The polka made a kind of tour of Parisian theatres. In some of these places it was performed very often; in others, less so. Finally it was danced and played at the concerts organized in the Parisian gardens. Among these there were the Concerts Vivienne, a series of concerts organized between 1840-1845 focused on light orchestral music; the monstre concerts organized by Musard and the concerts organized by the Académie Royale de Musique.<sup>166</sup> The polka pieces were played during these concerts, however, it does not seem that the Bohemian dance achieved here the same popularity as at the balls in salons and theatres.

It was precisely because of this wide variety of places where the polka was danced, that it attracted different social strata. As there are too many places to be able to speak about all of them, I focus on those that were mostly frequented by the polka dancers and where the polka was very often executed. Their names could be found in the contemporary press as well as in many literary works written at the time.

### ***Dance halls and gardens***

The earliest bals publics such as the Ranelagh and the Grande Chaumière date back to the late eighteenth century, but it was in the 1840s that this new form of public entertainment gained its real popularity with the opening of numerous dance halls. Every quartier had its bal and each bal catered to a different public. Some even attracted a different clientele according to the day of the week, hence the social strata varied on certain days. Thus Monday's balls could be organized mainly for aristocracy and for example Saturday was for working classes. For instance, on Sunday the Château des fleurs dance hall became a place for family entertainment. Other bals were less tame. Several of these establishments were located within Paris itself.<sup>167</sup> With regards to the polka, different salons and gardens were mentioned for example at the beginning of the poem "*Les Polkeuses*", that was published in Paris by Nick Polkmall:

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<sup>166</sup> This information is based on the analysis of the nineteenth century press such as for example: *Le Menestrel*, *Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris*, *Mercure de Theatres*.

<sup>167</sup> Mossman, Carol (2009): *Writing with a vengeance: the Countess de Chabrilan's rise from prostitution*. Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press. 66-67.

*"Lorsqu'on dansait une Polka facile  
Sous les bosquets, plantés par le plaisir,  
De la Chaumière ou du jardin Mabille,  
Que cet hiver, aus lustres du Prado,  
A ceux de Mars ou de Valentino,  
Nous retrouvons et nous fêtons encore..."<sup>168</sup>*

As a matter of fact, places such as Chaumière and Mabille Garden were the main places where polka dancing took place and where the new dancing fashion became popular through its patrons and female dancers (lorettes or les oiseaux de la nuit).<sup>169</sup> Prado, Mars or Valentino were mentioned much less in connection to the polka by the contemporary press. However polka dancing also took place also there. Additionally there was another important salon where polka dancing took place and which was not mentioned in the poem, Le Ranelagh.

La Grande Chaumière began as a 'bal-jardin'. The place really took off when a person nicknamed 'Le Père Lahire' took it over. The Garden of the Chaumière had most excellent orchestras, perpetually playing polkas, waltzes, and contredanses. Here the excitement of the day reached a climax in the wildest inspiration of unheard-of, inconceivable, untaught and unteachable steps and figures of capricious dances such as the polka. There were almost none but young people there - people without cares, positions, or responsibilities; pleasure, the pleasure of the day, of the moment, was their only aim and so they ate, laughed, danced, talked and flirted. This garden was one of the most popular pleasure gardens in Paris.<sup>170</sup> The polka was first danced at La Grande Chaumière by Pere Lahire and Clara Fontaine, who were acknowledged polka dancers and very often performed there.

La Grande Chaumière was visited mainly by students from the Latin Quarter.<sup>171</sup> This quarter was a distinct area of Paris as of the thirteenth century with the founding of the Sorbonne. In the nineteenth century it was known as a bohemian area and was associated mainly with students and artists and a loose lifestyle. In fact, the illustration below shows the polka danced at the Grand Chaumière and it is quite clear from the way people are dressed, that the young bourgeoisie enjoyed the new dance in this ballroom. However, taking into consideration that the working class desired to become bourgeois, we cannot be sure that there were no members of the working class represented in this illustration too. It is known

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<sup>168</sup> Polkmall, Nick (1844): *Les Polkeuses. Poëme Étique sur le célébrités de la polka*. Paris: Paula Mascagna: 277.

<sup>169</sup> La France théâtrale. Journal des intérêts artistiques et littéraires, September 29, 1844.

<sup>170</sup> Almanach de la polka 1845. Paris: P. Martinon, Libraire Editeur.

<sup>171</sup> Hazan, Eric (2011): *The Invention of Paris: A History in Footsteps*. Trans. David Fernbach. London: Verso Books: 167.

that the working class used to wear bourgeois clothes to give an impression of belonging to a higher social level. Interestingly, some sources mention that even Marx, while staying in Paris, used to go to this ballroom to watch working class people dancing the polka and entertaining themselves. By watching them, he discovered their sensuality, joie de vivre and humanity.<sup>172</sup> Therefore, we cannot be fully sure that only the bourgeoisie enjoyed the new dance in this place. On the other hand, scant accounts of working class participation at the balls in this salon and the evidence of the presence of young students, artists and people who were or pretended to be from the middle classes makes it clear that the popularization of the polka was aimed above all at the bourgeoisie.



Illustration No. 4<sup>173</sup>

<sup>172</sup> Kramer, Lloyd (1988): *Threshold of a new world: intellectuals and the exile experience in Paris, 1830-1848*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press: 130-131.

<sup>173</sup> Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris. Departement de Estampes, No. Kd 5b (t: 5).



Further details can be noted when looking at the illustration. In the right corner the person of a policeman can be seen. In the nineteenth century the role of policemen in the ballrooms was usually to watch people's behaviour when dancing and ensuring that no immoral scenes were taking place. In fact, no squeezing and close touching can be noticed and the presence of the policeman confirms once again that polka dancing was considered dangerous for public morality and behaviour.

The second important ballroom for the polka dancing was the Mabilles Garden. 1840 brothers Mabilles reorganized their enterprise and converted their dance hall into a pleasure garden. The garden – transformed and barely recognizable - reopened in April 1844. Thus, the polkamanie which was at its height, was immediately a rage here and provided the strongest impetus for the ball. The Bal Mabilles became the most fashionable place of the time and became the first „temple” of the polka. In the feminine constituency of the bal Mabilles were women of easy virtue who required remuneration, the male public could come from any social stratum, although in practice the entrance fee excluded the poor.<sup>174</sup> In fact, on the garden's alleys one could meet Gautier, Sue, Berryer, Dumas, Raubuteau and other famous personalities.<sup>175</sup> Here also, reine Pomare<sup>176</sup> (Élise Rosita Sergent 1824-1846), who without instruction became a very good dancer, made the polka very popular.

The below caricature shows some bourgeois people, mainly political personalities, attending the Bal Mabilles and dancing the polka. It is clear that this illustration was designed to make fun of and criticize the bourgeoisie and people with power. More than criticism of the polka, it was a criticism of the bourgeoisie and politics that were interested mainly in fun and pleasure and failed to take care of the many problems with which Parisians struggled. Hence, it is also clear that the polka was considered light, useless and frivolous and therefore it was a perfect tool for this kind of criticism of politics and society. Making reference to this caricature, politicians in the mid-century came mainly from the bourgeoisie and it can be seen clearly that they enjoyed the polka a great deal. More than the polka, however, they enjoyed dancing, partying and amusing themselves. As a matter of fact it was commented, that

*„this dance hall pleases me well, and it puts bourgeois society to shame [...]. One is free at Mabilles, at the Chaumière [...]. There everyone dances as he wishes: he can walk, as in high society; he can cut a caper and strut about in the pastourelle solos; the ladies are free to drink and smoke. All*

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<sup>174</sup> Mossman, Carol (2009): 69.

<sup>175</sup> Gasnault (1986): 201.

<sup>176</sup> Parisian courtesan who used to attend the Garden Mabilles regularly. She was not a professional dancer but through careful observation she became a great dancer and soon her name was on the lips of all Mabilles dancers.

that, you'll say, is an orgy. The freedom of the public dance halls borders on orgiastic licentiousness, I admit."<sup>177</sup>

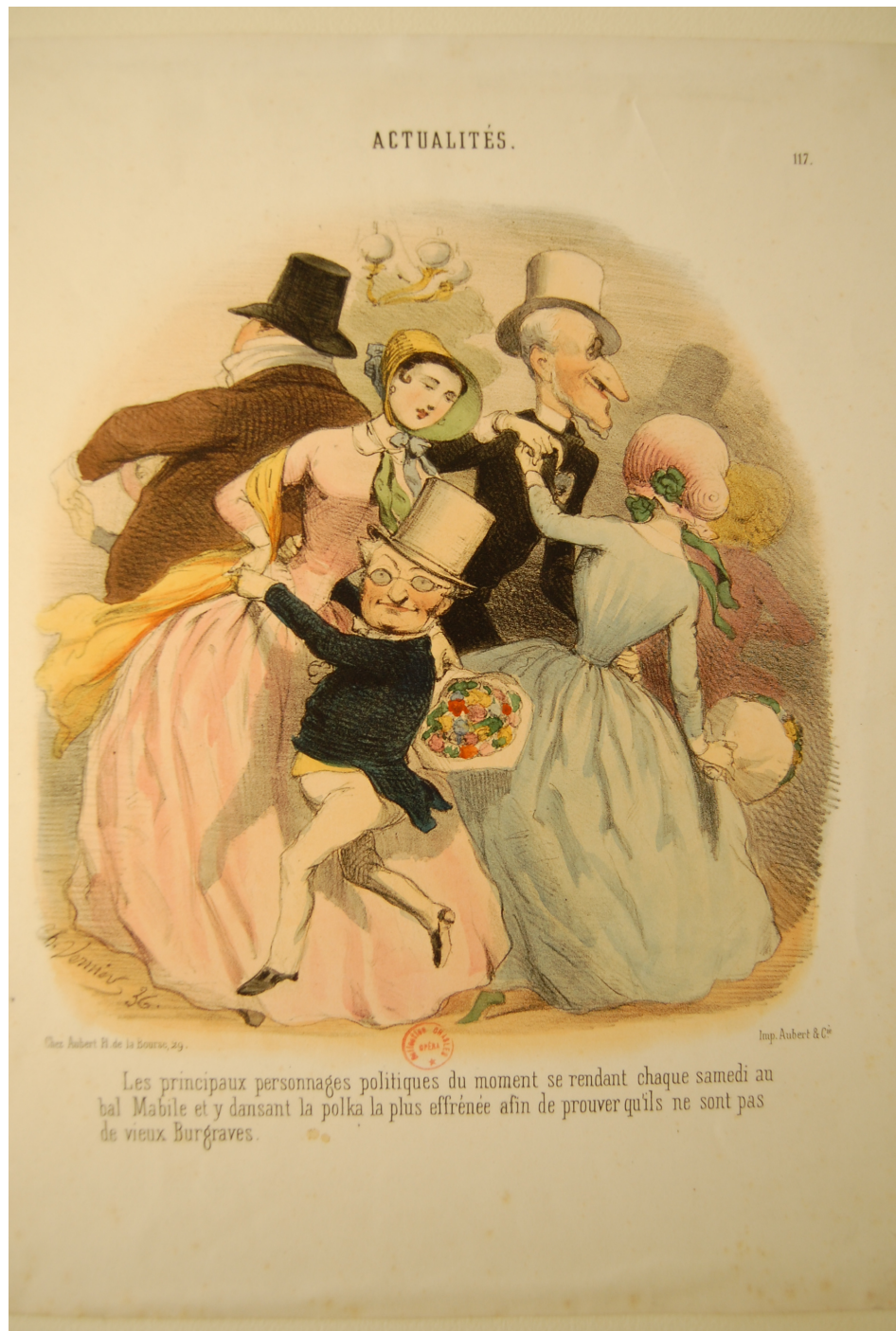


Illustration No. 5<sup>178</sup>

<sup>177</sup> "Ce bal me plaît encore, et fait honte à la société bourgeoise [...]. On est libre à Mabille, à la Chaumière [...]. Là, chacun danse comme il l'étend: il peut marcher, comme dans le grand monde, il peut aussi tricoter des entrechats et faire la roue dans les solos de pastourelle; les dames sont libres de boire et de fumer. Tour cela, direz-vous, c'est de l'orgie. La liberté des bals publics touches à la licence orgiaque, je l'avoue." In: Rousseau, Jean (1862): *Paris Dansant*. Paris: Libraires-Éditeurs. 10.

<sup>178</sup> Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris. Département de Estampes No. Danse Ris. 27 Polka (II).

Hence, It is not accidental, that caricatures form one of the sources for this research and it is mainly because of their important role in creating the exaggeration, which is one of the ways to understand the popularity of the polka. The caricature is considered the least subtle and potentially most damaging form of cartoon. Its basic techniques, its undertow of cruelty and derision, are the very taproots of all comic art. The portrait caricature is, in effect, an unmasking process: the victim becomes a marionette, completely at the mercy of the cartoonist. For example, Gerald Scarfe, one of the most popular contemporary caricaturists said, that he feels an intense hatred for his subject.<sup>179</sup> Thus, caricatures are one of the main sources in this work, for this reason their significance and role in nineteenth-century life will be discussed later more in depth.

Another place where the polka dancing took place was Le Ranelagh. It was a well-known and most agreeable place of public amusement. It was aristocratic and fashionable and consisted of a capacious ballroom, a small theatre, and good gardens, with a café attached. It was a rendezvous of fashion and the men who went there were mainly *hommes bien* from the higher classes. The greatest part of women visiting this place were *lorettes*<sup>180</sup>, but this kind of fashionable *lorettes* that lived in most expensive and prestigious areas of Paris. According to the French press the polka was usually danced there every Thursday by elegant and brilliant young people from upper classes and crowds of foreigners visiting Paris.<sup>181</sup>

### ***Theatres***

The nineteenth century showed most clearly the existence of a real and large popular public, born out of the development of Paris as a city with a huge population requiring leisure to enjoy. The revolution led to a considerable democratisation of the theatre and explosion of theatrical activity in France in the first half of the nineteenth century corresponding to a number of social developments and needs. Napoleon's decree of 1807 limited the number of theatres in Paris to four official theatres and four secondary ones.<sup>182</sup> The minor theatres were

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<sup>179</sup> Geipel, John (1972): *The Cartoon. A short history of graphic comedy and satire*. London: David & Charles. 21.

<sup>180</sup> The lorette, a courtesan, first appeared in the pages of the literature on Paris and the Parisians in 1841 and was from the beginning associated with credit and speculation. The term was first used by the journalist Nestor Roqueplan who gave this title to the young single woman who abandoned her working-class origins and attempted to acquire wealth and position through her affairs with wealthy men. In: Thompson, Victoria E. (2000): *The Virtuous Marketplace. Women and Men, Money and Politics in Paris, 1830-1870*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press: 133.

<sup>181</sup> for ex. *Le Menestrel* May 11-17, 1844: 5 and/or June 30 to July 6, 1844: 5.

<sup>182</sup> McCormick, John (2004): *Popular Theatres of Nineteenth-Century France*. London:

catering to the tastes of the less educated classes and provided distraction for the popular classes and diverted them from serious thoughts about politics. However, this classification was blurred after 1830, as existing theatres moved outside their allotted repertoire and new theatres came into being. The nineteenth century popular theatres developed out of the marginalised theatres of the eighteenth century and came to satisfy the entertainment needs of a rapidly changing society. As a consequence, by 1830 audiences had become more largely middle class.

Among all the institutions that contributed to the development of cultural activities in Paris, theatres were of a great significance. By contrast to other cultural establishments such as libraries, universities, concerts or museums they were open for all kind of audience. The amount of theatres where the polka was danced and performed was great and this was related to the great development of this cultural institution in the nineteenth century Paris. The first place where the polka was officially danced in 1840 was the Odéon theatre. It was the largest, the handsomest, and the least-frequented, theatre in Paris. There were probably thousands of theatre-goers who have never been within its walls. It was called the second Théâtre Français and its audience consisted mainly of students and grisettes<sup>183</sup> (petite bourgeoisie and young girls with neither good birth nor wealth) unacquainted with „savoir-vivre”, laughed and cried at the performances, ate chestnuts, and pointed. It is not surprising therefore, that the polka did not gain any success when first introduced in Paris.

After reintroduction in 1844 the polka was danced everywhere all over the city. To illustrate this, it is enough to look at the posters, advertisements and comments on some of the performances in the contemporary press. Thus, the following theatres were mentioned very often on the occasion of the polka performances: Théâtre Varietes, Gymnase, Folies-Dramatiques, Théâtre des jeunes élèves de M. Comte, la porte Sain Martin, Cirque des Champs Elyses, Théâtre du Palais-Royal, Théâtre du Vaudeville, Porte-St-Martin, Gaité, salons du Faubourg du Saint-Germain, Théâtre de l'Opera, Délassements-Comique.<sup>184</sup> Furthermore, the listing of the theatres and boulevards where the polka was in vogue was presented on the lithograph made by Vernier (below) and provides another important testimony to where the

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Routledge. 13.

<sup>183</sup> Grisette is nothing more than a historical name, and means simply the wife or daughter of a burgher or a citizen, who first by royal edicts, and latterly by custom, wore cloaks and dresses of sober grey, all gorgeous colors being reserved for the silks and velvets of the dames and gallants of the luxurious courts.

<sup>184</sup> The names of the theatres were found out through the analysis of the 19th century press such as: Le Menestrel, Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris, Mercure de Theatres.



polka was danced in Paris. It shows Parisians dancing the polka in one of the Paris ballrooms and mentions other places where the new fashion was executed: Faubourg St. Germain, Faubourg St. Honoré, Faubourg St. Antoine, Faubourg St. Denis, Boulevard des Italiens, Opéra, Palais-Royal, Variétés, Théâtre-Comte.



Illustration No. 6 185

Further to the analysis of Vernier's lithograph the following words were used as a title for the illustration: „*La grande vogue de la polka*”. Furthermore it was commented: “*Polka! Polka! And every day polka! This is the general call and one of the biggest concerns of the age*”.<sup>186</sup> This is further confirmation that the polka was seen as something dangerous and distressing. Another observation is to be made concerning the people who were represented in the picture. They were mainly members of the upper classes and it seems that the ballroom

<sup>185</sup> Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris. Département de Estampees, the lithographie was published in the "La mode Revue Politique" on April 5, 1844.

<sup>186</sup> „*Polka! Polka! et toujours polka! tel est le cri général et la grande préoccupation de l'Epoque.*”

was filled with people of the same social level and no class mixing took place there. Indeed, the lithograph was printed in April 1844, the initial period of the polka fashion in Paris and thus it can be noted that the aristocracy accepted the new dance straightaway and danced it in their circles. Moreover, as seen in the illustration the dance did not betray its raw and peasant qualities. Therefore it could be supposed that the dancing masters repolished it before it was to be encountered at the nobility balls. Most likely, from there, the polka found its way to the bourgeois circles where it became a great vogue.

Between 1750 and 1830 „boulevard” had a precise geographical reference and was associated with the popular theatres. However, the social and political changes lead the boulevards of the late nineteenth century to be associated broadly with the commercial theatre in Paris providing entertainment to the more affluent bourgeoisie.<sup>187</sup> In fact, a quick analysis of places mentioned above shows that the bourgeoisie and upper-classes prevailed over other Parisian classes that visited these places. Faubourg St. Germain was a fashionable boulevard and an upper-class residential district. In the nineteenth century it became a meeting place for artists, students, tourists, street entertainers and others. Faubourg St. Honoré established its popularity in the eighteenth century and was a rallying point for the nobility and financiers. It also attracted young talented craftsmen. Boulevard des Italiens was a meeting place for the elegant elite of Paris. It was full of elegant cafés and restaurants and the main entrance to the Opéra was two steps away. It was also the centre of artistic life. Faubourg St. Denis was an extremely upper-class area, occupied by jewellers and textile merchants. Furthermore, the Palais Royal contained some theatres and the most relevant for the discussion on the polka were: Opera and Theatre du Palais Royal. The Opera, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter was attended mainly by the aristocracy and from around 1830’ also by the bourgeoisie. The same applied to the Théâtre du Palais-Royal which was France’s prestigious national playhouse attended by the bourgeois and upper classes.

By contrast, The Gaité, the Ambigu, the Variétés and the Vaudeville were secondary theatres focused mainly on popular genres and visited by upper and lower-bourgeoisie and sometimes also by the working classes. Theatre Variétés was very important for the popularization of the polka in Paris. It was built in 1807 and was described as *"the centre of fun, frolic, and fie-fie!: a man ran no risk there of meeting anybody from the society frequented by his mother, wife or daughter. Only men of his own class were there - but they were bent on*

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<sup>187</sup> Banham, Martin (1995): *The Cambridge Guide to Theatre*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

*similar expeditions, so everything was safe.*"<sup>188</sup> This public theatre, designed for burlesque and popular pieces, principally made up of actresses became the favourite resort of courtesans. The polka and polka performances were very popular here and the theatre was visited mainly by bourgeois men who often met there secretly with their female lovers described as:

*"those young, lovely, clever, warm-hearted, careless, utterly-devoid-of-talent actresses, who have appeared and disappeared in rapid succession on the minor stages of Paris. They rose from obscurity - from the dark and dirty loge of the portière, in the small streets in the old portion of the Cité. They have known poverty, toil and want. These young ladies once en vue soon find appreciators and admirers and many of them are maintained by a so called "ami", a rich man, varying in rank from the peer to the shop-keeper...The Variétés is the favourite resort of the 'ami'- because there he runs no risk of meeting any of the society in which his mother, wife, or daughters move."*<sup>189</sup>

Another theatre, la Gaité, was situated between the faubourgs and that part of the capital which was inhabited by the working classes. Therefore it was generally well attended and working classes mixed with bourgeoisie.<sup>190</sup> The area of Faubourg St-Antoine was one of the most densely populated working-class neighborhoods in the city and thus, the dancing here was practiced also by working class people.<sup>191</sup> The working class enjoyed themselves also at the so called "guinguettes", popular drinking establishments, usually located outside or in the suburbs of the city. They served as meeting places for fellow workers, friends and family.

Working class entertainment was also clearly depicted in the painting (illustration No. 7) by August de Wilde, a Belgian painter, who showed working class people dancing the polka in a tavern. It is not certain if the picture represents people in Belgium, France or another country. Anyway it is clear that the working class entertained themselves in the rhythms of the polka. For the working classes, Sunday was the most popular day for the theatre, being the only day on which they might have something remotely approaching leisure, and the theatre, when it could be afforded, must have offered a marvellous escape from the very real hardships of everyday life. They danced the fashions of the bourgeoisie and upper classes, but with reference to Paris, it took place mainly in places where only this part of society used to entertain and relax itself. Most of these were outside of the city or in the suburban theatres and taverns where also the most part of working class inhabitants lived. Most probably, most

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<sup>188</sup> de Marguerittes (1855): 112.

<sup>189</sup> de Marguerittes (1855): 112-116.

<sup>190</sup> *The history of Paris: from the earliest period to the present day; containing a description of its antiquities, public buildings, civil, religious, scientific and commercial institutions.* Volume 2. 1828. Paris: A. and W. Galignani: 520.

<sup>191</sup> for the information on these places see for ex. Hazan, Eric/ tr. David Fernbach (2010): *The Invention of Paris: A History in Footsteps.* London: Verso Books.

of these events had also an informal character and were seldom advertised or published in the contemporary press or on posters; hence there is a lack of information on these kinds of events.



Illustration No. 7<sup>192</sup>

Even if the amount of documents concerning working classes entertainments is scarce, apart from balls organized in the suburbs and provinces, which were occasionally mentioned in the Parisian press, it is known that during the dancemania (1830-70), public balls offered both culture and diversion for the poorer urban working classes to compensate for the monotonous routine of work. However, it is not clear if the working classes enjoyed the polka as intensely as other Parisian classes. By contrast, it seems that they did not participate in the public balls in the French capital in such great numbers as the bourgeoisie. One of the reasons for could be their illiteracy; thus the information on the public events did not always reach them. On the other hand it is highly probable that they could not afford to participate in all kinds of events described earlier, mainly due to high ticket prices. Parisian working classes at the mid-century were still highly differentiated. Living close to the margin of existence, unemployment and migration were a constant reality. According to Hausmann there was

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<sup>192</sup> <http://www.repro-tableaux.com/a/wilde-august-de/the-polka-dance.html>.



nearly a million people living at or below the poverty level hence, a visit to the theatre must have been unattainable.<sup>193</sup>

All in all, what the nineteenth century showed most clearly was the existence of a real and large popular public, borne of the development of Paris as a city with a huge population requiring diversion whenever it had leisure. Even if the polka fashion started among the elites at their private balls and to a certain extent among the students and young people it was later diffused among all kinds of Parisian bourgeoisie and it is because this social class was dominant in Paris in the mid-century, dictating tastes and fashions of the time. Furthermore, even if the aristocracy enjoyed the polka, except for a few public places, they executed the polka almost always privately. Not surprisingly, in public they showed disapproval of the new fashion and hence, critics. Concerns about the immoral dimension of the polka came after all from those who supported aristocratic values.<sup>194</sup>

The next sections discuss how the polka fashion developed through the years and if it remained popular among the same classes. The study is done through the analysis of the relations of the polka popularity to the political and social issues of the time. It is done mainly through the study of the contemporary French press.

### **1.3. A long season: 1840s-1860s**

"*Eminently Polkeuse*"<sup>195</sup> - this is how the year 1852 was described in *Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris*, one of the most important and influential nineteenth-century music journals in France and hence, its significance for French cultural life does not need to be repeated. Clearly, the expression used by this prominent French newspaper was related to the polka. However, it also gives an idea about the role of dancing in the middle of the nineteenth century. It confirms that, at the time, dancing, enjoyment and entertainment were associated with the polka. Taking into consideration the main qualities of the polka, its happy rhythms and light way of execution, the midcentury in Paris could be considered as the time of a search for liberty, happiness and escape from different daily responsibilities.

As a matter of fact, in 1850, Paris was a place seething with economic, social and political possibilities and problems. The city had, after all, grown rapidly in population, from 786,000 in 1831 to more than 1,000,000 in 1846.<sup>196</sup> Its industry had undergone a remarkable

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<sup>193</sup> Harvey (2003): 233.

<sup>194</sup> Physiologie de la Polka: 255.

<sup>195</sup> *Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris* June 13, 1852.

<sup>196</sup> Harvey (2003): 93.

growth, and it had even enhanced its traditional centralized role as the national hub of communications, finance, commerce, culture, and, of course, state administration. But in 1850 the city experienced a widespread crisis of capital. There had been harvest failures in 1846-47 that brought misery to the country. Distressed people flooded into the city, seeking employment or assistance. Parisian life in 1848-51 was in total turmoil, a turmoil that affected painting, letters, science, and management, as well as industry, commerce, and labor relations.

With regards to cultural and public life, it was the time of dancing, the so-called dance mania, and there was a great love for Slavonic dances. Hence, the lexicon of dances offered at the public balls between 1844 and 1852 was impressive and they resembled each other like sisters. They developed with light speed and among them there were: polka 1844, mazurka 1844, redowa 1846, villeika 1849, cracovienne and varsoviana 1850. They were all speedy, happy, light and had Slavic origins and thus, reflected the needs of Parisian society for this kind of entertainment that did not require any psychological and mental engagement but which was enjoyable and relaxing.

The study of the evolution of the polka in the years 1845-1860 is based on the analysis of advertisements, comments and critics found in the main cultural Parisian journals such as: *Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris*, *La France Musicale*, *Le Ménestrel*, *Le Mercure des Theatres* and *La France Theatrale*. The first conclusions show that the polkamania was very intense in Paris in the 1840s and in the first half of the 1850s. After its introduction in 1844, the polka took its place in the programmes of public and private balls and became an integral part of concerts lead by Musard and other conductors, including Strauss and Jullien who visited the city from time to time. In fact, Strauss was a frequent visitor to Paris and the French audience loved his concerts and dance music. The journals were full of advertisements for his concerts in the 1850s and his polkas were well known in Paris. They were described here as passionate, delicious and seductive. The dance itself was also loved for its wagging and spruce Bohemian step.<sup>197</sup> The publishing houses issued numerous new polkas by Strauss.

It seems that, in contrast with Vienna and London, Paris did not have its exclusive polka composer. Among the rich number of musicians who wrote polkas, in Paris the most important were Wolff, Labitzky, Musard, Chledowsky, Fessy, Carpentier, Gungl, Waldteufel, Rosellen, Wallerstein, Padeloup, Alkan, Arban, Fahrbach, Herz, Halevy, Auber, Burgmueller, Thys, Hall, Meyerbeer and even Rossini<sup>198</sup>, and only a few of them become as famous as

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<sup>197</sup> *Le Ménestrel*, January 11-17, 1857.

<sup>198</sup> see for ex. *Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris*, February 11, 1844; April 9, 1844; April 14, 1844; April 21, 1844.

Strauss. Considering this great amount of composers, it is not surprising that newspapers announced new polkas sometimes even every day and within one month one could hear and dance more than two thousand polkas in Paris.<sup>199</sup> To illustrate this, the advertisement of the publication of new polkas by Brandus (illustration No. 8<sup>200</sup>) with the pieces written by Wolff, Labitzky, Strauss and Rosenhain from August 1847 is presented below.

Le Directeur gerant, D. D'HANNEBOERT

**Ouvrage nouveau de HENRI ROSELLEN,**  
EN VENTE chez BRANDUS et C<sup>e</sup>, successeurs de MAURICE SCHLESINGER, 97, rue Richelieu.

**FANTAISIE BRILLANTE SUR L'ÉCLAIR DE F. HALÉVY.**  
Op. 96. — Prix : 9 fr.

**Œuvres de HENRI ROSELLEN publiées par les mêmes éditeurs.**

<p>Op. 15. Fantaisie sur le Postillon de Lonjumeau. 6 »</p> <p>35. Fantaisie brillante sur le Guitarero. 7 50</p> <p>36. Fantaisie sur la Favorite. 7 50</p> <p>43. La Zampogna, air de ballet de la Reine de Chypre. 7 50</p>	<p>Op. 43 bis. Chœur dansé de la Reine de Chypre, arrangé en rondo. 7 50</p> <p>43 ter. La Cyprïote. 7 50</p> <p>46. Grand caprice sur la Reine de Chypre. 7 50</p> <p>54. L'Aérienne, valse brillante. 5 »</p>	<p>Op. 56. Fantaisie sur Charles VI. 7 50</p> <p>65. Fantaisie et variations sur Il Templario. 7 50</p> <p>71. Fantaisie brillante sur la Juive. 7 50</p> <p>86. Fantaisie sur les Mousquetaires de la Reine de France. 7 50</p> <p>Barcarolle originale. 5 »</p>
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**Collection de Polkas publiées par Brandus et C<sup>e</sup>, 97, rue Richelieu.**

<p>Cinq Polkas nationales les plus en vogue. . . . . 6 »</p> <p>LABITZKI. Trois nouvelles Polkas. . . . . 5 »</p> <p>PIXIS. Grande Polka. . . . . 4 50</p> <p>ROSENHAIN. Polka de concert . . . . . 7 50</p> <p>WOLFF. Quatre Polkas : 1<sup>re</sup> livraison . . . . . 5 »</p> <p>N. 1. La Carlotta, par Strauss, op. 133. . . . . 2 »</p> <p>2. La Cerritto, par Lanner, op. 189. . . . . 2 »</p> <p>3. La Duchesse, par Lanner, op. 194 . . . . . 2 »</p> <p>4. Polka favorite des Princes, par Wolff. . . . . 2 »</p> <p>5. Polka favorite de la Cour, par Wolff . . . . . 2 »</p> <p>6. Le Faubourg Saint-Germain, par Wolff. . . . . 2 »</p> <p>7. Le Faubourg Saint-Honoré, par Wolff. . . . . 2 »</p> <p>8. Les Camélias . . . . . 2 »</p> <p>9. Les Eaux d'Ems. . . . . 2 »</p> <p>10. Les Rayons du Soleil . . . . . 2 »</p> <p>11. Caroline. . . . . 2 »</p>	<p>N. 12. Le Bal de la Reine (Anna), par Strauss, op. 137. . . . . 2 »</p> <p>13. Les Anémones, par Labitzki, op. 83. 2 »</p> <p>14. Les Tubéreuses, par Labitzki, op. 83. 2 »</p> <p>15. Les Roses du Bengale, par Labitzki, op. 83 . . . . . 2 »</p> <p>16. Amélie. . . . . 2 »</p> <p>17. La Maréchale, par Wolff. . . . . 2 »</p> <p>18. La Favorite, par Wolff. . . . . 2 »</p> <p>19. L'Amazone, par Wolff. . . . . 2 »</p> <p>20. La Bohémienne, par Wolff. . . . . 2 »</p> <p>21. La Couronne de Lys . . . . . 2 »</p> <p>22. Le Bouquet d'Immortelles. . . . . 2 »</p> <p>23. La Branche d'Acacia. . . . . 2 »</p> <p>24. Polka favorite de Paris . . . . . 2 »</p> <p>25. La Course . . . . . 2 »</p>	<p>N. 26. Valérie. . . . . 2 »</p> <p>27. Augusta . . . . . 2 »</p> <p>28. La Taquine. . . . . 2 »</p> <p>29. La Mexicaine . . . . . 2 »</p> <p>30. Esmeralda. . . . . 2 »</p> <p>31. Baden-Baden. . . . . 2 »</p> <p>32. Aurora. . . . . 2 »</p> <p>33. Graciosa . . . . . 2 »</p> <p>34. Laure et Rosine . . . . . 2 »</p> <p>35. Rose-Pompon . . . . . 2 »</p> <p>36. Sultana, de Maurice Bourges . . . . . 2 »</p> <p>37. Polka favorite de Jenny Lind, par Wallerstein (avec le portrait de Jenny Lind) . . . . . 2 »</p> <p>38. Le Rendez-vous de chasse, de Wallerstein. . . . . 2 »</p>
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**REVUE ET GAZETTE MUSICALE DE PARIS**

Illustration No. 8

In 1851, the same publishing house published dances nouvelles with 22 polkas, 8 waltzes, 5 galops and 9 quadrilles.<sup>201</sup> Again, in the repertoire of the balls published by *Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris* in 1848 there were more polkas than waltzes or quadrilles and they were composed by different composers such as: Alkan, Padeloup, Musard, Marcaillhou and Quidant.<sup>202</sup> A similar situation is to be noted with regard to concerts performed by Strauss in Paris, at which the sum of waltzes and quadrilles was the same as of the polkas. Thus, it shows not only that the polka was still extremely popular in the following years but that at the mid-century it was much more popular than the waltz or quadrille. As a matter of fact, after the

<sup>199</sup> for ex. *Le Menestrel*, March 17-23, 1844: 3.

<sup>200</sup> *Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris*, August 1, 1847.

<sup>201</sup> for ex.: *Revue et Gazette musical de Paris*, September 21, 1851.

<sup>202</sup> *Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris*, February 20, 1848.

arrival of the polka, it was commented that the waltz became obsolete and the polka became the queen of all ballrooms and salons:

*"it is a kind of a mysterious and invisible god that we pay tribute to and it is like a king that reigns but is not on the throne [...] Ah! This is the polka, an imperious and demanding queen...something monstrous and impossible but for a good dancer something of many qualities."*<sup>203</sup>

Back to the Parisian polka composers, it can be noticed that most of them were foreigners. This is due to the popularity of Paris itself, which was a dynamic city and attracted foreign artists with its culture, fashions and its air of myth and mystery. Hence, for example Strauss and later also Jullien, who enjoyed international fame, were often invited to Paris to perform their polkas and other dances at the monster concerts. With regards to promenade and monster concerts, Paris had its great star and this was Philippe Musard. He organized great public concerts with dance music, where quadrilles and galops were his main specialties. He composed also some polkas but his real interest was in quadrilles. By contrast to a rapid growth in the number of polka composers in Paris, it can be noted that the names of three great dancing masters seem to have disappeared quickly from the programs of the balls over the years. From time to time the names of new dancing masters could be read in journals but none of them gained such fame as Cellarius, Laborde and Coralli.

Another factor that points to the popularity of the polka and its use as a commercial good in mid-century Paris is that, besides being advertised and published, the popular polka dance sheet music for piano was often made available for readers on the pages of the journals. Notably, the circulation of sheet music was very intensive. Thus the publishing companies published everything that was interesting, fashionable and suitable for sale. Many polka sheet music pieces were for example published in *Le Ménestrel* in 1847 and 1848. There were for example: the polka *Églantine* by Burgmueller<sup>204</sup>, *Marienka* by Strauss<sup>205</sup>, *Pomponnette* by Leffebure-Vvely<sup>206</sup>, *Mon Coeur* by Buvernoy<sup>207</sup> and many others. Thus, once again, it is clear that the polka was used as a consumption good and became a commercial product of the time.

It was mentioned before that the introduction of the polka in 1844 met with positive and negative reactions. As a matter of fact, this situation did not change as the years

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<sup>203</sup> *"C'est un dieu invisible et mystérieux à qui l'on rend hommage; c'est un roi constitutionnel, qui règne mais ne gouverne pas. [...] Ah! C'est que la Polka est une reine impérieuse et exigeante, qui ne souffre point de médiocrité: mal dansée, c'est quelque chose de monstrueux et d'impossible, et pour la bien danser il faut tant de qualités!"* In: Perrot/Adrien (1845): 31.

<sup>204</sup> *Le Ménestrel*, July, 25-31, 1847.

<sup>205</sup> *Le Ménestrel*, June 27 to July 3, 1847.

<sup>206</sup> *Le Ménestrel*, January 23-29, 1848.

<sup>207</sup> *Le Ménestrel*, February 2 to March 5, 1848.



went by and thus, in 1846, *The Revue et Gazette Musicale* commented that "*the polka invaded everybody, it spread out everywhere*".<sup>208</sup> Clearly, the use of the word "invaded" suggested that this new fashion was seen as something alarming and distressing. Furthermore, in January 1846, *La France Théâtrale* commented that the polka still reigned the dancing floors of public and private balls all over Paris and they multiplied from day to day during the Carnival of 1846. The French press was unrestrained in its criticism and said that this foreign dance was a sort of unhealthy importation and a real plague, the most terrible plague, more dreadful than lansquenet which was a popular card game on a mass scale at that time.

The polka was danced everywhere, even mansards, private apartments or boutiques were transformed into temporary ballrooms. The polka was compared to hashish that caused all kinds of extreme emotions from anxiety through sadness and pain to cheerfulness and happiness.<sup>209</sup> In 1850 the article entitled "*Le Bal Musard*" was published and described the polka as dangerous and exciting.<sup>210</sup> Vernier made fun of the polka and depicted enthusiastic dancers in various, funny situations like the one in the illustration No. 9. It shows a bourgeois couple, disturbed by another couple falling through the ceiling into their apartment. The reason for this unpleasant issue was polka dancing.

For all these reasons it can be stated that, a few years following its introduction in Paris, the polka was still criticized for its negative effects on society. Besides being considered unhealthy, dangerous, obsolete and macabre, it was continuously described as dreadful, horrible, monotonous, giddy, frenetic.<sup>211</sup> Moreover, in 1860, 15 years after its arrival in Paris, the polka was still considered vulgar.<sup>212</sup> It seems also that even the church was against the polka and sometimes its critical opinions were published in the journals. Its comments usually expressed its disapproval at immoral consequences of the polka. Nevertheless, the same quality was also one of the crucial reasons for the great popularity of this dance in Paris; therefore it will be discussed in a separate section.

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<sup>208</sup> "*la polka a tout envahi, elle s'est répandue partout. Un navire ans porte aujourd'hui le nom de Polka.*" In: *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris*, January 4, 1846.

<sup>209</sup> "*La Polka! mais c'est une importation malsaine, mais c'est un vrai fléau, fléau plus terrible, plus redoutable que le lansquenet, cette autre idole du monde fashionable...On polke à côté de moi, on polke au dessus, on polka au dessous, la boutique et la mansarde sont transformées en salles de bal, toutes les classes s'en mêlent.*" In: *La France Théâtrale*, January 29 to February 1, 1846.

<sup>210</sup> *Le Bal Musard*: 15.

<sup>211</sup> for ex. *La France théâtrale. Journal des intérêts artistiques et littéraires*, October 11, 1844.

<sup>212</sup> Fremy, Arnould (1860): *La cousine Julie*. Paris 12 Edition: Charpentier Libraire-editeum: 31.



Illustration No. 9 <sup>213</sup>

As dancing was the favourite amusement with Parisians both in winter and summer, there was no quarter of the capital in which ballrooms suited to all classes could not be found. The understanding of a what kind of social strata continued to be dominant in dancing the polka over the years requires a closer look at the places were it was danced. The analysis of the contemporary press shows clearly that for years, the polka continued to be danced at the Bal Mabille, Ranelagh and Chaumière, as well as in the theatres mentioned earlier. As time went on it was also to be encountered in many new dance halls, gardens and theatres all over Paris. It was performed and exhibited also at the Valentino Ball, at the concerts in Casino, at le Chateau Rouge, Prado, Jardin d'Hiver, Salle Sainte-Cécile, Vauxhall, Tivoli, l'Ermitrage,

<sup>213</sup> Charles Vernier: "Un desagrement de la polka", Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris, Département de Estampees No. Danse Ris. 27 Polka (II).

Montesquieu and others.<sup>214</sup>

Most of these dance halls were places where the bourgeoisie met for dancing, chatting and entertaining. However, there were also some where mainly working and lower-middle classes could be encountered. They were usually located in the districts of Paris inhabited by these social groups. It happened sometimes that several balls took place in various places all over the city at the same time and so the participants had to take a kind of tour through the ballrooms to be able to take advantage of all dance pleasures.



Illustration No. 10<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> La France Théâtrale, December 14-18, 1845.

<sup>215</sup> Vernier Charles: *Les Bals de Paris "Valentino"*.

Salle Valentino was one of the most celebrated and diverting ball-rooms of Paris. Primarily, it was a concert hall where the most prestigious concerts took place. Later, in around 1841, it became a ballroom. When full, the ballroom presented a scene of extraordinary animation.

*"Whenever the policemen's backs are turned, the cancan reigns in all its glory, to degenerate into a sober quadrille figure as soon as danger is apprehended. As for the waltz and polka, the stranger may expect to see every variety of embrace, not excepting the Cornish, nay, the ursine hug. The contortions and kicks some of the dancers indulge in are astounding to a novice in Parisian balls."*<sup>216</sup>

Here, Musard's orchestra exhibited itself and the balls were attended with great enthusiasm. The Balls here were visited mainly by commercial travellers, students, grisettes and other bourgeois members of Parisian society and this can be observed also in the illustration above.

Another place for dancing was Jardin d'Hiver, avenue de Champs Elysees opened in 1846 and was the first place to link between winter and summer balls. It was the most splendid of all places of amusement of its kind in the capital. The admission fee, which was between 3 and 10fr, limited the participants of the balls to members of the better classes. The place was described as a garden in which all the seductions and enchantments united.<sup>217</sup> Furthermore, the balls de l'Opera also remained very fashionable among good Parisian society throughout the years and Musard conducted many of his own polkas there.<sup>218</sup> Besides being the centre of enjoyment and dancing, the Opera during the carnival ball became a place of malicious intrigues and séances and these events were visited by all kinds of people from dandies, financiers, legislators, artists to literary men and foreigners. They were also very lively commented on the contemporary press. For example, the success of Musard's polka "*La Polka des Baisers*" at the Bal de l'Opera was announced as "*le succès de la saison d'été.*"<sup>219</sup>

Another important dance hall where the bourgeois society met to dance the polka was the Prado. It was divided into two separate parts, the Rotonde and the Grand Salon. The rotunda was reserved for students and grisettes. In the great saloon were to be seen the great dance mistresses such as Clara Fontaine, Mogador, Louise la Balocheuse, Rose Pompon, Malakoff or Jeanne la Juive who performed eccentric dance to the music executed by the orchestra. It can be seen in illustration No. 11 that this spacious ballroom allowed a lot of freedom in the execution of dances. The simple but also elegant garments of the participants

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<sup>216</sup> Galignani, A. and W. (1852): *Galignani's New Paris Guide*. Paris: A. and W. Galignani and C&o. 502.

<sup>217</sup> Galignani (1852): 503-504.

<sup>218</sup> La France Musicale, 1845: 8.

<sup>219</sup> La France Musicale, 1859: 467.



lead to the conclusion that all kinds of bourgeoisie visited this dance hall. Another place, the Château Rouge, was the center of Paris social life between 1848 and 1864 during the Second Empire. In the 1840s, this was the site of what would become one of the largest public dance halls in the north of Paris – the Bal du Château-Rouge, also known as the Nouveau Tivoli.<sup>220</sup> It was open to all kinds of participants.



Fig. 45. — Bal du Prado (1855).

Illustration No. 11<sup>221</sup>

As for locations of minor importance and visited mainly by the lower bourgeoisie and working class there was for example Hermitage, founded in 1815. It became the meeting place of grisettes and clerks. It was commented that „*men and women, they came there to frolic.*”<sup>222</sup> Furthermore, there were Salle Sainte-Cécile, a lofty and small ballroom where for the price of

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<sup>220</sup> Hazan (2011): 202.

<sup>221</sup> “Bal du Prado” by Hoffbauer available at the Brown University Library published in: Hoffbauer. *Paris à travers les âges aspects successifs des monuments et quartiers historiques de Paris depuis le XIIIe siècle jusqu'à nos jours*. Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1875-1882. In: <http://library.brown.edu/find/Record/dc1172175762196725>.

<sup>222</sup> Vuillier (2004).



2 fr everybody could enjoy dancing pleasures. The same applied to Cercle Montesquieu which was a small room attended mainly by some inferior company. Vauxhall garden was a pleasure garden, primarily erected in London. Its vogue diffused all over the world and soon other Vauxhall ballrooms were opened in Paris (1764) and New York. Finally, there was Casino, one of the well known music halls of Paris. It was erected in 1730 and renamed Jardin de Tivoli after the Revolution. Illustration No. 12 presents participants of the balls in Casino. They are simply dressed, the room has a quite rough aspect and people here might come from lower parts of the bourgeoisie and perhaps some members of the working class. As can be seen, they also seem to indulge in the dancing pleasures of the time.



Illustration No. 12 <sup>223</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> The illustration was made by Winslow Homer, American Naturalist Painter, engraver and Illustrator (1836-1910) and published in Harper's Weekly on November 23, 1867.

To conclude, the polka remained popular on the ballroom floors through the years and continued to be danced by all social classes with the predominance of the middle classes. It was the bourgeoisie that gave the tone to most social events and dictated the tastes of the time. Moreover, very often working class members could not afford to participate in some of the balls because the prices of the tickets did not correspond with their salaries. The polka continued to be accompanied by waltzes, mazurkas, galops, schottisches and quadrilles, nevertheless it remained popular and constituted an integral part of the ball and concert programmes till 1860.

#### **1.4. "Une danse aphrodisiaque": The exoticism and eroticism of the polka**

The point was made humorously in *La Polka enseignée sans maître: "Occasion makes polkeuse..."* This ambiguous and suggestive aphorism is quoted here to remind the readers, that besides being joyful and happy, the polka was seen as dangerous and immoral for young people. It was already mentioned that it was criticized for its nature, its high kicks and passionate and light character. It seems that this aspect of the polka influenced society and the evolution of the polka in Paris in a very significant way. Hence it was broadly commented on in the contemporary press and literature and even more, it was ridiculed in caricatures and paintings. This section consists of two parts. On the one hand, it is going to uncover, if and how far the polka had a negative and immoral effect on Parisian society and how this aspect influenced its popularity in Paris. On the other hand, through the use of the mythical story of a Bohemian girl it shows how the polka reflected the current socio-political situation of midnineteenth-century Paris. Before focusing completely on the polka, however, a few words about the situation of women in Paris are presented below. This brief introduction allows to trace more clearly the dynamics between women's situation at the time and their relationship to dance and cultural and social changes of the time.

Throughout most of the nineteenth century women from middle- and upper-classes were under the protection of men. As a consequence they were deprived of legal rights, access to the professions and they could not appear independently in public life. Furthermore, loss of respectability was considered an absolute disaster and there was no return from it. Thus, with regard to the conduct of women, society in Paris had established rules which, in some measure, limited the power of scandal, and certainly acted as a restraining principle on women in general. As regards unmarried women, they had to be always under the safeguard of their mothers and hence, because the theatre was still regarded as slightly sinful, many

young women simply did not attend until after they married, so that their "innocence" would not be compromised. With a married woman, the rules were also well defined. As long as a wife lived under her husband's roof, his presence with her in public sanctioned and protected her, the world could whisper its opinions and observations, but it had no right to openly manifest its disapprobation or its suspicions. But if once a woman forfeited the protection of her husband, if she was separated from him, and his home was no longer hers, then the animadversion of the world had free scope to exercise its malice or its censure on her. The only independent position of a woman in France was that of a widow. The young widows in France enjoyed every privilege, they were the only women who might flirt, dance, come, go and dress exactly as they pleased.<sup>224</sup> However, it seems that in all ranks, women in France had more power than in any other country; and this was mainly attributable to the sphere of usefulness in which the manners and customs, of the French had placed them. In the middle-classes for example, the wife had the entire management of domestic arrangements such as: ordering, superintending, and administering all home expenses. French women learned arithmetic, and the true value of money - it was a portion of their education.

Legally considered, it was possible for a woman to live her own way, economically and socially, without any tutelage from men, employers or other institutions. Naturally, it was also very difficult, because women's wages were for the most part insufficient to meet even basic needs. A skilled dressmaker, seamstress, or bookbinder could occasionally achieve economic independence, otherwise the positions available for women were either domestic services or - for educated women - governesses, companions and schoolteachers.<sup>225</sup> These positions gave little liberty and money; therefore women used to supplement their income through prostitution or by establishing a liaison with a man. Prostitution was extremely widespread and blended into a wide range of other activities, from the lower-class dance halls to the higher-class opera and theater, and merged into the profession of "mistress". In a large city like Paris, all kinds of liaisons were possible. It was common, for instance, for students from the provinces to employ mistresses, thus giving birth to the profession of the so-called "grisette". Gradually, they were replaced by "lorettes", women of pleasure who used their powers of seduction for shorter-term gain (meals, entertainment, gifts or money).

Undeniably, the dance became a tool to gain power over men. Beginning in the 1830s, dancing came to be viewed as vehiculating sexuality rather than love, hence its appeal to men who wished to attract their sexual opposites or to watch and fetishise the female dancers. The

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<sup>224</sup> de Marguerittes (1855): 357-359.

<sup>225</sup> Harvey (2003): 185.



earlier association of dance with love and sentiment metabolised over time into a sexual correlation which objectified the body.<sup>226</sup> For women especially, the ball offered them a temporary public space in which to express themselves with their bodies. Presenting their desires, realising dreams, exemplifying femininity and contesting restrictive social rules, women utilised the signifying practice of dance subversively to graph in space their silenced subjectivity even as social constraints determined how the dancers gave their bodies to the dancing.<sup>227</sup> On the other hand, some women used the dancing to seduce men and there are many references to some lorettes in the contemporary literature and documents who became fashionable and known polka dancers. The most famous were: Celeste Mogador, Lise Sergent, Clara Fontaine and Rose Pompon and their role in the polka popularization and sexualization will be dealt with in greater depth later.

At the same time, Paris had a second face. The city was as addictive as a drug and one of the reasons for this was its "Bohemian" side. It drew together artists, the young, shady but inventive characters, political radicals, visionaries, eccentrics, rebels against discipline, the poor and people rejected by their families. It was a sort of parallel world, another Paris for them. For the first bohemians it was a dreamlike and exotic world and from its first days Bohemia had appeared to offer women space and freedom from the social restrictions of respectable society, and recognition as autonomous individuals in their own right. Many lorettes and female dancers escaped to the Bohemian Paris.

***Exoticism of the polka: the use of the myth of the dancing Bohemian Girl to mirror the political and social issues of the time***

Analysis of around 200 covers of various polka sheet music composed in Paris in the period between 1844 and 1860 allows the deduction that two topics were the focus of those compositions: women and Bohemia. With regards to women, *La Coquette*, *La Parisienne*, *Isabella*, *Les Irresistibles*, *Oiseaux*, *un file d'Eve*, *un premier amour*, *Rendez vous de chasse* are just some of the titles of the most famous polkas published and performed in the French capital. To better illustrate the connection between women and the polka it is enough to look at 6 polkas, written by Herz in 1845. They were all devoted to beautiful women: *La Belle Allemande*, *Hongroise*, *Suedoise*, *Bohemienne*, *Polonaise*, *Moscovise*.<sup>228</sup> Also Strauss devoted many of his polkas to women and love related topics (discussed in the next chapter).

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<sup>226</sup> Cordova: 245.

<sup>227</sup> Cordova: 246.

<sup>228</sup> La France Musicale, 1845: 16.

Interestingly, these and other titles usually corresponded with the image of women on the sheet music covers. As this relation of the polka and femininity and sexuality are crucial for this work, it will be discussed separately in the next section and now I will focus mainly on the relations of the polka with Bohemia.

With regard to Bohemia, I would like to refer to an anecdote of a dance student and published in 1845. It reported that Cellarius, who most probably introduced the polka in Paris, was an unknown and mysterious figure and managed to influence gossip sufficiently to pass himself off as the exiled Pole who had organised the first polka performances in Paris. One day he brought a new dance to the French capital and announced that he would teach a dance that would make a revolution.<sup>229</sup> Why did he speak about revolution when mentioning the polka? At first sight, it could be simply interpreted as a marketing trick, which aimed at attracting as many polka students as possible. However, Coralli also mentioned a sort of a social revolution caused in Paris by the polka.<sup>230</sup> Moreover, after a careful analysis of press articles and contemporary writings it can be noted, that the word "revolution" had been used with relation to the polka with a certain regularity. The aim of this section is to analyze to what extent the polka interacted with social and political issues or in other words it mirrored the socio-political events taking place in mid-century Paris. Furthermore, the myth of the dancing Bohemian Girl that influenced the popularization of the polka in Paris constitutes another important element that provoked the following discussion.

As mentioned before, by 1830, Paris was a cultural and entertainment centre without rival. Constant carnivals, concerts and dances were staged there, and it boasted many more theatres than London for a population half the size. Exotic music of various kinds invaded musical life in these years, in large part through theatrical dance, and there was a great fascination with the culture of the Middle-East. Nevertheless, peripheral European countries such as Poland, Bohemia or Spain were also seen as exotic by the French who were fascinated by their cultures. Consequently, in Paris, the unconventional lifestyle called "la Boheme" was adopted. Bohemia was the name for the attempt by nineteenth- and twentieth-century intellectuals, writers, artists and radicals to constitute an alternative world within Western society. It was a sort of country with visible inhabitants, without a location on any map. The terms "Bohemia", "la Bohème" and "Bohemian" first appeared in the 1830s and 1840s in France and alluded to the common French word for gypsy-bohémien and was associated with

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<sup>229</sup> The Polka Almanach 1845.

<sup>230</sup> Perrot/Adrien (1845): 25.

the province of Bohemia as the gypsies' place of origin<sup>231</sup>. Until the new meaning for the term developed, "bohemian" had traditionally been used in France to refer to the semi-criminal underworld. Marx deployed it in that sense when he referred to the "vagabonds, discharged soldiers, discharged jailbirds, escaped galley slaves, swindlers, mountebanks, pickpockets, tricksters, gamblers, procurers, brothel-keepers, porters, literati, organ-grinders, rag-pickers, knife-grinders, tinkers, beggars etc."<sup>232</sup>

Even, if Bohemia was created as a sort of opposition to the "bourgeois society" many members of the bourgeoisie were attracted by it. This fascination was rooted in their romantic desire for the exotic, the uncivilized, the unclassifiable, the attempt to invoke the deeper levels of human nature. It could be said that the polka was a product of these romantic attitudes and Bohemian behaviours. With regard to women, from the 1830s onwards, generations of bohemian women who had rejected the protection of the traditional family, carved out meaningful roles for themselves in the alternative world of the arts. Some created what were essentially variants of the traditional domestic and social roles assigned to them throughout society; some forged identities related to the transgressive forms of sexuality that were so important for this new life style, others demanded recognition as artists. Among these types of women there were: *Grisette*<sup>233</sup> or „*Mistress; Muse, Model, Wife, Mother, Salon Hostess, Independent Woman, Worker or Artist*“.<sup>234</sup>

The myth about the Bohemian girl, mentioned in the introduction to this work, did not have any particular influence on the polka in Paris, moreover it was almost never commented on in press and literature. Indirectly, however, it seems that the story of the Bohemian girl dancing the polka somewhere in Bohemia was very exotic and that was because Bohemia in itself was exotic and romantic to Parisians. This becomes clear when looking at the sheet music covers of some of the contemporary polkas. Many of them presented Bohemian couples, wearing traditional costumes and dancing the polka. In fact, this topic became one of the main themes for the covers of the polka sheet music and consequently became part of making the polka fashionable in Paris. Below I present few examples of this kind of music covers.

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<sup>231</sup> Seigel, Jerrold (1986): *Bohemian Paris. Culture, Politics and the Boundaries of Bourgeois Life, 1830-1930*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press: 5.

<sup>232</sup> Marx, Karl: *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte In: Marx, Karl/ Engels Frederick (1968): Marx and Engels Selected Works. International Publishers: 137.*

<sup>233</sup> Grisette- "a young girl sixteen to thirty years old who works all week and has fun on Sundays. Her job: she would be a seamstress, a flower-maker, a glove-maker, a millionaire" In: Steele (1988): 70.

<sup>234</sup> Wilson, Elizabeth (2000): *Bohemians. The glamorous outcasts*. New York: I.B.Tauris&Co Ltd: 85.

*Depôt 1844 - Mars 16 - 490.*

# LES TROIS POLKA

Exécutées au Théâtre des Variétés.

LAUSSE & CIE  
L.R. MUSIQUE  
VIRIOTYKIE.

PAS de CORALLI  
DANSÉ PAR M<sup>lle</sup> MARIA VOLET ET M. LIONEL.  
Musique composée par  
**L. CHLEDOWSKI.** PIANO & ACCORD. LIE.

PRIX 4 f. 50.

Vendu chez J. MEISSONNIER, 22, Rue Dauphine.

*F. Mecklenburg*

N. 1172

Illustration No.13 235

A CELLARIUS.  
**LES CELLARIENNES**

**TROIS POLKA**  
pour PIANO par  
**OSCAR COMETTANT.**  
PRIX 5 FR<sup>cs</sup>  
à Paris, chez E. Troupenas, 40, Rue Vivienne.

1844. 2726

AU PROFIT DES POLONAIS.  
**LA JEUNE POLONAISE.**  
Nouvelle **POLKA** pour le Piano.

L'Auteur de la 1<sup>re</sup> Redowa.  
*Publié à Paris au Monestrel.*  
**PH. GAWLIKOWSKI.**  
Professeur de Danse. 1846. 1005

Paris, COLONBIER Editeur, rue Vivienne N<sup>o</sup> 6.  
et chez l'Auteur à l'adresse de ses Cours, 18, rue de l'ancienne Comédie.  
PRIX 2 f. 50.



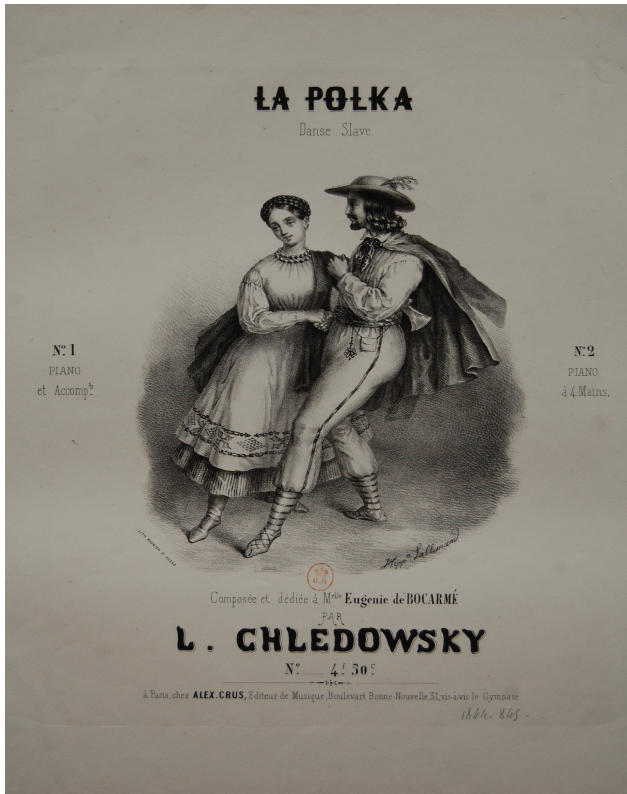


Illustration No.14,15,16,17<sup>236</sup>

Bohemia was seen as the country of gypsies and gypsy life was seen as adventurous and carefree. They lived simply, and wholly for the moment. Even if modern life threatened to make their style of living disappear, their spirit was preserved in art and music. In fact, people from Paris (very often dancing masters) pretended to have gone to Bohemia and some of them really went there to study the traditional steps and ways of dancing the polka; thus there were different methods and different schools of teaching and dancing this new fashion. Since 1848 the Czechs had been widely perceived as the leaders in liberation movements against the Habsburgs. That resistance was expressed through popular movements and through the successive political manoeuvres of the Czech Political Parties, all articulating hopes of a strong Czech bourgeoisie for Czech rights and ultimately, independence. As a consequence, not only was Bohemia exotic and hence, attractive for the inhabitants of Paris, but also Czech courage and resistance in searching for a better tomorrow held great appeal.

Furthermore, the most powerful symbol of nationalism in East Central Europe was the music of the "folk", which had a special richness and vitality in unmodernised rural communities of these territories. The nationalist movements of the nineteenth century made substantial capital out of folklore, which they viewed - somewhat spuriously - as a collective

<sup>236</sup> all the illustrations are from the Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris. Département de Estampes No. Kd 5b (t.2).

expression of national identities. Over the course of the nineteenth century, many different national styles were used by composers. People across Europe came to associate them with the particular locale almost automatically. These styles were often based on folk-dance types. Tunes in various of these folk and non-Western traditions (peripheral areas of Europe such as Bohemia, Poland or Spain) often used pentatonic scales and rhythmical and melodic solutions unknown to the Western audience, thus making the music sound exotic. The relatively sudden explosion of the musically exotic increased public exposure to such traditions.

In Paris, post and pre-revolutionary, this kind of political events had a great influence on people searching for freedom, liberty and new identity. Indeed, with many revolutions that took place in Paris at that time, people felt a need for freedom and enjoyment. The transformation of society, which in the case of France was very bloody, had to bring a sort of revolution in dance and music and not surprisingly, the polka was in a certain way integral to all these changes. As mentioned before, it came to Paris in 1840 but it was really noticed and made public in 1844. What would be the reason for this kind of reaction to the new dance? We know that Louis-Philippe was progressive but at the same time conservative. However, he changed his ruling strategy to a more rigid one exactly at the moment when the polka started to become fashionable. Perhaps this course of events that led to the dissatisfaction and consequently rebellion of the French working classes and bourgeoisie partly influenced the popularity of the polka which symbolised freedom, freshness and novelty. Hence people identified with it. As a poet in the journal *l'Artiste* summarized it: "*The polka is a personification of our society*".<sup>237</sup>

Indeed, the catchword of the day was "zeitgeist" which was understood as the fusion of art and politics. Accordingly, political repercussions and trends- the passion for freedom and the early, still liberal nationalism of the 1830 revolution - left a strong imprint on certain artistic creations of the time. It is possible that the happy polka, that seemed to be much more liberal, erotic and crazy than the other social dances of the time, was one of the signs of this passion for freedom and upcoming events of 1848. By contrast, in 1849, French students sang about their country with the following words:

*"La polka, la pipe et la bière  
Ne consomment plus nos loisirs;  
Les petits bosquets de Cythère  
Ne révellent plus nos désirs,  
Nous avons pour maitresse unique  
Minerve, sous de nouveaux traits;*

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<sup>237</sup> Polka Almanach: 48.

*C'est notre jeune République;  
Vénus n'aura son tour qu'après.*<sup>238</sup>

In short, this song shows how the values and desires that dominated young people's lives at the end of the first half of the nineteenth century were changing. It is also a documentary and mirror of French society before the revolutions of 1848. People at this time wanted to dance the polka, smoke and drink beer, all in all they wanted to enjoy themselves. By contrast, in 1849 they desired to construct the young Republic based on new values of wisdom and intelligence. This can be interpreted as a criticism of the polka, as being something very silly, transitory and useless. Moreover, it shows clearly that the polka had a shortlived popularity and was considered a rather funny and useless temporary enjoyment.

To conclude, the Bohemian polka, even if very symbolic, played its small role in the political and social changes that took place at the mid-century in Paris. On the one hand, interest in this new, exotic folk dance was a sign of political and social transformation taking place in French society. On the other hand the character and execution of the polka reflected people's desire for freedom and change.

#### ***The "night birds" and the "sexualization" of the polka***

A very enjoyable anecdote was published in an article of *La Sylphide*: an old lady criticized the verb "*polker*" to be the most ridiculous verb she had ever heard. A young polkeuse replied to her that it was also the most active verb he had ever heard.<sup>239</sup> The meaning of this short story could be interpreted in a few ways. On the one hand it refers to the speed and lively character of the polka as well as its fast diffusion among the Parisian society. On the other hand it is a great example of the process of so called „sexualization“ of the polka, whereby a word „*polker*“ gained various meanings, usually full of sexually suggestive remarks. The aim of this section is to analyse the immoral dimension of the polka and the process of its eroticisation. The study is conducted through the analysis of caricatures and paintings by Vernier and the life and activity of the so called „night birds“ - female dancers, prostitutes, lorettes and grisettes - in the Parisian ballrooms and theatres.

There is an initial discussion of women's participation in the balls in Paris. In contrast with the situation in most countries, women also participated in the pleasures of this city, although respectable Frenchwomen almost always did so as part of a family group. New forms of recreation developed that shifted away from the old, more-or-less private contexts of

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<sup>238</sup> Dupont, Pierre (1849): *Le chant des Étudiants*. Paris.

<sup>239</sup> *La Sylphide*, December 1843 to May 1844: 392.

family and neighborhood, to become public, commercial, even standardized entertainment. Semi-public areas, however, were safer for women.<sup>240</sup> For this and other reasons, young girls were usually accompanied at the balls by women between 30 and 40. Nevertheless, there was always a threat to their morals as these kinds of attractions influenced them in a very significant way. For example it is clearly visible in an extract from a ball description from 1856 describing a young women at a Paris ball, whose physiognomy changed entirely after hearing the first polka.

*"She arrives pale, sickly, lacking in vitality like those poor white lilies that bloom in winter in a heated greenhouse, but after the first polka, a sudden metamorphosis occurs in the physiognomy of the young woman. Her cheeks take on new colours resembling the leaves of the Rose bengal, her eyes are animated and throw lightnings, her fragile and delicate body seems to have muscles made of steel..."*<sup>241</sup>

A short look at the description illustrates clearly that the polka was seen as a potential danger to morals and good behaviour on the part of young women. Unexpectedly, thanks to the polka, a simple girl becomes a sort of demon of eroticism emanating with sex appeal.

Additionally, Coralli mentioned something of a "polkeur-touriste", a dancer who travelled in different provinces of France and on the pretext of taking polka lessons, but his real goal was to attract the most beautiful girls of the village and find a wife.<sup>242</sup> Arnoud Warnod expressed great outrage at the way the young men hold their female partners waists in his article written in 1856. Moreover he compared the polka dancing with the act of prostitution:

*"The young Christian virgins dance the polka, then the waltz and then the polka-mazurka, the redova, the schotisch etc. They are passed in the arms and on the beating breasts of excited and fevered young people. Even the purest young women start to indulge in the enjoyments of the dance, for the pleasure of men who they even do not know, for example hussar officers, students or travellers and business men. Mothers applaud silly and sometimes, more than modern dances, these dances look to me simply like real acts of prostitution."*<sup>243</sup>

The polka, however, was not only considered dangerous for young and unmarried girls but it looks like it was also a threat for wives and husbands.<sup>244</sup> Some married women and men

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<sup>240</sup> Steele (1988).

<sup>241</sup> La Sylphide, January 30, 1856.

<sup>242</sup> Perrot/Adrien (1845): 48-50.

<sup>243</sup> *"Le jeunes vierges chrétiennes polkerent, puis valsèrent, puis la polka-mazurka, la redova, la scottisch, etc., les firent passer dans les bras et sur les poitrines palpitantes des jeunes gens enfiévrés, et maintenant la jeune fille la plus pure se livre, quelquefois entre deux communions, à l'étreinte des premiers venus, officiers de hussards, étudiants, hommes du monde. Les mères applaudissent niaisement et il y a des bals où l'on ne danse plus que de ces danses modernes que je regarde comme de véritables actes de prostitution."* In: Warnod, Andre (1856): "Une Danse aprodisiaque" In: Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris, Art. de presse 1848-1921. Polka 10050.

<sup>244</sup> La Sylphide, December 1843 to May 1844.



gained pleasure from dancing it with another partner; thus the polka was seen as a specter of betrayal. It is therefore not surprising that older generations looked at it without mercy and they found the people who danced it degenerated and perverted.<sup>245</sup> In fact, *La France Musicale* criticized the arrival of the polka with these words:

*"Some time ago the fashion brought amongst us a new pleasure. The most elegant and charming women fell in love with this new and bizarre dance- the polka...she leaps her hips and arms in a malicious way, she turns and falls again on her feet, then on the other one; she gazes at the partner and shakes his arms in a nonchalant way, finally she provokes her cavalier with voluptuous movements and glances directed at him. La Polka is a dangerous dance for young women.... it's a bastard sister of progressive dances at the balls de l'Opéra."*<sup>246</sup>

As mentioned in the previous sections, in 1844, the polka could be traced everywhere all over Paris: in the salons, in the society circles, in the cafe, everybody talked about it. All the journals were full of advertisements and criticisms of the polka performances, streets were covered by polka posters, caricaturists designed a handful of the polka pictures, even men wore ties with polka patterns and posters announced polka lessons in all Paris districts. With regards to theatres, very often, each of them had its dancers and for that reason the polka was performed differently in each of them. With the fashion of the polka in full swing, all Paris was attending the balls in famous dance halls such as for example Ranelagh, Bal Mabille and Chaumiere. It was already mentioned that Bal Mabille was visited by everyone including foreign princes and dignitaries. Married men visited this place without their wives because the majority of the women who frequented this ball were lorettes, grisettes or courtesans. Interestingly, these ladies were in many cases described by the press as polka queens of those places. Many of the theatres and ballrooms had its "reine" – hostess and queen of the polka who had the leading role in all polka performances at the balls and who attracted the gazes of the excited men. In fact, for example for the editors of *Le journal amusant (1845)* the polka was visible: at Ranelagh it could be seen in the young features of lorettes and grisettes such as the Queen Pomaré, at Chaumière under the coat of miss Paquita, at theatre Variétés in the boots of miss Maria Volet, at Palais-Royal through the person of Levassor, at Vaudeville in the

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<sup>245</sup> Figaro, May 10, 1857: 2.

<sup>246</sup> „ Ah! Par exemple, la mode a colporté depuis quelque temps parmi nous de singuliers plaisirs. Les femmes les plus charmantes se sont éprises subitement d'une danse bizarre, la Polka. Russe ou bohême, polonaise ou hongroise, cette nouvelle reine a des allures bien burlesques, bien hardies! Voyez, s'il vous plait, avec quel laisser-aller elle sautille en secouant malicieusement ses hanches et ses bras; elle tourne, retombe sur un pied, puis sur l'autre; elle lance un oeil de feu, agite ses bras nonchalamment, et provoque, par de voluptueux élancemens, les regards de son cavalier. La Polka est une danse dangereuse pour les jeunes femmes; elle est décente à demi; c'est une soeur bâtarde des dases progressives en vogue aus bals de l'Opéra..." In: Maurel, J/ Esdudier, L. (red): *La France musicale*, 1844: 84.

person of madame Doche, in Gymnase through mademoiselle Nathalie, etc.<sup>247</sup>

Curiously, until now, nobody really stressed the role of these female "dancers" in the polka popularization in Paris. It could be said that officially the polka in Paris was made fashionable through the dancing masters such as Cellarius, Coralli and Laborde. They danced the polka on the theatre scenes and taught it in their schools, moreover, noble ladies invited them to dance the polka at their private balls. Anyway, it is evident that not only men danced the polka and there were also fashionable women who either specialised in the polka or were proper dancers of it. Through the analysis of contemporary press and literature it can be noted that some of the lorettes became acknowledged polka dancers.

Among the most significant dancers and lorettes who performed the polka were Claire Fontaine, Reine Pomare (Elise Sergent), Celeste Mogador, Maria (Léontine Rumilly) and Rose Pompon. In particular, they were famous in the Paris dance halls such as Ranelagh, Bal Mabille, Prado and Chaumière and their polka performances attracted crowds of men. They usually did not participate in the private balls because of their questionable reputation and soon the inconstant press denounced them as dangerous to society's men. The polka as performed by these *reines* had come to symbolise an uncontrollable sexuality.<sup>248</sup> As a matter of fact, these "ladies" were very often presented in a very exciting and sensual way and sometimes put in their place by some journalists and poets like in the example below:

*Pompon..., hold in the eccentricities of the frenetic polka! ... Do not emphasize your gestures!... Pomare..., do not drag in this way your royal attitude across this mass of people who take dirty glances of you... Mogador..., do not waste so much of your smile which reminds us of your heavenly name. Don't you know that your divine step with these light feet puts the innocence of the boxers and drunkards across the Channel in danger..."<sup>249</sup>*

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<sup>247</sup> "En 1845, j'ai vu la polka au Ranelagh sous les traits jeunes de la reine Pomaré; je l'ai vue à la Chaumière sous la mantille de mademoiselle Paquita, jeune modiste, qu'on couronnait tour le soirs de roses de Fontenay et de réséda; je l'ai vue au théâtre des Variétés dans les bottines éperonnées de mademoiselle Maria Volet, je l'ai vue a Palais-Royal dans la personne de Levassor; je l'ai vue chez les marchands de nouveautés en musique; là tissus de laine, ici en romances; je l'ai vue dans tout Paris, depuis la Madeleine jusqu'à la Bastille; je regarde et je ne la vois plus nulle part..." In: Le Journal amusant, July 27, 1855 or

„En 1845, j'ai vu la polka au Ranelagh sous le traits jaunes de la reine Pomaré; je l'ai vue à la Chaumière sous la mantille de mademoiselle Paquita, jeune modiste, qu'on couronnait tous le soirs de roses de Fontenay et de réséda; je l'ai vue au théâtre des Variétés dans les bottines éperonnées de mademoiselle Maria Volet; je l'ai vue au Palais-Royal dans la personne de Levassor; je l'ai vue au Vaudeville sous le tablier de soie de madame Doche; je l'ai vue au Gymnase avec la robe feuille-morte de mademoiselle Nathalie; je l'ai vue à la Gaité eu ours blanc et en ours noir dans les Sept Châteaux du Diable..." In: Le Journal pour Rire, July 27, 1855: 7.

<sup>248</sup> Cordova (1999).

<sup>249</sup> "Pompon..., ménage les exentricités de la polka frénétique!... Sois moins accentuée dans les gestes!... Pomaré..., ne traine plus ainsi la royauté à travers cette foule qui s'enivre de les regards

It seems that one of the main details that attracted men were the legs of female dancers. The high kicks and naked calves were very erotic. In fact, it was not till the mid-nineteenth century that women started to show some uncovered parts of their bodies. Wherever the polka was danced, the audience was totally agitated. Descriptions served by the French press and used by the writers were very spicy and sensual. Many of the lorettes became protagonists of various poems including "*Les Polkeuses*". It was a set of poetry devoted to each of these lorettes and their beauty and charm when they danced the polka. This document contains lots of information about the places where the polka was danced and helps to understand how it was adopted by Parisians. One of the poems describes a lorette called Maria as an enchanting, voluptuous and graceful polka dancer.

*"A light leg  
of exceptional purity,  
The chest of a panther,  
A gaze full of passion:  
Ah! This is a polka dancer,  
of whom I am enchanted  
Flexible and voluptuous,  
She is full of grace and beauty."*<sup>250</sup>

It is noteworthy that mostly women and their dancing were commented on in such an erotic way. In fact, it was not only the polka that was considered morally dangerous for women but women themselves were dangerous because they could lead men astray. Men were usually the "victims" of this immoral female behavior. To better illustrate this, I present the following anecdote that was printed in many journals of the time, proving the power of this fascinating dance over ordinary material caution. The Duchess de B- had a handsome and talented son, a youth of nineteen years of age, who desired to receive lessons in the polka from the celebrated maitre de dance, M. Cellarius. As the master had at his house the danseuses of the opera, the cautious mother sent for the professor, requesting him to attend at her hotel, to give the required lesson to the young nobleman. M. Cellarius arrived in the evening, having two carriages with him, filled with dancers of the opera. The Duchess was in a state of extreme alarm; but the lesson commenced, and she saw her son dance first with a tall

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*lascifs...Mogador..., prodigue un peu moins ce courier qui nous rappelled encore ton nom celeste. Ne savez-vous, pas divinités aus pieds légers, que vous alarmez la pudeur des boxeurs et des ivrognes d'Outre-Manche.* In: La France théâtrale, September 14, 1845.

<sup>250</sup> *"Une jambe légère D'une entière blancheur; Un torse de panthère, Un regard plein d'ardeur: Ah! telle est la polkeuse Dont je suis enchanté; Souple et voluptueuse, Elle a grâce et beauté."* In: Polkmall Nick (1844): *Les Polkeuses. Poëme Étique sur le célébrités de la polka.* Paris: Paul Mascagna: 291.

blonde, and then with a sparkling-eyed brunette; but she sat with her eyes intently fixed upon the youth and his partner all the while. Her anxieties were fully relieved by the assurance that her watchfulness had kept the young man's heart from the dangers threatening it.<sup>251</sup>

Another consequence of the polka's immorality was that Roman Catholics regarded it as a dance that abused the church and therefore, anybody who danced it should be excluded from it.<sup>252</sup> Furthermore, there was also a vast range of spicy adjectives that accompanied descriptions of the polka balls and performances - piquee, demon, epidemy, rage, ecstasy, seductive – to name a few. It seems that the same words were used by the London and Viennese press to describe the polka. Therefore a closer semantic analysis of all these expressions is carried out in the last chapter where the evolution of the polka in all three cities is compared.

One figure recurs in descriptions of all these balls, as though he was a permanent fixture: the policeman, a "municipal," or "sergent de ville," who was charged with controlling the dancers' ebullience, asking some to restrain themselves, and, occasionally, throwing out the more persistent abusers of social restraint. Consequently, all the polka steps and figures had to be authorised by the prefect of police before being executed. These policemen were defenders of morals. In reality, the police force lacked manpower and many smaller places, if checked at all, received only a rare and cursory inspection.<sup>253</sup>

Often, the municipal's job included collecting the pleasure tax from the owner of the establishment.<sup>254</sup> There were many occasions for the police to intervene during polka dancing. For example: in 1844, in the Odeon theatre police had to intervene when the public demanded the polka and they did not receive what they wanted. There was a tumult and chaos caused by the dissatisfied people.<sup>255</sup> The role of the policeman at dancing parties is also clearly depicted in the illustration No. 18 and confirms once again that the dance steps, behaviour and dancing manners were precisely observed by the guards. The comment under the same illustration shows that certain behaviour and movements in the polka dancing were prohibited by the authorities:

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<sup>251</sup> Oeuvres Complètes de Madame Émile de Girardin née Delphine Gay. Le Vicomte de Launay, lettres Parisiennes Années 1840-1848. Paris, Henri Plon, imprimeur -Editeur: 230.

<sup>252</sup> La France Musicale, 1845: 301.

<sup>253</sup> *"Il existe, dans certains bals publics, des inspecteurs de la danse, qui...se placent près de l'orchestre, et de là observent tout ce qui peut être contraire à la décence"* In: Journal des Dames et des Modes, December 5, 1829.

<sup>254</sup> Gasnault (1986): 26.

<sup>255</sup> La France théâtrale. Journal des intérêts artistiques et littéraires, December 19, 1844.

-Young man!...come on, young man!...you are dancing a dance as incoherent as conflicting with the constitutional law of your country!  
 -Officer...you are bothering me...don't you see we are dancing the polka!...<sup>256</sup>



Illustration No.18 <sup>257</sup>

<sup>256</sup> "-Jeune homme!...dites donc, jeune homme!...vous dansez-la une danse aussi incohérente qu'incompatible avec les autorités constitutionnelles de votre patrie! -Sergent de ville...vous m'affligez..voyez bien que nous Polkons!..."In: La Polka des Bals Publics, lithographie by Ch. Vernier In. Bibliothèque Nationale de l'Opera, Paris, Danses par genre, Polka 1-37, 36 planches numérotées de 1 à 37 présence d'un 25 bis.

<sup>257</sup> "La Polka des bals publics" by Charles Vernier in "La Polkamanie" In: Le Charivari, April 14, 1844: 169.

Journals and literary writings were also full of stories in which the polka was portrayed as immoral, dangerous and even erotic. For example the main protagonist of the story "*M. Gustave et la Polka*" danced the polka using certain gestures that alarmed the policeman who observed the ball. He came to M. Gustave and ordered him to stop dancing the polka. M. Gustave did not listen to him and everything finished in court where it was decided that M. Gustave had to pay a 5 fr. penalty.<sup>258</sup> Another story was reported in October, 1846 that a young lady, known for her tireless ardour for dancing, after having danced the polka, died in the arms of her partner from an aneurism in her heart.<sup>259</sup>

Again in the story called Irma, she and a certain René danced the polka. The scene was described as follows:

*"We went to dance the polka, a simple and sweet dance, that allowed him to freely chat with his beloved idol! He hugged the subtle and curved waist of the young woman, and taken by the first bars of the polka and by the drunkenness of its happiness, he lifted her and furiously took her in the dance whirling. The audience stared stunned at the two polka dancers who seemed lost in a fantastic dream, and the gossips, the speculations and as well the slanders proceeded."*<sup>260</sup>

Another funny story about M. le Marquis who presented divorce papers to his wife after seeing her taking polka lessons by M. Coralli and thus accusing her of not being loyal to him, was published in Perrot and Robert's work.<sup>261</sup> A similar situation could be observed in the lithograph by Vernier presenting a couple caught when studying the polka. The image is commented on by the author with the following words:

*"-Oh heavens! What do I see- I cannot believe my eyes!... a young man who is holding my wife's waist!.*  
*-Sir... I have only one word to tell you...we are preparing for the polka."*

All the above considerations show that it is not necessarily the polka in itself that was erotic but thanks to its characteristics and popularity it was also made "sexy" by the authors of poems, writings and press articles and by dancers and lorettes. It was one of many ways to make the new consumption product more attractive to the customers. People in Paris needed

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<sup>258</sup> Gardembas, A.. Nouvelles causes célèbres françaises et étrangères, ou Revue mensuelle des plus intéressants procès,... recueillis et mis en ordre par A. G\*\*\* [Gardembas]. 1844: 75-76

<sup>259</sup> Le Mercure des théâtres, October 8, 1846.

<sup>260</sup> *"On allait faire une polka, une danse facile et douce, cela lui permettrait de causer librement avec sa chère idole! Il entourra de son bras la taille fine et cambrée de la jeune femme, et emporté par le premières mesures de la polka et l'ivresse de son bonheur, il l'enleva et l'emporta furieusement dans le tourbillon de la danse. Les spectateurs regardaient stepéfais les deux polkeurs qui semblaient perdus dans un rêve fantastique, et les chuchotements, les suppositions, voire même les calomnies allèrent bon train."* In: Irma. Paris Libraire Nationale 113-122.

<sup>261</sup> Perrot/Adrien (1845): 14-21.



excitement and spicy stories; thus the polka seemed to fulfil these criteria. In a certain way dancers, lorettes, writers, composers and journalists used the polka because of its popularity and to make themselves fashionable through this dance. I would even say that they "sexualized" the polka and turned a Bohemian, simple peasant dance into an immoral and sensual dance that excited people of all classes throughout Paris.

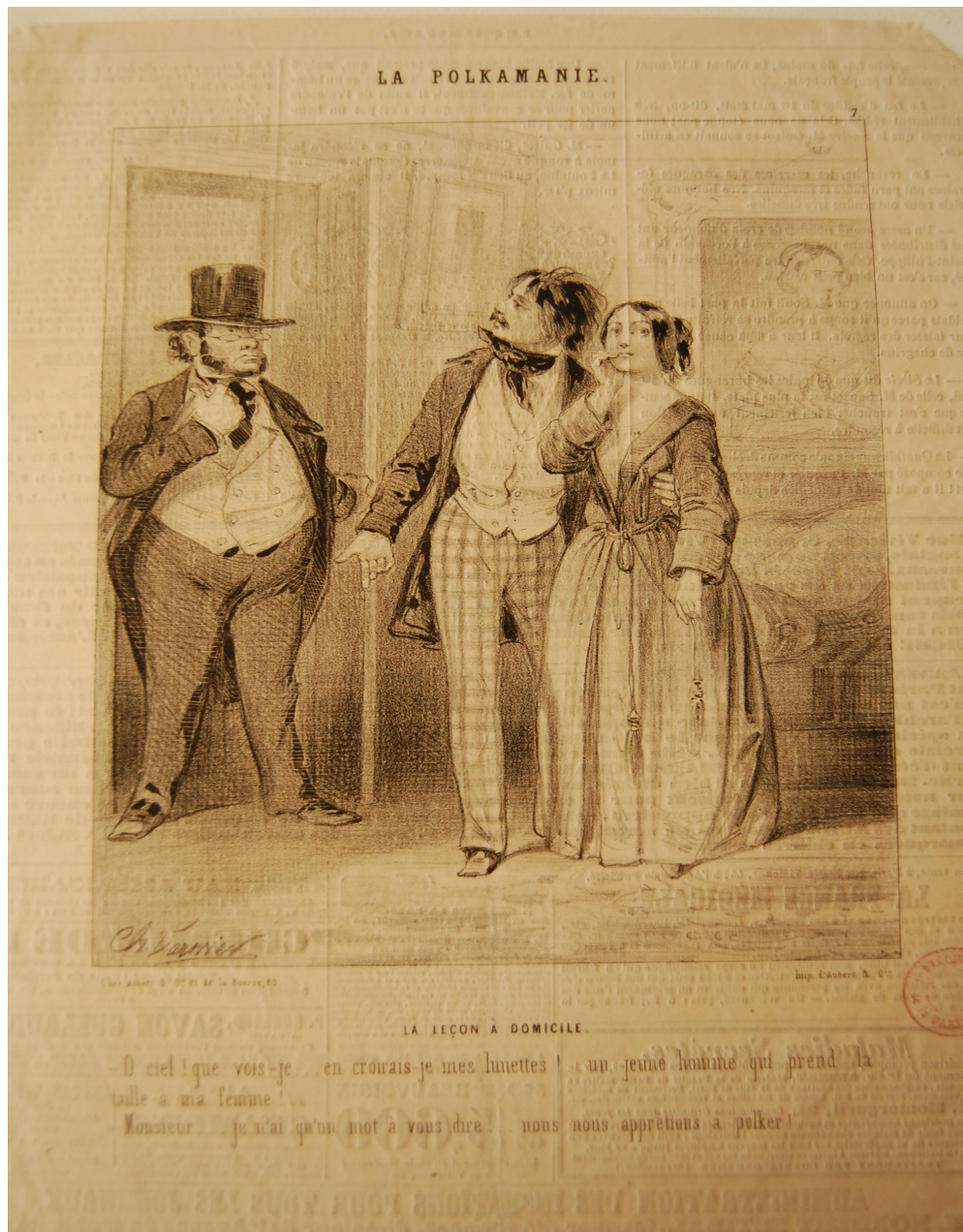


Illustration No. 19<sup>262</sup>

<sup>262</sup> "-O ciel! que vois-je...en croirais-je mes lunettes!...un jeune homme qui prend taille à ma femme!"

-Monsieur...j n'ai qu'un mot à vous dire...nous nous apprêtons à polker!" In: lithographie by Vernier In: Bibliothèque Nationale de l'opera: Danse Ris. 27. Polka (II) Ch. Vernier.

To conclude, in 1856 Andre Warnod declared the polka as "*la danse aphrodisiaque*"<sup>263</sup> It is hard to disagree with this statement after taking into consideration all the contemporary comments and writings on that topic and when looking at some of the lithographs by Charles Vernier that were presented in the previous sections of this chapter. He was a great caricaturist, artist and lithographer and created many illustrations of the polka. Most of them depicted the new fashion in an immoral, very sensual and even erotic way. Vernier's works constitute a great documentary about Parisian social and political life in the nineteenth century and many of them were published in *Charivari*, one of the most important satiric journals of mid-century Paris. Below some lithographs are presented to show how the polka was seen by Vernier and his contemporaries. Illustration No. 21, for example, presents a couple dancing the polka and surrounded by a crowd of people, mainly men looking intently at them but especially at the woman and her uncovered body parts. It is a sort of sensation and could be interpreted in a few ways. Anyway there is no doubt that the polka here is presented as exciting and very erotic. Almost all these illustrations show naked parts of the body, heels and knees uncovered, kicks, passionate movements and excited gazes; everything that symbolizes eroticism and love.<sup>264</sup> Furthermore, it is thus quite clear, that nakedness, women, touching and anything what symbolises eroticism became tools to not only make this new cultural product fashionable but also to sell it on a large-scale.

All in all, the way the polka was adopted, danced, fashioned and criticized confirms once again that people in Paris desired freedom, liberty, relaxation, entertainment and happiness. When the author of the *Polka Almanach* wrote that the destiny of the polka is similar to the destiny of a soap-bubble: it will live its life as a whim or eccentricity of the current fashion and then it will fade away like everything else<sup>265</sup>, he did not realize that the polka was going to play a much more important role in Parisian society than that of a soap-bubble. The polka did not cause a revolution; however its impact on society could be compared to one. The polka represented the young of the century and started a new era in the Paris ballrooms, it brought a breath of happiness to young men and women. It could be concluded that the polka emerged in Paris with the passion for freedom and equality and it came as one of the consequences of Napoleon's regime. It could be considered one of the first

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<sup>263</sup> Warnod, Andre (1856): "*Une Danse aprodisiaque*" In: Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris, Art. de presse 1848-1921. Polka 10050.

<sup>264</sup> all illustrations come from Bibliothèque Nationale de l'Opera in Paris and are lithographs by Charles Vernier from the collection: Danse Ris. 27. Polka (II) Ch. Vernier, published by d'Aubert.

<sup>265</sup> Almanach de la Polka 1845: 75.



dances which at that time showed real signs of a will for living, explosion of happiness, lack of limitation, eroticism and sexuality: "*danse de liberte, d'amour, de poesie*"<sup>266</sup>. It was well established among Parisian society, it flooded all of Paris rapidly and expanded into the provinces. No other kind of revolution could have had such an effect, no other new religion could have ever converted in such a short time more neophytes than the polka.



Illustration No. 20

<sup>266</sup> Vuiller (1898): 299



LA POLKAMANIE.



Chez Aubert & C<sup>ie</sup> Pl. de la Bourse 23.

Imp. J. Aubert & C<sup>ie</sup>

LA POLKA.

Depuis longtemps les dames du grand monde révoltées du laisser-aller qui régnait dans les bals publics et même particuliers, éprouvaient le besoin de voir apparaître enfin dans les salons une danse de bon goût et complètement décente. — En conséquence on emprunta à la Bohême le ravissant pas de la Polka.

N. B. — En Bohême on écrit Polka mais on prononce Kankanka !

Illustration No. 21





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LA POLKAMANIE.

10.



Chez Aubert, Pl. de la Bourse, 29.



Imp. de Aubert & Co.

A LA CHAUMIÈRE.

— Hé bien papa Lahire !... j'espère que vous êtes content cette année e... nom  
nous ne cancanons plus !... rien que la Polka... la simple et modeste Polka !... admirez comme  
Clara lève bien le pied à la Hongroise !...  
Le Papa Lahire. — Hum !... hum !... hum !... hum !...

Illustration No. 22, 23, 24<sup>267</sup>

## 2. The Viennese round-dancing culture: Johann Strauss - the 'polka king' of Vienna

*"Music is indissolubly connected with Vienna, because it reaches deep into every class of society, because it has its place in every family; because it is indispensable element in home life and street life. Thus its effect is shown in the intimate everyday behavior of all Viennese, and this phenomenon recurs so persistently and so enduringly, through the centuries, that we must really consider it as a constant factor in the national temperament."<sup>268</sup>*

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It is most likely that the polka started its European "grand tour" in Vienna. With the highest probability it was first transferred from Bohemia, its native country, to the Austrian capital and later it spread further through Europe and beyond. Hence, the aim of this chapter is to trace the transfer of the polka and its increase in popularity in this city. This is done mainly through the study and analysis of the professional activity of Johann Strauss II and partly also through analysis of the career of his father and his brothers.

To answer the question of why Johann Strauss II should be analyzed as the most important representative of the polka fashion in Vienna, it suffices to look at his repertoire. It contains more than 200 polkas (a list of the most important is presented in the last section of this chapter). Furthermore, he was one of the most important musical personalities of nineteenth-century Vienna and it seems that members of all social classes could listen to his concerts. Moreover, as suggested by Fantel, it might be Strauss II who, on his return trip to Vienna, encountered a new dance that had just sprung up in Bohemia - the polka, and who later started to compose and play it in Vienna.<sup>269</sup> By contrast, according to Derek Carew it was Johann's father who introduced the polka to Vienna.<sup>270</sup> Both assumptions seem unlikely. As a matter of fact, it seems that Joseph Lanner<sup>271</sup> was already composing polkas in 1842 - his Hans Jörgel Polka; at the same time Johann Strauss I also composed his Sperl-Polka. Another theory maintains that Bohemian immigrants or military bands brought the polka to Vienna around 1839 and that it was later adapted by the Viennese composers.<sup>272</sup> Whatever the truth is, there is no doubt that the polka as a dance form constituted a very important part of

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<sup>268</sup> Brion, Marcel (1961): *Daily life in Vienna of Mozart and Schubert*. Luton and London: The Legrave Press Ltd.: 58.

<sup>269</sup> Fantel, Hans (1971): *Johann Strauss, Father and Son, and Their Era*. London: Newton Abbot: 52.

<sup>270</sup> Samson, Jim (2001): *The Cambridge history of nineteenth-century music*: UK: Cambridge University Press: 256.

<sup>271</sup> Viennese contemporary composer of dance music.

<sup>272</sup> see for example: Greene (1992).

Johann Strauss II repertoires.

This chapter is divided into five subchapters in which I deal with questions such as: the relationship between the waltz and the polka; political and social contents reflected through the polka; and discourses of morality and questions connected with the popularity of light music. To conduct this study I focused mainly on the Austrian press, posters, and sheet covers of Strauss' compositions. With regards to newspapers I focused mainly on two of them because only two political journals physically existed in Austria during the first half of the nineteenth century and the government had effective control over them. One of them, *the Wiener Zeitung*<sup>273</sup>, was founded in 1703, and is still one of the oldest and most famous newspapers in Europe. It is the official publication used by the Government of the Republic of Austria for its formal announcements. Informal contacts as well as the censorship system ensured that the *Wiener Zeitung* expressed the officially sanctioned view on all important questions of the day. But the paper retained its characteristic style of stressing factual reporting over editorial comments, thus giving it an exemplary documentary character.

There was a widespread distrust of what was printed in the press, and Austrians preferred reading foreign newspapers whenever possible. Foreign newspapers, especially from Germany, played a substantial role in Austria between 1815 and 1848.<sup>274</sup> Only after 1848, the amount of newspapers and journals started slowly to increase, mainly thanks to the gradual beginnings of press liberty and thus, another significant journal of the time and of importance for this research was *Der Fremdenblatt*. It was a daily newspaper, published in Vienna from 1847 to 1919 and it became the official organ of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Other newspapers that I used in this research were *Die Wiener Theaterzeitung* and *Der Humorist*. The former was published from 1806 to 1860 and was one of the most popular specialized journals in Austria. It was dedicated not only to the theatre but also to music, literature, art and fashion. Till 1847, it was the bestselling magazine in the German-speaking area and had a large readership. Instead, *Der Humorist* was a daily satirical publication edited between 1837 and 1862. It contained some interesting information on the topic that is central to this research. To start with the exploration of the growth in the popularity of the polka, the focus will be shifted now to a brief biography of Strauss II's life.

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<sup>273</sup> <http://www.wienerzeitung.at>.

<sup>274</sup> Katzenstein, Peter (1976): *Disjoined Partners: Austria and Germany since 1815*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

### ***Brief biography of Strauss II' life***

A biography of Johann Strauss II, emphasising that he was a great musician, composer and conductor, would waste our time here; furthermore, it would not add any new revelations. Strauss II was such a remarkable personality in nineteenth-century Vienna that hundreds of biographies have been written about his life as a musician. For these reasons, the following chapter starts directly by discussing his first performances and draws on only those biographies that seem to be the most relevant and convincing from a historical point of view. These include:

- 1) Linke, Norbert: *„Musik erobert die Welt oder Wie die Wiener Familie Strauss die Unterhaltungsmusik revolutionierte.“*
- 2) Mailer, Franz: Johann Strauss (Sohn). *„Leben und Werk in Briefen un Dokumenten“*
- 3) Mayer, Anton: Johann Strauss. *„Ein Pop-Idol des 19. Jahrhunderts“*
- 4) Decsey, Ernst: Johann Strauss. *„Ein Wiener Buch“*
- 5) Jacob, Henrich, Eduard: *„Johann Strauss und das neunzehnte Jahrhundert“*

Johann Baptist Strauss, born on October 25, 1825 in Vienna, was best known as the 'waltz king'. He was one of Johann Strauss and Maria Anna Streim's sons and was brother to Josef and Eduard Strauss, two other famous composers from the same family. His father, Johann Strauss I was the most famous conductor in Vienna in the first half of the nineteenth century. He had such a great influence on the development of round-dancing culture and musical life in Vienna that he was described as the 'Napoleon of Austria'. To describe Strauss' greatness, Hans Fantel quoted in his book about the Strauss family the following words:

*"Under illuminated trees and in open arcades people are seated at innumerable tables, eating, drinking, laughing, and listening [...] In the midst of the garden on the orchestra platform stands the modern hero of Austria, le Napoleon autrichien, the musical director Johann Strauss [...] I do not know what other things besides music Strauss may understand, but I do know that he is a man who could do a great deal of harm if he were to play Rousseau's ideas on the violin..."<sup>275</sup>*

The beginnings of the musical career of the younger Strauss in Vienna were hard. Twenty-four year old Johann Strauss II's first performance took place in Dommayer's Casino in 1844<sup>276</sup> and caused a great sensation in Vienna. It was advertised as a *soirée dansante*, however, no dancing took place during the concert, as the concert hall was overcrowded by people who were curious to see if the young Strauss was better than his father. This tells us not only about Johann's talent but confirms the popularity of Johann, the father. Strauss' debut

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<sup>275</sup> Fantel (1971): 43-44.

<sup>276</sup> it was opened in 1787 as a dancing hall where the family Strauss and Josef Lanner played for the public.

was greeted enthusiastically by the Viennese audience, since it was felt that the city was in the process of gaining a new great composer and musician. For this occasion, a set of dances, composed by the young Strauss, was played and one of them was the *Herzenslust-Polka*.

The first years of Johann's artistic activity had, however, been very difficult. His father, who had never accepted Strauss's musical passion, did everything to hinder his son's efforts to perform in public in Vienna. Despite his father's opposition, his career as a musician and conductor was supported from the start by the rest of his family: his mother Anna pushed him towards a musical career and he often played together with his two brothers, Joseph and Eduard. They were both prominent musicians and composers of a great number of polkas and other social dances; hence their cooperation with Johann and consequently their presence in this chapter. As a result of all these developments Strauss II took his musical career forward and, from 1844 on, both father and son were prominent conductors in Vienna, constituting an integral part of the Viennese musical life.

However, it is interesting to note that father and son adopted different approaches in trying to win over the Viennese audiences. For example, the younger Strauss targeted the younger Viennese population with waltzes such as *The Young Viennese* and with melodies that appealed to national minorities. He also sought to establish connections with different nationalities living in Vienna, especially the Slavs, doing this by using folk tunes and titles such as *Czechen-Polka*, *Serbien-Quadrille* or *Slavic Potpourri*. In his first years, he was engaged at the Casino Zögernitz as well as Dommayer's, and he also became bandmaster of the Second Regiment of the Citizen's Guards. Until 1849 he travelled widely in the Balkans, where his music was welcomed very enthusiastically. However, the route to his overwhelming success in Vienna opened after the death of his father in 1849, when he took over as conductor of his father's orchestra, thus becoming the leading conductor in the Habsburg Empire for almost 50 years. He became a sort of 'pop-idol' of the late Biedermeier and Pre-March era.

Throughout these years in Vienna, Johann Strauss took part in an extraordinary number of concerts and gave performances in places such as *Sophienbadsaal*, *Grüner Thor*, *Zweiter Cafehaus*, *Simmeringer Casino*, *Leopoldstädter Theater*, *Sperl*, *Theater an der Wien*, *Sträußl*, *Volksgarten neben der Hofburg*, *Redoutensaal*, *Grosser Zeisig*, and *Bierhalle* (more will be said about these later). He did not only conduct, but also performed his own pieces on the violin. Strauss organized and played at balls for special occasions, such as *Medizinerball*, *Künstlerball*, *Architektenball*, *Baumeisterball*, *Grazienball*, *Slawenfest*, and *Serbsball*, and his performances were commented on in the most important newspapers and specialized magazines in Vienna (for example, *Wiener Zeitung*, *der Wanderer*, *der Abendblatt*, *der Humorist*,



*der Fremdenblatt, die Presse, Wiener Allgemeine Theaterzeitung, Blätter fuer Musik, and Theater und Kunst*).

It seems that not only did the young Strauss II's talent contribute to his popularity in Europe but also his skills and ability as a businessman. To organize the concerts, he and his family employed hundreds of musicians on-stage and invested a lot of money in sheet music production and advertisement. At this time commercialization and mass consumption dominated cultural life. People craved entertainment and the middle classes whose wealth and social importance increased significantly, participated enthusiastically in the public entertainments. It is therefore also not surprising that Strauss developed a great market for entertainment in the form of dance music sheets and public concerts and balls. Until he was forty-four, Johann Strauss II composed nothing but dance music. His dance music resounded through all Viennese ballrooms. His music circulated in a variety of forms, tailored for concert halls, dance halls, military bands and domestic use. After this, during the 1860s, he turned to composing symphonic waltzes and operettas. Furthermore, Strauss II made a great deal of his money through his visits to Russia, especially from his concerts in Pavlovsk where he played for the tsar and the royal family. His journeys included Poland, England, the United States, Germany, the Balkans, provinces of the Habsburg Monarchy, as well as other places. These journeys naturally influenced his compositions and, as a result, he tended to use national melodies in his dance pieces, which he often dedicated to different national minorities living in Vienna.

During his lifetime, Strauss maintained a high profile in Viennese cultural life and his audiences came from all kinds of classes including workers, civil servants, and aristocrats to exclusive groups of professionals and elites, including the court. It was commented in the Viennese press, that "*there is no artist in Vienna, and - with the exception of Strauss, Sr. and Lanner - never has there been one who enjoyed the same popularity with all levels of society as Strauss.*"<sup>277</sup> However, as was mentioned before, his popularity lay not only in his music but also in the intersection of his career with Viennese musical life, its commercialization and imperial politics; thus to understand better the political and social background for the polka popularization in Vienna, a brief introduction to the political, cultural and social situation in Vienna follows here.

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<sup>277</sup> Fremdenblatt, January 3, 1892.

## 2.1. Dancing, a political issue

The beginning of the nineteenth century in the Habsburg Empire was very turbulent. Napoleon's desires for empire building strongly influenced Vienna's political scene. His incursions into Habsburg territories started in 1803 and culminated in 1805 and 1809 when the French occupied Vienna. The Holy Roman Empire was dissolved by Napoleon and the new Austrian emperor, Franz I, was forced to abdicate his position as Holy Roman Emperor. Under Emperor Joseph II, Vienna became the capital of the Habsburg Empire. This Empire lasted for only a decade, however, as by 1815 Napoleon had ceased to be emperor. From September 1814, the Congress of Vienna redrew the political map of Europe. The Congress itself was also an occasion for social events and meetings, and it took on a frivolous and joyful quality. The period following the Congress of Vienna, which lasted until 1848, was called the Biedermeier era in Central Europe. It was during this period that Strauss II was a boy, and music was dominated by the middle class whose prosperity increased. Also new urban middle class developed and gained importance thanks mainly to the growing urbanization and industrialization of the cities.

At the same time, Vienna developed and flourished, particularly from an architectural and artistic point of view. As the city grew and quality of life increased, immigrants who lived in the Habsburg provinces moved to Vienna seeking employment. They thereby created a more ethnically diverse population than the city had ever known before. From a small imperial capital of 500,000, within only a few decades the city had grown into an important gateway linking the east and west and was inhabited by almost 2 million residents. Its rapid economic development and the changes in the main characteristics of Vienna's population contributed to, if not necessitated, a new means of cultural and musical expression such as the development of new concert halls, theatres, the rise of new musicians and musical forms.

In the meantime, however, Metternich - Austria's chancellor - enacted domestic policies that led to the eradication of civil rights, introduced a police state and created economic conditions that placed industrial interests above worker's rights. This resulted in the abdication of Metternich and rise to power of Franz Joseph I. One of the consequences of this situation was events that took place in March 1848 and were part of the so-called Spring of Nations which affected Europe in the years 1848-1849. It was a series of political upheavals that affected over 50 countries. The most important of these were France, Germany, Italy and Austria. The revolutions were strongly felt in the Habsburg Empire, mainly due to its multinational character. The country was ruled from Vienna, the city that was inhabited not

only by Austrians, but also by Germans, Poles, Croats, Hungarians, Romanians, Italians, Slovaks, Serbs Ukrainians/Ruthenians, Czechs, Slovenes. All of them tried during the revolution to either achieve autonomy, independence, or even hegemony over other nationalities. While most of these revolutions collapsed, for the context of this thesis it is important to mention that all the events of 1848 meant that the peoples gained a new political importance where new values and ideas such as liberalism, nationalism and socialism became important. This, of course, had an impact on culture and consequently on music. Thus, the focus will be directed now on cultural life in Vienna.

Franz Joseph I's 68-years reign was a time when an explosion of artistic development took place. On the one hand, it was a result of new technological developments that lead Vienna into the Industrial Age, making the city resemble a glittering showcase. The resources of the empire were used to keep theatres, palaces, coffeehouses, homes and concert halls cleaned, well-lit and maintained. On the other hand, the city was full of music and all classes could enjoy it. Sainte-Aulaire wrote in his reminiscences about Vienna that: "*country walks, music and dancing in the fresh air, always accompanied by good fare, are habitual among all classes of the population.*"<sup>278</sup> When, in Paris or London, music was regarded as entertainment, something that people did in their leisure time but it was not the same in Vienna. For example, Fantel put it in these words: "*Here it was a personal necessity, an indispensable part of everyday life. In its lighter forms, music was a needed refreshment; in its more demanding forms, an exercise of the spirit in search of illumination.*"<sup>279</sup>

Balls and dancing venues were often visited by inhabitants of Vienna. Only in the spring of 1832 alone, at least 200,000 people attended the several hundred balls that were given in Vienna and this was half the population of the city, including infants and the elderly.<sup>280</sup> These balls were usually accompanied by dance music composed and executed by Strauss and his orchestra. As a matter of fact, "*Strauss had become for the Viennese the essence of the carnival spirit, and to attend a ball or any dance entertainment without his melodic magic would be unthinkable anymore.*"<sup>281</sup> The passion and love for dancing was so great that "*the people of Vienna were in my time dancing mad...the propensity of the Vienna ladies for dancing and going to carnival masquerades was so determined, that nothing was permitted to interfere*

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<sup>278</sup> Sainte-Aulaire (1927): *Memoires*. ed. Thiebaut (Calmann-Levy, Paris).

<sup>279</sup> Fantel (1971).

<sup>280</sup> Knowles (2009).

<sup>281</sup> Eisenberg, Ludwig (1894): *Johann Strauss: Ein Lebensbild*. Leipzig: Breitkopf und Haertel: 82.

*with their enjoyment of their favorite enjoyment*"<sup>282</sup>

Hence, it is no surprise that the contemporary Austrian writer Eduard Bauernfeld compared the nineteenth-century Vienna with a land of the Phaeacians, which according to a Greek myth were a race of people living on the island of Scheria visited by Odysseus on his way home from the Trojan War. They were known for their relaxed lifestyle. He summarized his observations about Vienna in the following phrases:

*Feasting, banquets and gay dancing,  
Goblets full and bosoms white,  
Sweet quiescence, and deep peace,  
In the land of the Phaeacians.*<sup>283</sup>

As a matter of fact, Bauernfeld's opinion might express a sort of criticism of Viennese lifestyle. At this time, the „Viennese standpoint“ was to take life easily, sceptically and to avoid unpleasant situations. Abroad, Vienna had a reputation for „gaiety“ and this perception of the Austrian capital started most probably with the Congress of Vienna in 1815.<sup>284</sup> However, the critical stranger could not see anything of this reputed gaiety. Centuries of absolutist government working upon a temperament composed of Celtic, South German and Slavic characters produced a population disposed to take nothing seriously save the pursuit of pleasure. According to Steed, the Viennese were never schooled to concentrate their minds on matters more important than concerts, theatres, sports and amusements. They seemed to be hypnotized by the general atmosphere of unreality. On the other hand, keeping people busy with music and dancing, was part of Austrian politics at the time. In a certain way, the „authorities“ strove to adjust reality to appearances and hence, life in the Austrian provinces and in parts of Hungary seemed more real than in Vienna.<sup>285</sup> This partly explains why there was no real ban on round dances in Vienna, while in other capitals there certainly was. Certainly there were strong critics of the waltz and the polka; no restrictions however, were imposed on dances favored by the people, even if they were criticized for being vulgar and inappropriate.

On the other hand, Mozart had written that *"the peoples of Vienna were crazy for*

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<sup>282</sup> Kelly, Michael (1826): *Reminiscences of Michael Kelly: of the King's Theatre, and Theatre Royal Drury Lane, including a period of nearly half a century*, Tom 1, London: H. Colburn. 204.

<sup>283</sup> a poem by Eduard Bauernfeld (1802-1890) in: Ewen David and Frederic (1939): *Musical Vienna*. New York/London: McGraw Hill Book Company, Ing.: 186.

<sup>284</sup> Steed, Wickham Henry (1914): *The Habsburg Monarchy*. London: Constable and Company Ltd.

<sup>285</sup> Steed (1914): 202-206.

dancing"<sup>286</sup> and later the same passion for music was observed by a famous composer, Berlioz.<sup>287</sup> This indicates that the cultural tendency to dancing, concert-going and amusement in the nineteenth century was not really new. The Viennese were always great music lovers and one of their greatest passions in the nineteenth century was dancing. Perhaps, this passion was used by the "authorities" to keep people busy and to distract them from social and political problems in the Habsburg Empire. The renowned contemporary critic commented on contemporary Viennese life with these words:

*"I have lived through the last years of the pre-March days in Vienna, and I have some very valuable recollections. How petty was the musical life at the end of the thirties and at the beginning of the forties!...Excluded from all intellectual pre-occupations, the Viennese public threw itself with eagerness upon the purely entertaining and distracting in art. Not only did the theaters prosper; they formed the kernel of conversation, the most important columns in the journals. For lack of political organs, the Viennese read with astonishing seriousness the Theaterzeitung and the Humorist, etc. In the musical domain, Italian opera ruled, virtuosity and the Waltz. Strauss and Lanner were idolized..."<sup>288</sup>*

The music and dances of the long-ruling of Emperor Franz Joseph (1848-1916) have become famous all over the world. Viennese dance music provided not only infectious and energetic rhythms and novel orchestral timbres, but explored and put into practice a new creative and coloristic use of harmony. The passion for dancing found its apogee in the whirling rhythms of the waltz and thus, I start my analysis of the polka in Vienna with a brief look at the Viennese waltzing culture.

## 2.2. From the waltz to the polka

It was mentioned before, that the popularization of the polka in Vienna cannot be studied without taking into consideration the history of the waltz in this city. As a matter of fact, a very important phenomenon was created here and became known as "light music". It gradually replaced old types of contredanses for couples, with new dances such as the waltz and the polka. All the most popular and best-known dances of the new age: the mazur and polonaise from Poland, the polka and schottische from Bohemia, the csárdás from Hungary, and - finally - from the heart of Austria itself, the waltz, were warmly welcomed in Austria and its royal domains. It was, in fact, the waltz, the first round dance in Vienna, which created a furor and paved the way for the arrival of the polka. Towards the end of the eighteenth

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<sup>286</sup> Nettl, Paul (1955): *W. A. Mozart, 1756-1956*. Fischer Bücherei: 134

<sup>287</sup> Newman, Ernest (1960): *Memoires of Hector Berlioz from 1803 to 1865 comprising his travels in Germany, Italy, Russia and England*. New York: Dover Publications, inc: 366.

<sup>288</sup> Hanslick, Eduard (1892): *Aus dem Tagebuche eines Musiker*. Berlin: Allgemeiner Verein für Deutsche Literatur.

century the waltz brought men and women face-to-face. They danced tightly embraced and stared into each other's eyes. This close position provoked a great deal of anxiety in many society circles because the idea of a couple of opposite sex remaining joined in what looked like a close embrace for the entire duration of a dance was shocking, if not repulsive, to many sensitive ladies and gentlemen who had been brought up to enjoy the stylized mummery of polite bows, curtsies, and reverences that constituted the minuet. As the nineteenth century moved into its first decades, the waltz began to rule the Viennese dance floors and the city went mad. Crowds of people filled Vienna's ballrooms and dance music was to be heard everywhere. Eduard Hanslick said that "*musical life was dominated by Italian opera, virtuosity, and the waltz.*"<sup>289</sup>

The waltz fever continued during and after the Congress of Vienna. According to Sachs, the waltz had a unique character, expression, spirit and passion and as a result it was a very interesting novelty in the new era. It was welcomed warmly and rapidly adopted by the German bourgeoisie and entirely approved of in France. By contrast, it was not accepted immediately in England, where it had to wait until 1812 for approval, and it was also prohibited at the court balls of the German imperial house in the reign of Wilhelm II.<sup>290</sup> The waltz's enormous popularity as a social dance was accompanied by an equal concern for its effect on women, and thus, the main reason for its disapproval was its negative influence on females. Naturally, women continued to dance, but they did so in full awareness of society's disapproval and threat to their reputation. Waltzing was erotic, lustful, highly romantic and profoundly associated with women.

The history of the waltz as a form of musical expression does not form part of our theme here; it would need a volume to itself. I am concerned rather with the repercussions it had on the introduction of the polka to the Viennese society. In this section it will be shown how the polka went on - after the waltz - to be fully accepted and adopted in Viennese society. For this reason and in order to explain how the polka managed to enter the Viennese ballrooms, a few lines are devoted to explanation of the history of the round dancing culture in Vienna.

During the nineteenth century, ballroom dancing became an immensely popular recreation and it was enjoyed by the aristocracy and all levels of the emergent middle class. Unlike Britain and France, there was no buffer between the Austrian high nobility and the

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<sup>289</sup> Yaraman, Sevin H. (2002): *Revolving embrace: the waltz as sex, steps, and sound*. Hillsdale, N.Y.: Pendragon Press.

<sup>290</sup> Sachs (1963): 429-431.

middle classes. According to Samson, in the case of Vienna,

*"the very recent acquisition of capital status resulted in a bourgeoisie of lesser means and lineage which tended to look inwards to itself and the remain more cohesive and perhaps less opulent (given the lateness of industrialization) than that in London or Paris."*<sup>291</sup>

At the same time when dancing was so much popular, new and smoother floors became available in the large halls which were being built in entertainment complexes in city parks. This brought both a need and a possibility for new and more rapid tempo dances than the old stately court dances. As the century continued, hand in hand with these changes came a gradual and constant relaxation of the previous rigid social codes, and as a consequence it became possible for men and women to participate increasingly frequently in dances that brought them in close proximity, placed face to face and linked by hugs and handholds without incurring social censure. At balls for both the aristocracy and the middle classes, couple dances mingled with the occasional quadrille, minuets, allemandes, cotillions and country dance sets that had predominated a few decades earlier in the century.

With regards to the season in Vienna it was usually concentrated around the autumn and spring months. At the end of the winter season came Carnival, also known as Fasching, which was one of the most important cultural events in the Austrian capital. The carnival amusements were divided into six different types: public balls, balls in the Redouten Hall<sup>292</sup>, closed society balls, private house balls, picnics and fancy dress balls (Schnackerlbälle).<sup>293</sup> The Austrian Empire also provided most of the dance orchestras of the time, and they were often lead by best-known composers such as Lanner, the Strauss family, Schubert and so on. As a matter of fact, Vienna's musical output was so great that it had no rival in the area of popular music with regards to quantity and quality and this was mainly the result of the musical genius of the Strauss family. Hence, the city was visited by many famous musicians from all over the world who went there to present their works. People danced to this music at large and small balls, in the dance halls and ballrooms and at promenade concerts. They played the tunes on pianofortes at home, and were serenaded with it at bandstands and restaurants in every park, casino resort, grand hotel and spa of the Empire. Practically, dance music was played and performed everywhere where it was possible. The city corners were full of

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<sup>291</sup> Samson (2001): 238.

<sup>292</sup> It was a dance hall where fancy dress balls were organized in the nineteenth century, attended mainly by the aristocracy and bourgeoisie. The festival halls were the spaces for many concerts, "Redoutes" (masquerade balls), as well as for the magnificent wedding banquet of Joseph II and Isabella of Parma.

<sup>293</sup> *Ein Wiener Tanzsaal aus den Vierzigerjahren* In: Sammlung Strauss-Meyszner I.N. 76.272/1, in: Wienbibliothek Musiksammlung.



musicians who played for the people passing by. Hence, before going on to explore some other little known aspects of the ballroom dancing and the polka, a brief description of the most fashionable Vienna ballrooms is presented below to give a brief overview of the social strata that attended the places where the polka was played by the Strauss family.

### *Nineteenth-century Vienna's ballrooms*

Few cities could boast of such public ballrooms and dancing salons as the capital of Austria. These places of amusement, though not ranked among fashionable places of entertainment in regard to their use, were used by persons of both sexes, particularly citizens and tradesmen and their wives and families seeking amusement. However, during the carnival concerts and masked balls that were given there, they were attended also by the higher classes. Instead, Vienna's suburban dance halls provided not only entertainment for the city's working classes, but also a good livelihood for talented musicians from the lower classes. The public dance halls offered ordinary citizens the opportunity to spend evenings amid splendors comparable to those of the great aristocratic palaces they knew only from the outside. They were gathering places for many levels of society. Without counting the Redoutensaal, which occupied a whole wing of the Imperial palace, and which was opened to the bourgeoisie on special occasions only, there were several other great dance halls in the city and suburbs.

The most popular dancing halls at that time were the Apollo-Säle and Zum Sperl. The Zum Sperl was opened in 1807. It was a very popular locally and remained open until 1857. By the time the Congress of Vienna was held in 1815 it had gained a reputation as Vienna's most elegant place of entertainment. It was especially popular at Carnival time when Strauss held his nobility balls there. Instead, at Sperl, Strauss went beyond the limits of local celebrity. Here, he was on view to the world, for Sperl was Vienna's most famous tourist showplace, and was visited by many foreigners including Richard Wagner and Heinrich Laube.<sup>294</sup> Although Sperl's prestige decreased after the Revolution of 1848, its owners managed to keep it open for almost seventy years. In the second half of the century it was remarked that "*from the paradise of pleasures for better classes it became a playground of half of the world.*"<sup>295</sup> Here, Strauss II played for everybody. The illustration below comes from the Strauss-Meyszner collection in the State Library of Vienna and depicts the Benefizball in Sperl on Carnival Sunday in 1858, with Johann Strauss as the conductor. Dancers' clothes confirm that it was an elegant dance hall attended mainly by the middle class and aristocracy.

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<sup>294</sup> Knowles (2009): 29.

<sup>295</sup> Sammlung Strauss-Meyszner I.N. 76.272/1.



Illustration No. 25<sup>296</sup>

The major competitor of the Sperl was The Apollo, opened on January 10, 1808, on the occasion of the engagement of Emperor Franz and Princess Ludovica. It could accommodate around 4000 dancers in five huge halls. The Apollo was visited by Vienna's more affluent clientele. Here, extravagant guests could be noted using hundred-guilder bills as cigarette lighters and the chandelier in the dining hall was illuminated by 5000 wax candles. However, in 1812, the Apollo went bankrupt and in 1839 the building was converted to a candle factory.<sup>297</sup> Perhaps one of the most important places where dancing took place in the mid-century, was the Redoutensaal. It owed its name to the great balls which often took place there in the winter time and where the young Viennese indulged their passion for dancing. It had opened in 1748 and was located in Hofburg (the residential palace of the Habsburg family). During the time of Johann Strauss II the State Balls and Burgeoisie Balls were organized there.<sup>298</sup> Another nineteenth-century dance hall, opened in 1842, was the Dianabad and it was a result of a commercial combination of a dance hall with a swimming pool. Its

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<sup>296</sup> Benefizball in Sperl In: Strauss-Meyszner collection in the State Library of Vienna.

<sup>297</sup> Prawy, Marcel (1991): *Johann Strauss*. Vienna: Ueberreuter: 98.

<sup>298</sup> Newman (1932): 375.

scope was to attract the Viennese with its impressive covered swimming facilities being available all year round. As swimming during the winter was never very popular, the pool was eventually covered during the colder months and served as a dance floor. For example, in February of 1867, a production of the Viennese Men's Choir in the Dianabad premiered the famous Johann Strauß waltz "*On the Beautiful Blue Danube*".<sup>299</sup>

Other important places where social dancing took place in the mid-century were: Elisium, the Sophienbad, Dommayer's, Casino Zögernitz, Sträussel-Säle, Volksgarten. The Elisium was popular in the 40s and 50s and consisted of a few rooms in which almost 9000 people congregated.<sup>300</sup> These venues were widely known and visited by all classes. The Casino Zögernitz was another favorite rendezvous for the better-off society circles of Vienna and it was here that the Strauss family played its concerts, which were considered as local cultural events of a higher level. Dommayer's Casino, where the young Strauss had his debut, was described by the "Humorist" as "*Eldorado der Genüsse*"<sup>301</sup> - in free translation, a paradise of enjoyments. It was visited by the elegant society of Vienna and was one of the favourite entertainment destinations of the Viennese. The Sofiensaal was instead built primarily as a steam bath in 1826, and was only later converted into a dance hall. Many of the Strauss family's dance pieces were first performed there. Although the Sperl and Dianabadsaal were used primarily by the upper and middle classes, the Sofiensaal had the better reputation. Indeed, it became one of the main dance halls for great Viennese balls. Another important venue for Strauss balls was the Volksgarten, a famous garden where the Strauss family and Lanner played their promenade concerts and where the military bands also performed.

It can be noticed that all these dance halls were visited by different members of society. As shown above, some of them were exclusively for the upper classes while others were for the lower and middle classes. It was also quite common in mid-century Vienna for the classes to mix on the dance floor and thus the petite bourgeoisie and working class could be found attending Strauss' balls together with the upper classes. Strauss II's concerts and soirées dansantes took place regularly in almost all of these dance halls and others. Sometimes he played several concerts in one evening, one after another in different places scattered over Vienna or sometimes several balls took place in the same venue but in different rooms. This is shown clearly in illustration No. 26.<sup>302</sup> On the whole, it is evident that Strauss played for

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<sup>299</sup> Prawy (1991): 102.

<sup>300</sup> Strauss-Meyszner collection: 310.

<sup>301</sup> Der Humorist, January 22, 1845.

<sup>302</sup> Strauss-Meyszner collection: 108.



everybody: working classes, bourgeoisie, nobility, national minorities, etc. Indeed, the analysis of Strauss' musical activity gives the clear impression that the round-dancing culture which he and his family dominated was an attraction for all the social classes in Vienna.

**Programm.**

**Der Carneval von 1862**  
mit allen seinen Corporations- und Masken-Bällen  
an einem Abende  
im  
**DIANA-SAALE**  
diesen Sonntag den 9. März  
als  
**BENEFICE**  
von Johann und Josef Strauss.

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<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Medizinerball (Die ersten Curen, Wtz.)</li> <li>2. Juristenball (Colonnen, Walzer.)</li> <li>3. Vereinsball (Conkurrenzen, Walzer.)</li> <li>4. Technikerball (Motoren, Walzer.)</li> <li>5. Studenten-Comité-Ball (Patronessen.)</li> <li>6. Beneficeball, Diana - Saal (Wiener-Chronik.)</li> <li>7. Hesperusball (Lucifer - Polka.)</li> <li>8. Studentenball (Studenten - Polka.)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Erster Maskenball, Dianasaal (Folimon-Quadrille.)</li> <li>2. Zweiter Maskenball (Amazonen-Quadrille.)</li> <li>3. Dritter Maskenball (Winterlust-Polka.)</li> <li>4. Beneficeball, Sofien-Saal (Die Tanz-interpellanten.)</li> <li>5. Maskenball, Sofienaal (Die Fachtlaube Polka-Mazur.)</li> <li>6. Hesperusball (Hesperusballtänze.)</li> <li>7. Beneficeball, Dianasaal (Amaranth-Polka-française)</li> <li>8. Achter Maskenball, Dianasaal (Schlittschuhläufer-Ganz.)</li> </ol>
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Ausnahmsweise werden bei diesem Concerte nur diese angeführten Tanzpièces aufgeführt. Programme werden an der Cassa ausgegeben.

**Anfang 5 Uhr.** **Ende 10 Uhr.**

Eintritt 50 Kr.

Freikarten aller Art ungültig.

Verlag von Carl Witzelsperger & Co. in Wien, K. K. Hof-Druckerei.

Illustration No. 26

Illustration No. 26 presents a program of Johann and Josef Strauss' balls in Dianasaal and Sofienaal, and it can be clearly seen that 16 balls took place in parallel. Eight balls were led by Johann and another eight by his brother, Joseph. The poster presents also which dances were played on the occasion of this big event. Additionally, many sources mention that

Strauss had the habit of organising a few concerts at the same time and he would run from one room to another to conduct the orchestra.

### *The introduction of the polka*

According to Sachs, it was not until 1825, or indeed not really until 1830, that the absolute supremacy of the waltz in the field of couple dance began to wane. However, the dances which came to contest this supremacy were deviations from the waltz rather than new additions. The only serious rival and the most important and most lasting of the round dances after the waltz was the polka.

As mentioned before, the way in which the polka reached Vienna is still quite obscure. Most historical analyses mention the musical band of Prague that brought the dance to Vienna in 1839. There, both the music and the dance met with extraordinary approval, though the dance did not become a popular favorite until the 1850s. Most probably, the first polka that reached Vienna and was to be seen on the advertisements was the Bruenner Polka; later Strauss Senior wrote his Sperl-Polka and only a few years later the polka craze took over Europe. To satisfy the demands of the dance-music lovers, not only the Strauss family but also Josef Lanner and other Viennese composers wrote many polkas. At the apogee of the Empire most people knew and were able to dance various couples dances such as: polkas and redovas from Bohemia; mazurs from Poland; and csárdás from Hungary. Even if various secondary sources mention the extraordinary popularity of the polka across Europe in the 1840s, the analysis of the primary sources leads to the conclusion that no polka rage as such was to be observed in Vienna at that very moment. Moreover, the term 'polkomania' is virtually unheard of in Vienna at that time. An analysis of the polka through the music of Johann Strauss II and his family members allows us to hypothesise that the popularity of the polka in Vienna operated on several levels. Firstly, when it came to Vienna at the beginning of the 1840s it was welcomed very coolly. In the 1840s, the waltz was still the favourite dance and the polka seems to have been simply an offshoot of the Viennese waltzing tradition. This is very visible in the way that the Strauss' concerts were organized: the programs of both father and son were still full of waltzes in the 1840s. The Skizzenbuch<sup>303</sup>, however, shows that Strauss the Younger had begun to work on his polkas by 1843, one year before his debut, when he was twenty-one. Anyway, on the occasion of his debut in Dommayer's Casino in 1844 we can see that he played only one polka, *The Herzenslust Polka*. However, it should be

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<sup>303</sup> Strauss' sketch book in which he wrote his music.

pointed out that the dance made such an impression on the audience that it was commented on in the "Der Wanderer" that both the "*Debut Quadrille* and *the Herzenslust Polka* are so piquant in their inspiration, and handled with such glittering effect in the instrumentation that we [...] have to recognise and commend the bold and exuberant talent of Strauss the son."<sup>304</sup> It has to be admitted, however, that the quotation clearly shows that Strauss II was probably more popular than the polka at this very moment. Thus, his popularity influenced the popularity of the pieces he composed and performed including the polka.

From the very outset of his musical career Johann Strauss II, who had become very popular within only two years of the beginning of his career, found his greatest appeal lay with the young of Viennese society, who - dance crazy frequented the city's many places of entertainment, notably Dommayer's Casino in Hietzing. Strauss was well aware their support and enthusiasm had helped him, and he showed his appreciation in a number of compositions such as: *Herzenslust-*, *Amazonen-*, *Czech-*, *Jux-*, *Hopser-* and *Fidelen-Polka*.<sup>305</sup> Johann and his orchestra introduced The *Fidelen-Polka* on 26 April 1846 at a festive ball held in the Sträussel-Säle dance hall in the suburb of Josefstadt. The first piano edition pictures a young couple dancing the steps of the polka. This and the other polka dance pieces were also widely published by the Viennese publishers. In 1847, for example, Carl Haslinger published polkas by Johann Strauss in different versions: for piano solo, for four hands, for the guitar, for the entire orchestra and for the violin and the piano.<sup>306</sup> This variety of publications indicates on how widely the polka was used and played by the Viennese and how greatly in demand it was.

The titles of the first polkas written by the young Strauss show also that he composed not only for the young Viennese public but that his music reflected his and young peoples' pro-revolutionary ideas. This, however, was not very well received at the Austrian court. Nevertheless, before and when the Revolutions of 1848 took place, he wrote several pro-revolutionary works, including the *Revolution March*, the *Czechen-Polka* and a *Song of Barricades*. His *Students March* was confiscated by the police. His first dance compositions, including his polkas, had a political meaning and reflected the events taking place in Viennese society. His polka *Geisselhiebe*, for example, was composed in response to the revolutionary movements that took place in December 1848 and was confiscated by the police. He played the Marseillaise at the barricades, and was probably saved only by his popularity when the

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<sup>304</sup> Der Wanderer, 1844.

<sup>305</sup> Der Wanderer, 1846, Nr. 292/7.12.

<sup>306</sup> different advertisement in the Viennese Press such as: Wiener Zeitung, Wanderer or Wiener Theaterzeitung.

revolution was crushed; nevertheless, it was at this point that his police record began. As a consequence of his revolutionary demonstrations and activity, it was not until 1864 that he was given the title of Director of State Balls in Vienna. All this political activity might be one of the reasons why Strauss' polka did not become fashionable among the upper classes straight away. On the other hand, this probably did not, in fact, affect the spread of the polka in Vienna so much, as his father, who was greatly loved by the Viennese, did not manage to make the polka very popular in Vienna in the 1840s either. As a consequence, it is rather difficult to agree with some twentieth-century historians who have considered the polka to be a revolutionary genre. Perhaps it could be partly true of London or Paris, but not of Vienna. It is, however, clear that the polka in Vienna contained some revolutionary undertones in its melodies, rhythms and execution.

Another significant factor that indicates a rather low interest in the polka at the moment of its introduction in Vienna is the considerably low number of new polka compositions. For example, Johann Strauss Elder continued to compose mainly waltzes throughout the 1840s and nothing indicates that the polka was considered particularly or more fashionable than other social dance forms at the time. Johann Strauss, the son, composed only ten polkas in the years 1844-1849 and it therefore seems clear that there was no *polkomania* among the Viennese. Most probably, if the dance had been very fashionable, Strauss II would have composed far more polkas in that period. Surprisingly, even Strauss' father, who was very fashionable among the elites and upper classes, produced no more than twenty polkas in his entire life (he died in 1849). So, this indicates that no polka craze took place in the 1840s in Vienna and the small number of polkas composed in that period suggests that they were noted by the leading conductors, who considered them as an inseparable part of the Viennese round-dancing culture and/or the continuation of the waltzing culture rather than as a separate new fashion.

The other, second, reason the polka craze in Paris and London was not paralleled in Vienna could be the question of its 'lack of exoticism'. It will later be shown that one of the qualities of the polka that influenced its fashion in the early years in London and Paris was its exoticism. We know that the polka was discovered most probably in Bohemia, which was at the time a part of the Habsburg monarchy. Vienna, the capital of the Habsburg monarchy, was thus in the mid-century a very multinational capital with inhabitants from Bohemia, Poland, Hungary, Slesien, Albania, Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro, Russia, Serbia, Bosnia and other Balkan countries. Their cultures were known in the Habsburg capital. In the field of music, it was the Czechs, who first arrived at a form of national renaissance strongly influenced by the



ideas of Goethe and Herder. They were the first to turn back to their national past, to the old songs, legends and myths, finding in them inspiration for further national music. The Czech melodic line and Czech rhythms were already to be found in the works of the Bohemian composers of the eighteenth century. However, it was not before Bedrich Smetana<sup>307</sup>, whose career developed simultaneously with that of the young Strauss, that the world learned about Bohemian songs and dances. The Czechs were, however, not the only small nation to win universal recognition from the periphery, of the cultural world of Europe: the Spaniards, Hungarians, Poles, Russians, Rumanians, Yugoslavs, Finns and Norwegians all had a place in this development.

At the same time, the Romantic movement in Europe brought in its wake the rise of the cultural independence and autonomy of these smaller nations. A common feeling of unity was to be seen among the peoples of all these nations in Vienna and they enjoyed all songs and different types of dances with equal enthusiasm. Johann Strauss II who had encountered many obstacles at the beginning of his Viennese career, turned to these nationalities and played and composed a great deal for them in the first years of his musical activity in Vienna. He organized Slav, Polish, Serb and Czech balls and composed polkas and dances which reflected the national melodies and rhythms of these countries. Thus, in its first years of popularity, the polka was to a certain degree the emblem of national minorities in Vienna. Therefore, it could not have been exotic to the people of Vienna, given that it was based on their national melodies and on the national melodies of their neighbours who lived in the same city and country. This was one of the reasons why Bohemian music was not new to the Viennese and thus, it could not have the same effect as it had on the British and French society.

All in all, it can be concluded that the arrival of the polka in Vienna did not initially create much of a stir. The polka was viewed as adding extra variety to the waltz, as Derek Carew concludes in his article in the Cambridge history of nineteenth-century music.<sup>308</sup> Moreover, it constituted a sort of prolongation of the waltzing culture at the mid-century. However, this picture changed in the 1850s/1860s, and these changes will form the basis of the next sections of this chapter.

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<sup>307</sup> Bohemian classical music composer .

<sup>308</sup> Carew (2001): 256.

## 2.3. The polka as part of "Unterhaltungsmusik"

*"Gleicher Tanz fuer alle und im Tanze sind alle gleich!"<sup>309</sup>*

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These words were spontaneously formulated by Johann Strauss in 1860. He believed that there were no differences between people when they dance regardless of their social status. Everybody is the same in a dance. Through discussion of Strauss' musical activity in Vienna, this section examines the audiences, cultural practices and reasons that led to the popularity of the polka in Vienna in the 1850s and 1860s. Moreover, it looks at the changes in the social structure of Viennese society and the shifting roles of various social groups in dictating and deciding musical and cultural tastes.

Drawing on the foregoing quotation, the commonly accepted view is that in the early nineteenth century the upheaval of commercial ballroom culture in Vienna created a bourgeois social space, which democratized the Viennese dance culture, and from there on all Viennese people could attend the public ballrooms without class distinction. It has been pointed out that this democratization occurred mostly during the first two decades of the nineteenth century, when the rich Viennese bourgeoisie developed.<sup>310</sup> At the same time, at the end of the 1820s, the music that had become established in Vienna was widely enjoyed but at the same time criticized for being fashionable and frivolous. It was so-called 'light music' -the opposite of 'serious music' - so- it was criticized for lacking in seriousness and for being trivial. Non-serious music was perceived as that which did not involve the mind and was consumed merely as an amusement, usually alongside the distractions of talking, laughing, or dancing.

By contrast, according to Bourdieu, "*art and cultural consumption are predisposed, consciously and deliberately or not, to fulfill a social function of legitimating social difference*".<sup>311</sup> It is not that obvious therefore, if commercialization, which took place in the Viennese dancing culture at the beginning of the nineteenth century, did create a democratic social space. Quite the opposite, it enabled a formation of new ways of highlighting class differences during this time when dancing began to be consumed by almost all social classes.

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<sup>309</sup> "the same dance for everybody and in dance we are all equal" In: Schneider, Hans (1983): Johann Strauss (Sohn). *Leben und Werk in Briefen und Dokumenten*. Tutzing: Hans Schneider: VII.

<sup>310</sup> See for example Hanson, Alice M. (1985): *Musical life in Biedermeier Vienna* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 150-167; Jacob, H. E. (2005): *Johann Strauss, father and son; a century of light music*. New York: Greystone.

<sup>311</sup> Bourdieu, Pierre (1984): *Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste*. Oxon: Routledge Kegan&Paul: 7.

Moreover, since it was no longer clear who was more important, the growth in urban populations and the rise of the bourgeoisie resulted in a need for public demonstrations of social standing. Thus, going to concerts became a means of displaying status.

As mentioned before, in the second half of the nineteenth century a distinction was formulated between art music (serious) and popular music (light). 'Light music' was said to have originated in Vienna, in the dance music of Lanner and Strauss I, who combined folk and classical styles in a new way and Johann Strauss I was the first to use the term 'Unterhaltungsmusik' (light music, music for entertainment) publicly. Furthermore, in his contribution to discussion on light music, Carl Dalhaus has argued that nineteenth-century popular music was 'lowbrow' and better described as "*trivial music*".<sup>312</sup> By contrast, the term 'highbrow', first used in the 1880s, was a sign of intelligence. According to Dalhaus, the fault for the trivialization of music lay with industrialization and the compulsion to mass-produce and distribute commodities. In fact, it seems that the categorization of a type of urban music known as 'Unterhaltungsmusik' went hand in hand with the industrial production of sheet music, development of promenade concerts and the general growth of the music entertainment business.

With regards to the development of concerts, from the middle of the 1810s, the number of this kind of venue started to rise at a swift rate and during the 1830s this rise was reflected in the concert activities of all three cities (London, Paris and Vienna). One phenomenon in particular was responsible for that rise in Vienna: the dance music of Joseph Lanner and Johann Strauss Senior and the development of promenade concerts during the 1820s. Promenade concerts mixed popular and classical items, and, as mentioned in the previous sections, they resembled each other in the three cities more than any other kind of low-status concert. They were also the largest kind of public concert, and during them people could display any manner of inattentive behaviour: listening, walking, talking, drinking, or eating. For this reason they often took place in parks. In the 1840s, they started to become more formalized and were held in dance halls and theatres. One of their key features was their dance music - especially waltzes, polkas and quadrilles.

Compared to the other two cities, Vienna hosted more promenade concerts probably because they were 'petit bourgeois' by nature, catering to tastes developed in cafes, taverns, parks and pleasure gardens. The 'haute bourgeoisie'<sup>313</sup> tended instead to go only to the most

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<sup>312</sup> Dalhaus, Carl (1989): *Nineteenth-Century Music*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

<sup>313</sup> Marx distinguished between the "haute" (high) bourgeoisie (industrialists and financiers)

prestigious of the promenade concerts, such as those with conducting by Philippe Musard in Paris, Johann Strauss I and II in Vienna and Louis Jullien in London. Promenade concerts were conducted in vividly decorated spaces with programs framed by dance numbers. The conductor performing in a heroic posture acted as an entrepreneur. Another important factor in the success of the promenade concerts was the fact that being outdoors was an important pastime for all classes in Vienna. However, it is also remarkable that in Vienna, the nobility mingled less with the bourgeoisie than in other European capitals. Nevertheless, over the years Austrian aristocrats could no longer afford to patronise private orchestras and new compositions, increasing the importance of the bourgeoisie in musical life.

Another important venue for social, intellectual and cultural gatherings during the nineteenth century was the Viennese home, and particularly its salon.<sup>314</sup> Salon activities flourished, like much of Vienna's social life, in the fall and winter months, but were particularly profuse during carnival season. The salons were, for music, -of special importance because they reflected the general change of artistic patronage from the aristocracy to the bourgeoisie. In his monograph on concert life in Vienna during the years 1830-1848, William Weber asserts that "*the abundance of middle-class music salons delayed the modernization of the city's classical music concerts and the establishment of a professional orchestra*"<sup>315</sup> and thus waltz orchestras and virtuosos drew enthusiastic audiences in the first half of the century.

### ***The adoption and reception of the polka***

It has already been mentioned in the previous section that the polka did not become popular immediately upon its arrival in Vienna - the city was still full of the sound of the waltz (not only those of the young Strauss but also his father's), as well as Anton Farbach's<sup>316</sup> playing and composing. However, through analysis of the Strauss' concert and ball programs between 1850 and 1870 it can be seen that the polka became very fashionable in Vienna in the 1850s and remained so through at least two more decades. Many of these came from the repertoire of Strauss the Younger, who composed around 200 polkas from the 1850s until his death. Each of these was repeated many times at his and his brothers' promenade concerts and balls, as reported by the Austrian press. For example, it was commented that "*The Bauern-Polka brought a storm of applause such as no Beethoven symphony could yet have received, and*

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and the "petite" (small or petty) bourgeoisie (shopkeepers, self-employed artisans, lawyers)

<sup>314</sup> Hanson (1985).

<sup>315</sup> Weber (1975): 78-81.

<sup>316</sup> other popular Viennes composer.

was so frequently demanded that its bewildered composer was driven almost to distraction."<sup>317</sup> In 1853, *der Wanderer* commented on the new „*Wiedersehen-Polka*“ saying that it was a "superb, provoking and melodic dance flower." It caused such a great sensation at its first performance that it had to be repeated four times!<sup>318</sup> *The Humorist* wrote that "the young waltz caused furor, the young quadrille brought enthusiasm and the young polka aroused fanaticism"<sup>319</sup> while the *Grazer Zeitung* - reporting on Strauss' concerts in Vienna - wrote that "every quadrille, every polka and every waltz had to be repeated many times."<sup>320</sup> Strauss also wrote in his letters: "you won't believe how often and how many times I was called to repeat my waltzes and polkas, and not only to play but also to dance them."<sup>321</sup> From all these quotations, it is evident that the polka was very popular and that the Viennese liked its tunes. It is also notable that the new dance was in favor because of its fresh and provocative character. Nevertheless, it needs to be noted, that most of those comments mentioned the polka together with the waltz. This shows us that the polka was probably not, therefore, considered as a separate fashion but rather was an addition to the waltz - something that continued and enriched the whirling and waltzing tradition.

However, a closer analysis of Johann's concert and ball programs in the 1850s and 1860s, shows that the polka started to gain a position equal to the waltz. Moreover, sometimes more polkas than waltzes began to be played at some of the concerts and balls. Johann Strauss II started to compose and include more and more polkas in his repertoire from the 1850s on: for example, in the *Carneval Revue* from 1864, it was stated that ten polkas, seven waltzes and two quadrilles had been composed by Johann, Josef and Eduard during the carnival season.<sup>322</sup> The illustration below (No. 27) shows this very clearly. The document shows the order of the dances at the state balls in 1864 with remarks by Johann Strauss.<sup>323</sup> 'Francaise' is for the polka francaise. As can be seen, the program contains more polkas than

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<sup>317</sup> Kemp, Peter (1989): *The Strauss dynasty*. Omnibus Press: 1, 56.

<sup>318</sup> *Der Wanderer*, 1853, Nr. 432-20.9. "Strauß brachte eine neue Polka, betitelt: "Wiedersehen", eine superbe, reizende, melodische Tanzblüte zur ersten Aufführung, die Sensation erregte und viermal wiederholt werden mußte".

<sup>319</sup> Moritz Gottlieb Sophir im *Humoristen*: „Der junge Walzer hat furor, die jeune Qaudrille hat Enthusiasmus und die giovane Polka hat Fanatismus erregt.“

<sup>320</sup> *Grazer Zeitung*, 1845 Nr. 45./15.4.

<sup>321</sup> "Du glaubst nicht, wie oft und wie viel ich aufgefordert werde, meine Walyer und Polkas nicht nur zu spielen sondern auch zu ihren Klängen zu tanzen" In: letter written in Pavlovsk to a friend in Vienna in 1860, in: *Johann Strauss-Brevier, Aus Briefen und Erinnerungen*: 25.

<sup>322</sup> *Fremdenblatt*, 1864/Nr. 42 11.2.

<sup>323</sup> *Wiener Stadtbibliothek, Musiksammlung: Sammlung Strauss Meyszner I.N.76.272/1-p. 105.*

waltzes; to be precise six polkas, four waltzes, one cotillion and one lance. This could mean that in this period, the polka was much more popular among Viennese society than the waltz and other social dances and hence was played more often in the concert halls and ballrooms.

	Anfang		Ende
1. Nachtpalter	8. 45	1. 1 <sup>er</sup> Walzer	8. 51
2. Manson	8. 56	2. 1 <sup>re</sup> Française	9. 11
3. neues Leben Bawerij	9. 16	3. 1 <sup>er</sup> Polka tremblante	9. 22
4. Litarbittel	9. 27	4. 2 <sup>er</sup> Walzer	9. 33
5. Liederquartette	9. 38	5. 2 <sup>re</sup> Française	9. 53
6. Morgenblätter	10. 00	6. Cotillon	11 00
7. Lebenswetter	11. 45	7. 3 <sup>er</sup> Walzer	11. 50
8. Lom' e	11. 54	8. Lançe	12. 14
9. Domolien	12. 18	9. 2 <sup>re</sup> Polka tremblante	12. 23
10. Pasmew als Bot.	12. 27	10. 3 <sup>re</sup> Française	12. 42
11. Jwisland'sch. Polka	12. 46	11. 4 <sup>ter</sup> Walzer	12. 51
	12. 55	12. 3 <sup>te</sup> Polka	1 00

S. 105

Illustration No. 27

Another example is the program of a monster concert organized on February 11th 1863 by Johann, Josef and Eduard. It consisted of 50 dances: 14 waltzes, 10 quadrilles, 25 polkas of different kinds and 1 schottische.<sup>324</sup> This is illustrated in plate No. 28 presented below. This kind of dance division began to predominate at the balls and what can mainly be observed, in the course of the years and especially in the 1860s, is that the polka became Strauss' favorite dance piece at this time.

<sup>324</sup> Wiener Zeitung and Fremdenblatt, 1859/ Nr. 47 27.2 In: Strauss-Meyszner collection: 243.



Zum ersten Male in Wien  
DREI BÄLLE an EINEM ABENDE

im

Sofien-Bad-Saal.

Dienstag den 5. Februar

**MONSTRE-BALL**

als

**Strauß Benefice,**

bezeichnet:

Carnevals Perpetuum mobile, oder: Tanz ohne Ende.

Drei große Orchester,

wovon eines unter der Leitung des **JOHANN STRAUSS,** | das andere unter der Leitung des **JOSEF STRAUSS,**

das dritte zum ersten Male unter der Leitung des

**EDUARD STRAUSS.**

Das Tanz-Programm, welches von sämtlichen Orchestern anzustreichen (oder auch) ausgeführt wird, enthält

14 Walzer,	8 Polka-Schnell.
10 Quadrillen,	1 Schottisch.
9 Polka français,	In Summa 50 Tänze.
8 Polka Mazurka,	

Vor der Ruhestunde: **Monstre-Galoppade,**  
wobei Galoppen von weif. Strauss und Lanner, mit einem neuen eigend hierzu componirten Schluß-  
satz von Johann und Josef Strauss, unter Gesamtwirkung aller 3 Orchester aufgeführt werden.

An neuen Compositionen von Johann Strauß:

Divulbrades (Walzer), Wohlthunnen (Walzer), Klangfarben (Walzer), Camellen-Polka.

An neuen Compositionen von Josef Strauß:

Honore (Walzer), Schabernak-Polka, Iris-Polka Mazurka, Carneval-Quadrille, Wiener-Nachtmusik (Walzer).

Die Tänze leitet Herr NOWODWORSKY.

Eintrittskarten à 1 fl. 50 kr. Oe. W. für Eine Person

und Gesellschaftskarten für 3 Personen à 3 fl. Oe. W., ist in der 1. u. 2. Verkaufsstelle des Carl Stadlauer,  
hier in allen bekannten Billard-Etablissementen des Sofien-Bad-Saales zu haben. — In der Höhe 2 fl. Oe. W.

Johann und Josef Strauss.

It is remarkable that he composed a lot of polkas during his concert tours in Russia and it seems that this dance form was particularly fashionable there and that Russians loved the polka rhythms. It is hard to say why they liked the polka so much and we can only speculate that one of the reasons could be the polka's slavic origins. Thus, in a way, Russians felt that it was part of their own culture. Also, after Vienna, Russia was Strauss II's second home and he composed a great number of polkas there. For all these reasons, it is surprising nobody has considered Johann Strauss as more than just 'the waltz king' to date. Through his enormous contribution to the development of the polka in Vienna, he also deserves to be called 'the polka king'.

It was already mentioned that the Strauss family lived and performed in a time when commerce and consumption were developing. A feature of the consumption of commercial popular music was the appetite that its consumers showed for novelty. This novelty was something that attracted the public in London, Paris and Vienna and other European cities too. The quadrilles and polkas were offered almost as often as waltzes and Strauss II won greater international reknown within fashionable society than any other entrepreneur-conductor. In addition, he used different tricks and effects to attract his audiences and to make his music fashionable. He sometimes included attention-grabbing effects that might have been considered gimmicks - or might have been accepted simply as good fun - such as the rifle shot near the end of his *Jäger -Polka*, the cracking of the whip in his quick polka *Im Sturmschritt*<sup>325</sup> or the imitation of the uncorking of a bottle of champagne in his *Champagne -Polka*. It was new to use such visual and sound effects and the audiences in Vienna liked it. Thus, the Viennese appetite for novelties and Strauss' response to it, were among the many reasons and ways in which the polka was made fashionable in Vienna. All in all, it is clear that the development of the polka fashion in Vienna in the 1840s-1860s was gradual and depended on various conditions that were presented above.

Further to the perception and adoption of the polka, a closer analysis of contemporary articles, advertisements and press comments reveals the many ways it was perceived by critics. In some of these articles the polka was described as provocative, attractive, exciting, spicy, vivacious and tingling. Furthermore, Ludwig Speidel wrote that "*rhythmically as well as melodically, Strauss unveiled all stimulus of the dance music. His polkas and quadrilles were light and coquettish.*" Other polkas were described as "*comfortable, sociable, spicy and*

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<sup>325</sup> Wiener Theaterzeitung, 1858 Nr. 22/28.1.

witty".<sup>326</sup> It can be noticed that the polka was often described as 'provocative' in contrast to the waltz which was instead called 'delightful'. It does not mean, however, that the waltz was not provoking. By contrast, at the turn of the eighteenth century it was the most criticized and commented upon couple dance in Vienna. Nevertheless, it is also true that its popularity faded away throughout the years and most probably this was also one of the reasons why the polka became popular in Vienna. It was fresh, new, faster and expressed the spirit of a new time, a time when the middle-classes exerted more and more power and control over cultural life. This was also the time when working class people started to make themselves heard. Anyway, in reality, the polka never really replaced the waltz entirely and it is doubtful whether there was a polka craze in Vienna to such an extent as in London or Paris.

Summarizing, it seems that there was no particular polka craze in Vienna, even if the dance was very fashionable and popular among all classes of the Viennese society. It seems to have started to first gain popularity in the 1850s, when Strauss II composed a vast number of polka dances. During the next twenty years he and his brothers composed many polkas which gained popularity and evoked enthusiasm not only in Vienna but all over the world. However, in Vienna, it remained linked to the round-dancing fashion and there were no special signs of any extraordinary polka craze there and therefore it should be rather considered an integral part of Viennese entertainment for everybody, the so called "Unterhaltungsmusik".

## 2.4. Viennese polkas' rhythms

*"To dance the polka men and women must have hearts that beat high and strong. Tell me how you dance the polka, and I will tell you how you love."<sup>327</sup>*

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Stamping and whirling. The combined activities which horrified cultured society in Europe were for many centuries the principal feature of popular dance. Why did people stamp while they danced? Why did they jump into the air? In Sachs' view the powerful stimulus in dance was *"longing for truth, closeness to nature and primitivism"*. Could this explain also the popularity of the polka in Vienna? The aim of this section is to show how the rhythm, speed and character of the polka influenced Viennese society. Furthermore, its goal is to explain how and why the polka became an integral part of the Viennese season.

In 1845, two reknowned contemporary dancing masters Perrot and Robert described the polka in their short book devoted entirely to this new dance form. Clearly, for them the

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<sup>326</sup> Ludwig Speidel on February 12, 1871 in Wiener Fremdenblatt.

<sup>327</sup> Perrot/Adrien (1845): 9.

polka was passionate and full of different emotions. Indeed, just like the polka, Viennese cultural and musical life of the nineteenth century also had its own rhythm. The principle of the 'season' dominated the musical life of cities in which instrumental traditions were strong. The season usually lasted from October to November and from April to May, after which more affluent audiences usually went to the countryside or the seaside. The season differed in the three capitals and so in London it extended into June and was packed with concerts, while the Paris season usually finished at the end of May while that of Vienna ended in April and was the shortest.<sup>328</sup> Life during the season was structured around the artists and cultural events and in Vienna dancing was central to various cultural activities.

How the polka was danced is very distinctly expressed in the poem "Auf zum Tanze" written in 1888 by Ludwig Ganghofer, a German writer born in 1855. The poem describes a couple dancing the waltz, the polka mazur and the polka schnell. They are whirling around the room and their expressions such as gleaming eyes, burning cheeks, laughing mouth indicate a great pleasure in what they are doing. Their movements are full of meaning and sexual associations. They dance in a way that gives an impression of constant chasing and catching between both partners. The order of the dances and the rhythm of the poem indicate a constant acceleration of tempo which causes the atmosphere to become hotter and hotter. As a matter of fact, this increase in speed corresponds to the order of dances in Viennese ballrooms that were usually organized in such a way as to give the dancers time to rest, while at the same time keeping the excitement and pleasure of dancing going.

*"Nun habt Ihr geschmauset - wohl bekomm's!-  
Geplaudert bei blinkendem Weine!  
nun werft die Servietten beiseit'  
und rühret die Tanzgeneine...  
Ihr seid beim Strauss,  
Beim Walzer zuhaus!*

*Hopsa hei! Bis in den Tag  
sollen die Saiten klingen,  
bis in den Morgen sollen im Tanz  
lustig die Paare sich schwingen....  
Tour um Tour,  
Polka-Mazur!*

*Blitzende Augen lachender Mund,  
heisse, brennende Wangen,  
silbernes Lachen allüberall,*

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<sup>328</sup> Samson (2001): 345.

*fröhliches Haschen und Fangen....  
er und sie  
"Ein Vis-a-vis!"*

*Hört Ihr ihn klingen, den lockenden Laut!  
Wie sich die Takte sputen!  
wie sie sich drängen in wirbelnder Hast,  
wie sie rauschen und fluthen....  
Well an Well'...  
Polka schnell!"  
Concert, Champagner, köstlicher Schmaus  
Tanz-eine Hitze, südlich!  
Schließlich bei ungedecktem Tisch  
Würstln! riesig gemüthlich!  
Schwarzer Caffee!  
Wir bleiben eh'-'!*

Clearly, the poem shows that the polka was exciting, fresh and infectious and hence, it is not surprising that at a certain moment it was danced even more often than the waltz. In 1864, *The Berlinische Zeitung* wrote: "the waltz with its light steps was replaced by the realistic polka." It was already mentioned that the polka and the waltz constituted integral parts of the so called social dancing fashion. Therefore, it is important to look at the polka in relation to the waltz. There were significant differences between the two and additionally, the polka varied within its own genre due to the fact that there were also different types of polka in Vienna. The waltz was slower, danced in triple time with a strong accent on the first measure. By contrast, the tempo of the polka was originally that of a military march executed rather slowly, although faster polkas were composed later. According to Adrich, the polka is a „danse a' deux", commencing at pleasure, couples following each other and adopting any of the figures, but occasionally returning to the first. The polka should be played not quite so fast as the galop,<sup>329</sup> but in a similar way. The measure or time is 2-4 with the accent placed on the second beat.<sup>330</sup>

In brief, the main difference between the Viennese waltz and the Bohemian polka was its measure and rhythm. This difference also seems to have influenced the adoption of the polka in Vienna. As for Frank Rustes, the author of the book "*Dance in society*", explanation for the appeal of the polka must be sought in the nature of the dance itself. The rhythm - 2/4 time,

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<sup>329</sup> Galop is a lively country dance introduced in the late 1820s to Parisian society. It was danced in the same closed position as the waltz. It is considered to be a forerunner of the polka.

<sup>330</sup> Adrich, Elisabeth (1991): *From the ballroom to the hell. Grace and Folly in nineteenth-century dance*. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press: 170.

like a military march with an obvious and emphatic beat, and the physical movements, involving hopping and jumping, could hardly have been more different from the gliding ballroom waltz. This contrast is important since people of mid-century Vienna were, undoubtedly, ready to transfer their enthusiasm from the romantic waltz to a dance more in keeping with the quickening tempo of social change. It seems that the time was certainly ripe for such a dance not only in Vienna but also in Paris and London. For example, shortly before the advent of the polka, dancing in Parisian halls had already become extremely energetic and vital, with accelerated waltzes, exuberant galops and can cans, involving robust whizzing, twirling and leg-kicking. According to A.H. Franks "*the polka came just at the right moment to harness this energy and direct it into a less unseemly direction.*"<sup>331</sup> For his part, even if the younger Strauss still composed waltzes between 1850 and 1870, he seemed to be much happier composing polkas. For example, it was remarked that in the first part of the Jorunalists-Ball the waltzes by Johann Strauss Junior made a rather weak impression in comparison to the polka: "*his polkas affected with their freshness and the originality of their rhythmic pace.*"<sup>332</sup> In fact, to increase the tension and excitement, the younger Strauss used different rhythmic patterns typical of Eastern and Southern European countries such as Bohemia, Poland, Russia, Hungary and others. Indeed, Van der Merwe stated that "*the polka was much more folksy than the waltz*"<sup>333</sup> and thus, it was probably viewed as more exotic than it.

The world of fashion, at this time, tended to be languid on the ballroom floor and so even the upper classes were encouraged by the polka, although never quite allowing themselves the stamps and exaggerated movements of the masses in public. Ferrero noted that the polka gave the dancers much more freedom than the waltz, which was considered 'antiquated' in the mid-1840s: "*unlike the waltz, which is a continual whirling round, and which allows no pause or cessation until the dancers are exhausted, the polka admits exceeding variety, by allowing the performers to turn in any direction which their fancies may suggest.*"<sup>334</sup> In 1874, *The Fremdenblatt* described the polka as "*a prose and heroism for the legs*".<sup>335</sup> Again, the same Ferrero noticed that fast and lively character of the polka appealed to those dancers who:

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<sup>331</sup> Rustes, Frank (1969): 75.

<sup>332</sup> Kgl. priv. Berlinische Zeitung-Vossische Zeitungs-Expedition 1864/Nr. 89 14.4.

<sup>333</sup> Van der Merwe, Peter (2004): *Roots of the classical: the popular origins of Western music.* Oxford: University Press.

<sup>334</sup> Ferrero, Edwards: *The Art of Dancing historically illustrated:* 144.

<sup>335</sup> Fremdenblatt 1874/ 8.4.



"favor the age of progress".<sup>336</sup> For this reason it was also favored over other round dances, which arrived at approximately the same time, but were either slower or less passionate. Van der Merwe mentioned, that by the midnineteenth century, the polka and waltz basses (bass voice) had converged towards essentially the same formula of on-beat basses combined with off-beat chords. Only the off-beat chords differed, but this small difference resulted in the waltz, which remained smooth and romantic while the polka developed a rhythmic drive which was very particular.<sup>337</sup>

The particular treatment of rhythm was also a crucial feature of the Strauss compositions. Rhythm makes the dance, as well as marking the dance type, while particular rhythmic motifs often take precedence over melodic development. Already Strauss Senior began to experiment with the rhythms in his waltzes. That is to say, he began to extend the eight-measure sections of the waltz to sixteen measures (two times faster), sometimes using a varied repetition, and he used a great deal of syncopation, especially in polkas and galops. He used pizzicato<sup>338</sup> and staccato<sup>339</sup> short figures highlighted with another instrument; he shifted colours by using different instruments, emphasized the rhythm with percussion, used contrasted dynamics and other techniques too. Strauss II later used all these rhythmic and harmonic tools to make his dances more exciting and attractive to the public. In this regard, an interesting comment on his *Auroraball-polka* can be found in Derek's book: "*it consists almost entirely of repetitions of one note. But how infectious it is!*"<sup>340</sup> In fact, the musical and rhythmic expressions are so varied that even one note used in a right way could cause excitement. *The Tritsch-Tratsch polka* is another example of manipulation of a rhythm where the single quaver note symbolises gossiping (in German: tratschen).<sup>341</sup> In some of his dances Strauss also used special effects and these also had an influence on the speed and rhythm. For example, in *Champagner-Polka* the uncorking of the champagne bottle was imitated. *Die Zepperl-Polka* (zeppeln- to take small steps) corresponded with the polka tremblante, which was at the time a fashionable dance in Vienna.

It seems that this use of different rhythms and rhythmical effects, usually the fast and vivacious ones, was simply the result of a common need for such kinds of music and dance. In the nineteenth century, the desire to dance can be observed among the poor as well as the

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<sup>336</sup> Ferrero (1859): 72, 148.

<sup>337</sup> Van der Merwe (2004): 236.

<sup>338</sup> playing technique that involves plucking the strings of a string instrument.

<sup>339</sup> musical articulation for separated, unconnected notes.

<sup>340</sup> Scott (2008): 91.

<sup>341</sup> Strauss Werkverzeichnis.

rich. As the ball culture developed, so did the need for entertainment. Modern people desired faster and fresher dances which gave them a feeling of freedom, enjoyment and excitement. The way the Austrian press described the polka corresponded to these needs. According to it the polka was: *lively, vigorous, spirited, passionate, tempestuous, turbulent, exciting, melodic, infantile, ridiculous, effective, delicate, tempting, piquant, happy, fancy and gracefull rhythms*, etc.<sup>342</sup> In 1874, we can find an article where the polka was described as "*plump and at the same time dainty*."<sup>343</sup> Commenting on the *Polka Enfentillage*, for example, the *Wiener Theaterzeitung* described it as "*one of the happiest dance pieces ever written, mainly thanks to its tempting tones*."<sup>344</sup> Again, the *L'inconnue polka francaise* was full of Russian influence with respect to its composition and rhythm and tempo modifications. In the *Furioso-Polka* which was almost like a Galopp, the descriptive rhythmic components were side by side: "*sensational*" dotted eights and a "*barbarian*" quarter beat.<sup>345</sup> The dance was described as tempestuous and passionate and the tempo description *furioso*, indicated the quick and passionate character of this dance. Finally, *Juristen-Ball Polka schnell* was described as a "*nervous scurry of repeated tone motives*."<sup>346</sup> Most of these words can be associated with lively and passionate rhythms and character; furthermore, they give a strong impression of rapidity, lightness and joyfulness.

The examples could be multiplied; nevertheless, it is clear that the fast and lively rhythm was one of many elements that made the polka interesting and therefore fashionable among the Viennese society in the second half of the nineteenth century. But not only this feature decided its popularity in Vienna. It seems to be quite clear that the piquancy and provocative character of the polka attracted contemporary listeners and encouraged passionate dancers who were looking for excitement and enjoyment. Due to all these characteristics, the polka managed if not to replace then at least to be considered equal to the waltz in the Viennese ballrooms between the 1850s and 1860s. It seems that Strauss understood very well that people wanted faster dances to give them a feeling of freedom; it was for this reason that he composed the Bohemian polka. Later he invented different types of polka dance form with other Viennese composers.

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<sup>342</sup> for ex.: *Blätter fuer Musik, Theater, und Kunst*, January 1, 1858: 11.

<sup>343</sup> *Fremdenblatt* 1874/ 8.4.

<sup>344</sup> *Wiener Theaterzeitung*, 1858 Nr. 22/28.1.

<sup>345</sup> Schenk, Erich (1940): *Johann Strauss.*: Athenaion: 62.

<sup>346</sup> Schenk (1940): 62.

### ***Different polka variants***

From the 1840s through to the 1880s, the polka evolved into different styles and tempi and many variations of it were to be observed in the Viennese ballrooms. They included the characteristic 'heel and toe' steps<sup>347</sup> and the rapid sliding galop figures. Among the most popular polkas were the polka-redowa, polka-mazur, polka française, polka schnell and polka-tremblante. Usually, the Bohemian polka written in the nineteenth century had a four-theme structure and its step consisted of three figures: a hop, three glides and a rest. Its tempo was in 2/4 measure. For Durang, in order for the step to be appropriate to the music it required four beats to the bar, one more beat than the waltz. He commented that "*the step now universally used is a very animated movement; unique in style imparting much spirit to the dancers.*"<sup>348</sup> It was already shown that by the midpoint of the nineteenth century, the Bohemian polka had become an established favourite in Vienna and Johann Strauss II influenced the increase of its popularity by composing other polka variants. To understand why different variations of the polka should have influenced its development and fashion in Vienna, a brief overview of them is given in the next paragraph.

One particular polka variant, the **polka française**, was a slower version of the polka and became popular from the middle of the century on. In some cases it consisted of old-fashioned minuet figures that were used as a 'rest' dance between faster polkas and waltzes. This kind of polka was danced with slower steps, therefore requiring more time, and it was often described as being more measured in its gaiety. Therefore, it was also more feminine, graceful and elegant than the traditional polka. According to Schneider, "*its slow rhythm should increase the attractiveness of the entertainment.*"<sup>349</sup> The results of the analysis of Strauss II's polka compositions show that in the 1840s he mainly composed the traditional and original Bohemian polka. Later in the second half of the 1850s, he started to compose many polka françaises. Through analysis of his works lists, collected by the *Wiener Institut of Strauss Forschung*, it becomes clear that it was his second favourite type of polka. He went on to compose around 50 polka françaises. The *Elisen-Polka* was the first dance he wrote in this style and he conducted its inaugural performance at an open-air concert in May 1854. It was described by the *Wiener Neuigkeitsblatt* as "*composed in the character of the French polka*"<sup>350</sup>.

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<sup>347</sup> The heel and toe polka was a slower version of the polka in which the dancers touched first the heel, then the toe of one foot on the floor before taking three steps.

<sup>348</sup> Durang (1850): 113.

<sup>349</sup> Schneider, Hans (1987): *Johann Strauss (Sohn). Tanzmusik aus der Jahrhunderten*. Katalog Nr. 298. Tutzing: Musikantiquariat Hans Schneider: 787 (op. 182).

<sup>350</sup> *Wiener Neuigkeitsblatt*, May 9, 1854.

Among the other famous polka francaises are: *Annen Polka*, *Demolirer Polka*, *Bitte schön* or *Im Krapfenwald'l*.

The polka-mazur, or **polka-mazurka** was a different type of polka, played in the tempo of a mazurka<sup>351</sup> but danced in the same way as the standard polka. It consisted of one mazurka and one polka step, continuing three to each step taking two measures. Johann Strauss II started to compose this type of the polka at the end of 1850s.<sup>352</sup> During his lifetime he wrote around 35 of them. His first polka mazurka was *La Viennoise*. Strauss' polka mazurka was more romantic than the Bohemian polka and it was also more intercultural than the other types of polkas, appealing to a broader variety of listeners.

The **polka-schnell** was faster than the polka francaise or polka mazur. It was launched by Strauss Junior after the galop was banned in Vienna because of its bad effect on the health. He therefore developed the schnell-polka, which was more or less the galop under a new name. In 1854, when he produced his *Schnellpost-polka*, a cholera epidemic was probably creating a more distracting health worry than that of purportedly dangerous dances and it was able to stay in the Viennese ballroom without any problems. This type of polka was later a further source of inspiration for Johann II and Josef Strauss when they wrote the so-called *Pizzicato polka* for string instruments. Later, Johann II wrote a *New pizzicato polka*. Some time before, he also wrote a *Joke-polka* (German *Scherz-polka*).

The list of polka styles is much longer and there were many more polka versions, such as the **polka redowa**, **polka schottische**, **military polka**, **polka-tremblante**, **varsoviennne** and so on. Nevertheless, of the different polka versions, the polka-mazurka, polka-schnell and polka-francaise were the most fashionable in Vienna. To better understand differences between different types of polkas I refer to the article "*Über moderne Tänze*" published in 1857 that gave the following description of them:

*"Putting together of the same dances is preposterous, the greatest nonsense. Polka-Francaise, a conglomerate of Bohemian and French elements, a Bohemian dance, danced in the French way [...] while on the dancers of the Polka-Mazur it is demanded to unify the Bohemian and Polish national dance through the performance of their feet [...] Since the dancing masters endeavour to transfer the ballet into the public ground, the informality and entertainment disappeared from the public locals. Polka Francaise initiated the end, the Schottische dance, Zepperl and Mazur-Polka and Varsoviennne came directly after it. The dances such as Lanze, Union-Quadrille which are similar to the Quadrille dissapeared as quick as they appeared. All these dances have to be learnt through a long series of lessons and they cost a lot [...] Above mentioned new dances*

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<sup>351</sup> Mazurka is a Polish dance in a triple meter that became popular in the ballrooms in the nineteenth century.

<sup>352</sup> Shaw, Lloyd (1950): *The Round dance book: a century of waltzing*. California: Caxton Printers: 94.

are, moreover, so exciting and require such a flexibility and bodily agility, that only young people can submit to such turn-exercises, while the elders, are not able to indulge in this relative pleasure[...] therefore it appears, that only young dancers can be seen at the balls, while fathers, mothers, uncles and aunts, if still in the proper age, to avoid boredom and anger, would participate with the same right and pleasure as the young ones. The biggest part of the elder people's entertainment was before listening to the admiration and praise of their daughters for their beautiful posture while dancing (namely while at waltzing), while the new dances, especially Polka-Francaise and Polka-Mazurka are not praiseworthy, because of their banality; furthermore they require grotesquely-fast movements, typical of cancan and this calls the young girls' morality into question."<sup>353</sup>

It seems that the Austrian capital was the only place where so many polka variants evolved. This brings up the question, why in comparison to other capitals, so many variations of the polka existed in Vienna and why they were composed by the Viennese composers and not for example by other composers in London or even Paris? Without any doubts, one of the reasons was strongly connected with the multinational character of Viennese society. More cultural diversity means more variety in musical tastes. Therefore, the Viennese audience, which treated the musical life of Vienna as an integral part of their own life, was more demanding and had higher expectations of the Viennese composers. Vienna, at that time,

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<sup>353</sup> "Die Zusammenseßung derselben Tänzen ist ein Unding, der grasseste Unsinn. Polka-Francais, ein Conglomerat von böhmischen und – französischen Elementen, ein böhmischer Tanz, der französisch getantz werden soll [...] während an die Tänzer der Mazur-Polka, die speziell-cosmopolitische Anforderung gestellt wird, einen polnischen und einen böhmischen Nationaltanz durch die Leistungen ihrer Füsse ze vereinigen[...]

Seitdem die Tanzlehrer im, jedenfalls mehr industriösen als künstlerischem Beginnen, das Ballet auf den öffentlichen Tanzboden zu verpflanzen bemüht sind, ist die Gemütlichkeit und allgemeine Unterhaltung des tanzliebenden Publikums auf öffentlichen und wenn auch unter dem Titel "Gesellschaftsball" doch in öffentlichen Localen verschwunden. Polka-Francais begann den Anfluß, der schottische Tanz, die Zepperl und Mazur-Polka und Varsoviene folgten rapid nach. Der Quadrille ähnliche Tänze, wie die Lanze, Union-Quadrille und in neuester Zeit die Alliance verschwanden eben so schnell, als sie auftauchten. Alle diese Tänze müssen durch eine lange Reihe von Lectionen erlernt werden und kosten Geld [...]

Die oben benannten neuen Tänze, sind überdies so anstrengend, und fordern eine solche Biegsamkeit und körperliche Gewandigkeit, daß nur junge Leute sich solchen Turnübungen unterwerfen, während Diejenigen, welche über die Jünglingsjahre hinaus sind, sich bloß dem sehr relativen Vergnügen des Zusehens hingeben können, daher kömmt es, daß man jetzt auf Bällen lauter junge Tänzer sieht, während Väter, Mütter, Onkeln und Tanten, die wenn sie noch im entsprechenden Alter, bei einem häufigeren Vorkommen der ihnen geläufigen Tänze, dieselben recht gerne mitmachen würden – zu Laufe bleiben müssen, wenn sie sich nicht entfeßlich langweilen und zugleich ärgern wollen. – Ein großer Theil der Unterhaltung älterer Leute bestand ehemals darin, daß sie über die schöne Haltung ihrer Töchter beim Tanze (beim "Walzen" nämlich) von alle Seiten ein bewunderndes Lob hörten, während die neuen Tänze, besonders, Polka Francais und Mazurpolka, ihnen keine Gelegenheit geben, die Haltung und verschiedenen Stellungen derselben lobenswerth zu finden, da diese bachanalischen Tänze, welche grotesk-schnelle, cancanartige Bewegungen erfordern, die Sittlichkeit junger Mädchen in kein besonders günstiges Licht stellen [...]" In: "Über moderne Tänze" In: Wiener Theaterzeitung published in 1857.

attracted great composers, new ideas flowed rapidly and people got bored very easily; thus many polka variations were a response to the quick tempo of life and to the demand for variety and novelty.

At the same time, not only males but also females began to enjoy the exciting rhythms of the polka and other social dances. Turning, rotating and whirling were the main features of all the polka variants mentioned before and as this was regarded as morally reprehensible in high society because the movements were likely to cause a woman's skirt to fly up. Therefore all types of the polka faced some criticism at a certain point. However, they were not banned from nineteenth-century Vienna ballrooms. The Austrian press commented a great deal on the polkas composed by Strauss and very often also poked fun at the entire round-dancing culture. A funny example is given in the illustration below, the free translation of which means: Strauss fiddles, the Kopacsi shows, and Lessing slips off.<sup>354</sup> It shows precisely that one of the reasons why the entire round-dancing culture was criticized was its vulgar and light character. The same was true for London; the polka was seen there as a threat to the morality of young women and girls.



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<sup>354</sup> Berliner Kunstbericht In: Strauss-Meyszner collection.





Illustration No. 29,30,31

The Viennese press criticized the dance, because it was immoral and clumsy. *"The Wiener Zeitung"*, for example, stated that *"earlier Vienna had great dancers and dances. Since the introduction of quadrille and the flooding with the polka francaise, tremblante and polka mazur formal anarchy came into the city."* Furthermore:

*"people stopped to dance the waltz and started to dance all these new dances in a clumsy way. Instead of dancing graciously and slowly, people jump, turn around and watch the other partners. In comparison to a Vienna music-hall Oxford and Canterbury are temples of art and morality; and yet well-to-do Austrians take their wives and daughters- young modest girls-to such places, where the whole jest of a song lurks in its imperfectly veiled indecency. I should say that there were at least a hundred and fifty respectable women at the Neue Welt on the occasion of my only visit to that temple of song, but I did not see- and I kept my eyes open with curious pertinacity-an expression of disgust or shame upon the countenance of a single girl or young married woman present."*<sup>355</sup>

It is easy to see that the Viennese were afraid that the polka threatened the moral behaviour of young women and the Viennese authorities or opinion-making bodies were against single and young married women's participation in this kind of social interaction. Nevertheless, to the disgust of the critics, it was observed that females went to the ballrooms with great pleasure and danced the polka without shame. It was something highly inappropriate in such a conservative city under the rigid Austro-Habsburg regime. It is not surprising therefore, that the *Wiener Zeitung* described the balls of 1862 as *"a dancing orgy."*<sup>356</sup> Furthermore, it was commented that

*"in honour of the Viennese dancing masters we have to say, that they have a small part of the invention of sin with this new dance, namely abortions, on their conscience and that they dealt for the most part with the transfer and planting of this thistle in the terpsichorean garden. But, how can one plant thistles? Who can enjoy thistles?"*<sup>357</sup>

Clearly, then, the polka faced some criticism in nineteenth-century Vienna. As shown,

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<sup>355</sup> *"Früher hatte Wien den Ruf, die besten Tänzerinnen und Tänzer zu besitzen. Diesen Ruf würde es jetzt nicht erlangen. Seitdem Hereinbrechen der Quadrille und der Überflutung der Polka francaise, Tremblante, oder – um uns vaterländisch auszudrücken "Zepperl-Polka" und der Polka mazur ist eine förmliche Anarchie in unseren Tanzstaat eingedrungen. Der Walzer älterer Art hat aufgehört, und all die neuen Tänze werden mit einer Plumpheit getanzt, die unglücklich ist [...] Statt die Tänze langsam und graziös zu schleifen, springt man hier rasend herum, und da alles dabei untereinander tanzt, so schleudert alle Augenblicke der Tänzer seine Dame gegen eine anderes Paar, dass die Köpfe krachen, und das nennt man Vergnügen!"* In: *Wiener Theaterzeitung*, 1858: Nr. 22/ 28.1.

<sup>356</sup> *Wiener Zeitung*, 1862, Nr. 50/1.3.

<sup>357</sup> *"Zur Ehre der Wiener Tanzlehrer müssen wir andererseits sagen, dass sie den kleineren Theil der Erfindungsünden dieser modernen Tanz-Mißgeburten auf ihrem Gewissen haben und dass sie sich größtenteils nur mit der Uebertragung und Umpflanzung dieser Disteln im Garten Terpsichorens befaßt haben. Wie kann man sich aber damit bemühen, Disteln zu pflanzen? Wer kann Disteln genießen?"* In: *"Über moderne Tänze"* In: *Wiener Theaterzeitung* published in 1857.

the Viennese were concerned with the negative influence of the polka on women's morality and behaviour. The dance was not banned from the ballrooms; nevertheless it continued to be criticized for the way it was danced - described as giving - "*exciting and spirited pleasure*" and "*expression of an intense enthusiasm*" - which led women in particular to sinful enjoyments. It was thus its moral dimension that placed a question mark over it. Curiously, criticism of the negative impact of the polka was mainly addressed to women, particularly in regard to their reputation. To what extent the polka was viewed as immoral for Viennese society of the midnineteenth century will be discussed in the next comparative chapters related to Vienna, London and Paris.

Summarizing this section, the reasons for the popularity of the polka in Vienna need to be considered in relation to the waltz. Three main features seem to be important in answering the question of why the polka became fashionable in Vienna; speed, novelty, and variety. The polka was faster than the waltz, therefore it was more exciting; secondly it was new, hence it was attractive; and finally it offered the possibility to dance different polka styles and therefore it was refreshing and at a certain moment more exciting than the waltz. All of this, however, does not mean that the polka prevailed in popularity over the waltz.

## 2.5. Political, cultural and social meanings reflected in the Straussian Polka

*"If the title is part of the work and a knowledge of it adds something to the work-namely, a depictive character-then that something also is part of the work and should be appreciated as such by the listener who is motivated to understand the work. When this is done, the representational character of those works becomes manifest."*<sup>358</sup>

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Can we understand the music if we do not know what it represents? The title might determine what is represented in a musical genre; it is a part of a work. Indeed, by means of a title Strauss very often inserted an image into the reader's mind before the musical piece was even played. On the occasion of Johann Strauss II's 1884 Jubilee, one journalist commented, that "*a small chronicle of Vienna could be gathered from the titles of his waltzes, polkas, quadrilles and marches.*"<sup>359</sup> These works alluded to Vienna's environs, leading professions and local events. In fact, a brief glance at Strauss II's dance music titles reveals that his power to conjure up images through the titles was inescapable. The instant Strauss gave his pieces titles he associated them with a specific place within a specific country. These titles were also full of

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<sup>358</sup> Davies, Stephen (1994): *Musical meaning and expression*. New York: Cornell University Press: 108.

<sup>359</sup> Fremdenblatt, October 12, 1884.

meaning and they constitute a record of the social, political, cultural, and even technological history of his times. Thus, while it is true that image and video define the setting in which we view music, it seems to me that the very naming of dance pieces anchors them to a specific idea and this is clearly visible from the example of the Strauss dance pieces. It is difficult to determine just how much the titles of Strauss II's polkas contributed to his success but it cannot be forgotten that the dance pieces that had a title were better remembered by people and thus, they were better sold. In this section, it is shown that the polka in Vienna was not only popular because of its speed, novelty and freshness but also because of its actuality. This goal is achieved through the analysis of the titles of Strauss' polkas. A list of the majority is presented at the end of this section.

Strauss did not just compose for composition's sake. On the contrary: there was a method to it all. Composers from the Strauss family and other Viennese artists realized that the key to success for musicians in this period was to become involved in European current affairs and this is precisely what Johann Strauss II did. On the one hand, he dedicated most of his works to noble personalities, students, doctors, engineers, journalists, writers and others. On the other hand, he focused on specific current topics and thus, certain themes recur in his polkas: politics and social life; women, love and sensuality; technological discoveries and innovations; university graduates and professions. This is also true of the other Viennese composers of the polka such as Josef and Eduard Strauss or Lanner and Fahrbach.

As first mentioned in the earlier sections, Strauss' first polkas showed his support and enthusiasm for revolutionary ideas. The titles of the revolutionary works were all based on contemporary events, many of which bordered on the ridiculous. Musicologist Otto Brusatti wrote for example in his book that "*people who supported Metternich were often "serenaded" at night with 'Katzenmusik' (cat's music): which consisted of a combination of satirical lyrics and loud instruments*".<sup>360</sup> An example of Katzenmusik can be found in the *Ligourianer Seufzer Polka*. It was first performed at a Lerchenfeld tavern known as Zur Blauen Flasche, during the revolution of 1848, and it satirized an Order of Jesuits (founded by Alfonso Liguori) who supported Metternich. They were expelled from Vienna after the revolution broke out.<sup>361</sup> The Viennese press commented that even the title of this polka must arouse "*cheerfulness and dance pleasure*".<sup>362</sup> On the same topic, Strauss was once accused of favouring the Czechs and

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<sup>360</sup> Brusatti, Otto (1999): *Johann Strauss*. Graz: Bonechi Verlag Styria: 19.

<sup>361</sup> Strauß- Elementar Verzeichnis von Johann Strauß (Sohn), Hrsg. von Wiener Institut für Strauß Forschung, verlegt bei Hans Schneider. Tutzing. 207711 C, B. 1-6.

<sup>362</sup> Theaterzeitung, September 16, 1848: 223.

their national movements, because he played their disgraceful national melodies.<sup>363</sup> It can be observed, for example, in the *Geisselhiebe-Polka* in which he incorporated la Marseillaise. Furthermore, he dedicated the *Czechs-Polka* to the Czech minority in Vienna. The first two polkas were confiscated by the police.

It is very clear that the country's political policies had a strong impact on Vienna's musicians and music lovers in the *Biedermeier* time. As a matter of fact, the centralization of political power and the accompanying flurry of regulations led to revised and new rules about public decorum in the theatres; restrictions on the time and place of concerts and balls; limitations on travel; new taxes; and even attempts to curb the number of itinerant musicians allowed to play on the streets and in taverns. Censorship was applied to melodies, texts set to music, concert programs and handbills, and musical dedications. Secret police and spies were present at most concerts, balls, and public places where artists and musicians congregated, in order to gather information not only about their political activities but also about their moral character. In these ways, the government acquired a voice in deciding which musicians would be hired by state institutions or be granted court privileges, and whether their compositions would be allowed to be published or performed.<sup>364</sup> Thus, the political scene preoccupied contemporary composers at the mid-century and also became very significant for polka music composition.

The polka was not, however, limited to political use. Johann's brothers used more varied themes in their polkas such as, for example, women, emotions, animals, flowers, students, pleasures, love, ball events and more while Johann Strauss dedicated most of his works to particular groups of people; mainly students, doctors, artists, industrialists, technicians etc. After the revolutionary period in his artistic life, he dedicated many works to the court and the emperor, which might be understood as a political and strategical movement to gain more popularity and acknowledgement among the elites. For example, the *Elisen-Polka* was written in homage to the Joseph I's young bride Elisabeth of Bavaria. A brief glance at Strauss' *Werkverzeichnis* shows that many polkas were dedicated to royal families and members of the upper class. For example, *Haute Volee-Polka* was dedicated to Emperor Franz Joseph I for his birthday, '*S gibt nur a Kaiserstadt, 's giebt nur a Wien Polka*, *Warschauer Polka* was dedicated to the Russian empress, *Albion-Polka* was dedicated to Prince Albert and *Krönungsmarsch* was written for the Russian Emperor Alexander II.

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<sup>363</sup> Mailer, Franz (1983): *Johann Strauss (Sohn). Leben und Werk in Briefen und Dokumenten*. Tutzing: 55.

<sup>364</sup> Hanson (1985): 175-180.

Not only political but also cultural and social events provided opportunities for composing new dance pieces. The annual concerts and balls for students, lawyers and different social groups resulted in the composition of the *Students -Polka*, *Lawyers -Polka*, *Aesculap -Polka*, *Aurora -Polka*, *Peasants -Polka*, *Poor -Ball -Polka* and many others. They were all dedicated to the social and professional groups mentioned in their titles. Moreover, like a great many Strauss family compositions, the younger Strauss devoted many of his dances to specific events and fashions in the history of the Austrian capital. *The Demolirer-Polka*, for example, referred to the demolition of Vienna's ramparts and important changes in the city's architecture, while the *Electro-Magnetische Polka* was written for the students of technics. Again, *Patrioten-Polka* was performed at the Patriots Festival. There was, for example, a period of time when the word 'explosive' was very fashionable and thus *Explosions-Polka* was written by Strauss for the Joyful Explosions Festival in 1847.<sup>365</sup> This polka incorporates many explosive effects throughout the piece and was one of Strauss' most popular pieces when he was still a young composer.

Furthermore, it should not be forgotten that at the midcentury women started to participate in social dancing more intensely than ever before. Indeed, their participation in polka dancing constituted one of the most controversial and at the same time most exciting parts of the dancing practices. Therefore, many polkas were written especially for females. The list of Strauss' polkas whose titles can be associated with happiness, women and love is long. Some of the most interesting are as follows: *Hopser (jump)*, *Bachus*, *Figaro*, *Explosions*, *Nur Fort! (Let's away!)*, *Auf freiem Fuße*, *Auf zum Tanze (Let's dance)*, *Die Bajadere*, *Ballsträußchen*, *Bluette*, *Blumenfest (festival of flowers)*, *Drollerie*, *Fantasieblümchen*, *Frisch heran (fresh forth)*, *Furioso*, *Glücklich ist wer vergißt (Happy is the one that forgets)*, *Diabolin*, *Herzenslust (heart pleasures)*, *Leichtes Blut (light blood)*, *Liebchen, schwing dich (Swing honey)*, *Liebe und Ehe (love and marriage)*, *Lucifer*, *Musen*, *Was liebt sich, neckt sich (The quarrel of lovers is the renewal of love)*, *Vergnügungszug (train of pleasures)*, *Lob der Frauen (praise of women)*, *Heski-Hoski* (the title is Czech and in free translation means "for beautiful girls").

These considerations confirm that Strauss was a great businessman who knew how to connect the business of composing the right pieces for the right people keeping in mind current trends in entertainment, fashion and musical tastes of the day. Thus, the success of the polka in Vienna depended not only on its lively and novel character, its provocative and exciting features or its actuality of topics and themes but it was designed on the basis of

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<sup>365</sup> Strauss-Elementar Verzeichnis.



commercial speculation. This economic perspective of polka consumption will not, however, be discussed in this thesis, even though it is important to bear in mind that behind the cultural spread of the polka was the economic aspect, and this played a significant role in its evolution and fashioning all over Europe and therefore, was tightly connected with its cultural consumption.

<b>TITLE</b>	<b><i>YEAR AND PLACE OF THE FIRST PUBLIC PERFORMANCE IN VIENNA</i></b>
Aesculap-Polka op. 130	Vienna 1852/1853, Zum Sperl
Albion-Polka op. 102	Vienna 1851, unknown
Alexandrinen-Polka op. 198	Pawlowsk 1857, Vauxhall
Alliance-Marsch op. 158	
Amazonen-Polka op.9	1844/1845 Dommayer's Casino
An der Moldau. Polka francaise, op. 366	Vienna 1874
An der Wolga. Polka Mazurka op. 425	Russia 1886, Musikvereinsaal
Annen-Polka op. 117	Vienna 1852, Zum Wilden Mann, Papagei
Annina. Polka Mazurka op. 415	
Armen-Ball-Polka op. 176	Vienna 1855/1856, Etablissement Schwender
Auf der Jagd. Schnell-Polka op. 373	1875
Auf freiem Fue. Polka francaise op. 345	Vienna 1871, Musivereinsaal
Auf zum Tanze! Schnell-Polka op. 436	1888, Musikvereinsaal
Auroraball-Polka op. 219	Vienna 1858/1859, Zum Sperl
Aurora-Polka op. 165	Vienna 1854/1855, Sperl
Aus der Heimath. Polka Mazur op. 347	Vienna 1871, Volksgarten
Bachus-Polka op. 38	1846/1847 Goldener Strauss
Die Bajadere. Polka schnell op. 351	1871 Volksgarten
Ballstruschen. Polka schnell op. 380	1878, Sophienesaal
Bauern-Polka. (francaise) op. 276	Pawlowsk 1863, Vauxhall Pwlowsk, Volksgarten Vienna
Bijoux-Polka (francaise) op. 242	Pawlowsk 1860, Volksgarten
Bitte schn. Polka francaise op. 372	1875
Bluette. Polka francaise op. 271	Vienna 1862, k.k. Redoutensaal
Blumenfest-Polka op. 111	Vienna 1852, k.k. Volksgarten
Bonbon-Polka (francaise) op. 213	Pawlowsk 1858, Vauxhall Pwlowsk, Volksgarten Vienna
Brautschau-Polka op. 417	Vienna 1885
Brger-Ball Polka op. 145	Vienna 1853/1854, k.k. Redoutensaal
Burschenwanderung. Polka francaise op. 389	Vienna 1880/1881

Camelien-Polka op. 248	Vienna 1860/1861, Dianasaal
Champagner-Polka. Musikalischer Scherz op. 211	Pawlowsk 1857/1858, Vauxhall Pwlowsk, Volksgarten Vienna
Concordia. Polka-Mazur op. 206	Vienna 1857/1858, k.k. Redoutensäle
Czechen-Polka op. 13	1845 Zum Sperlbauer
Damenspende. Polka francaise op. 305	Vienna 1866, Redoutensaal
Da nicken die Giebel. Polka Mazur op. 474	
Demi-Fortune. Polka francaise op. 186	Vienna 1856/1857, Zum Sperl
Demolirer-Polka op. 269	Vienna 1862, zum Sperl
Diabolin-Polka op. 244	Pawlowsk 1860, Vauxhall Pwlowsk, Volksgarten Vienna
Diplomaten-Polka op. 448	1893, Musikvereinsaal
Drollerie-Polka op. 231	Vienna 1859/1860
Durch's Telephon. Polka op. 439	Vienna 1890, Sophiensaal
Ein Herz, ein Sinn. Polka Mazurka op. 323	Vienna 1868, Redoutensaal
Electro-Magnetische Polka op. 110	Vienna 1851/1852, Sophiensaal
Electrofor. Polka schnell op. 297	Vienna 1864/1865, Dianasaal
Elisen-Polka francaise op. 151	Vienna 1854, Ungers Casino
Eljen a Magyar! Schnell-Polka op. 332	1869, Redoutensaal
Ella-Polka op. 160	Vienna 1854/1855, Sophiensaal
L'Enfantillage. Polka francaise (Zäpperl-Polka) op. 202	Vienna 1857/1858, Sophiensaal
Entweder-oder. Polka schnell op. 403	1882, Sophienesaal
Episode. Polka francaise op. 296	Vienna 1864/1865, k.k. Redoutensaal
Etwas Kleines. Polka francaise op. 190	Vienna 1857, Ungers Casino
Explosions-Polka op. 43	1846/1847 Goldener Strauss
Exprefß-Polka schnell op. 311	1866
Fantasieblümchen. Polka Mazur op. 241	Pawlowsk 1860, Vauxhall Pwlowsk, Volksgarten Vienna
Fata morgana. Polka Mazurka op. 330	1869 Gartenbau
La Favorite. Polka (francaise) op. 217	Pawlowsk 1858, Vauxhall Pawlowsk, Etablissement Schwnder Vienna
Fidelen-Polka op. 26	1846 Zum Goldenen Strauss
Figaro-Polka op. 320	
Fledermaus-Polka op. 362	Vienna 1874, Sophienesaal
Freikugeln. Polka schnell op. 326	1868, Prater
Freuden-Gruß-Polka op. 127	Vienna 1852/1853, Sophiensaal
Frisch heran. Polka schnell op. 386	1880, Sophienesaal
Furioso-Polka (quasi Galopp) op. 260	Pawlowsk 1861, Vauxhall Pwlowsk, Sophiensaal Vienna

Geißelhiebe. Polka op. 60	1848 Zum grünen Thor
Glücklich ist, wer vergißt. Polka Mazurka op. 368	
Gruß an Wien. Polka francaise op. 225	Pawlowsk 1859, Vauxhall Pwlowsk, Volksgarten Vienna
Gruß aus Österreich. Polka Mazurka op. 359	Vienna 1873, Prater
Gut bürgerlich. Polka francaise op. 282	Vienna 1863/1864, k.k. Redoutensaal
Harmonie-Polka op. 106	Vienna 1851-1852, Sophiensaal
Haute-volée-Polka op. 155	Vienna 1854, k.k. Volksgarten
Heiligenstädter Rendezvous-Polka op. 78	Vienna 1850, Kuglers Park in Heiligenstadt
Hellenen-Polka schnell op. 203	Vienna 1857/1858, Sinapalais
Hermann-Polka op. 91	Vienna 1851, Zum Sperl
Herrjemineh. Polka francaise op. 464	1895, Musikvereinsaal
Herzel-Polka op. 188	Vienna 1856/1857, Zum Sperl
Herzenskönigin. Polka francaise op. 445	1893, Sophiensaal
Herzenslust. Polka op. 3	Vienna 1844, Dommayer's Casino
Heski-Holki Polka op. 80	Vienna 1850 k.k. Volksgarten
Hesperus-Polka Op. 249	Vienna 1860/1861, Zum Sperl
Hopser-Polka op. 28	Vienna 1846, Zum Goldenen Strauss
Husaren-Polka op. 421	1886 Musikvereinsaal
Im Krapfenwald'l. Polka francaise op. 336	1869/1870 Volksgarten
Im Sturmschritt. Polka schnell op. 348	1871, Volksgarten
L'inconnue. Polka francaise op. 182	Pawlowsk 1856, Vauxhall Pawlowsk, Volksgarten Wien
Invitation à la Polka Mazur op. 277	Pawlowsk 1863, Vauxhall Pawlowsk, Volksgarten Vienna
I Tipferl-Polka française op. 377	
Jäger-Polka française op. 229	Pawlowsk 1859, Vauxhall Pawlowsk, Volksgarten Vienna
Juristen-Ball. Polka schnell op. 280	Vienna 1863/1864, Sophiensaal
Jux-Polka op.17	1845/1846, Wien, Goldener Strauss
Kammerball-Polka op. 230	Vienna 1859/1860, Hofburg
Kinderspiele. Polka française op. 304	Pawlowsk 1865, Hofcncert by EHN Sophie
Der Klügere gibt nach. Polka Mazurka op. 401	1882, Musikvereinsaal
Der Kobold. Polka Mazur op. 226	Pawlowsk 1859, Vauxhall Pwlowsk, Volksgarten Vienna
Kreuzfidel. Polka française op. 301	Pawlowsk 1865
Kriegers Liebchen. Polka Mazurka op. 379	
Kriegsabenteuer. Polka schnell op. 419	1885, Musikvereinsaal
Lagerlust. Polka Mazur op. 431	
Leichtes Blut. Polka schnell op. 319	1867, Volksgarten

Leopoldstädter Polka op. 168	Wien 1854/1855, Sperl
Licht und Schatten. Polka Mazurka op. 374	Vienna 1875, Musikvereinsaal
Liebchen, schwing dich. Polka Mazurka op. 394	1881, Musikvereinsaal
Liebe und Ehe. Polka Mazur op. 465	1896, Musikvereinsaal
Liguorianer-Seufzer. Scherzpolka op. 57	Vienna 1848, Zur Blauen Flasche
Lob der Frauen. Polka Mazurka op. 315	Vienna 1867, Volksgarten
Louischen-Polka française op. 339	Pawlowsk 1871, Musikvereinsaal
Lucifer-Polka schnell op. 266	Vienna 1861/1862, Diansaal
Lust'ger Rath. Polka française op. 350	Vienna 1871, Volksgarten
Marie Taglioni Polka op. 173	Vienna 1855, Sperl
Maskenuzug-Polka op. 240	Pawlowsk 1860, Vauxhall Pwlowsk, Volksgarten Vienna
Musen-Polka op. 147	Vienna 1853/1854, Sophiensaal
Muthig voran! Schnellpolka op. 432	1888, Musikvereinsaal
Nachtigall-Polka op. 222	Vienna 1859, Ungers Casino
Nachtveilchen. Polka-Mazur op. 170	Vienna 1855, Ungers Casino
Neue-Pizzicato-Polka op. 449	Vienna 1893, Musikvereinsaal
Neues Leben. Polka française op. 278	Pawlowsk 1863, Vauxhall Pawlowsk, Volksgarten Vienna
Neuhauser Polka op. 137	1853, unknown
Newa-Polka française op. 288	Pawlowsk 1864, Vauxhall Pawlowsk, Volksgarten Vienna
Niko-Polka op. 228	Pawlowsk 1859, Vauxhall Pwlowsk, Zum Sperl Vienna
Nimm sie hin. Polka française op. 358	
Nord und Süd. Polka Mazurka op.405	
Nur fort! Polka schnell op. 383	1879, Musikvereinsaal
Nur nicht mucken. Polka française op. 472	1897
Olga-Polka op. 196	Pawlowsk 1857, Vauxhall Pawlowsk, Volksgarten Vienna
Papacoda-Polka op. 412	1883
Le Papillon. Polka Mazurka op. 174	Vienna 1855, k.k. Volksgarten
Par force! Polka schnell op. 308	1866, Redoutensaal
Die Pariserin. Polka française op. 238	Vienna 1860, Ungers Casino
Pariser Polka op. 382	
Pasman-Polka (zu op. 441)	Vienna 1892, Hofburg
Patrioten-Polka op. 274	Vienna 1863, Sophiensaal
Patronessen-Polka française op. 286	Vienna 1863/1864, Sophiensaal
Pawlowsk-Polka op. 184	
Pepita-Polka op. 138	1853, zum Sperl

Pizzicato-Polka (von Johann und Josef Strauss) ohne op.	Pawlowsk 1869
Polka-Mazurka Champêtre op. 239	Pawlowsk 1860, Vauxhall Pwlowsk, Volksgarten Vienna
Postillon d'amour. Polka française op. 317	Vienna 1867 Volksgarten
Process-Polka schnell op. 294	Vienna 1864/1865, Sophiensaal
Promenade-Abenteurer. Polka Mazur (nach Motiven des Balletts Aschenbrödel) ohne op.	1899/1900
Rasch in der That. Polka schnell op. 409	1883, Sophienesaal
Rokonhangok (Sympathieklänge). Polka française op. 246	Vienna 1860/1861, Dianasaal
Sängerlust. Polka française op. 328	Vienna 1868, Sophiensaal
Sans-Souci-Polka op. 178	Wien 1855/1856, Etablissement Schwender
Satanella-Polka op 124	Wien 1852/1853, Sophiensaal
Scherz-Polka op. 72	Wien 1849, Zum Sperl
Schnellpost-Polka op. 159	Wien 1854, Etablissement Schwender
Secunden- Polka française op. 258	Pawlowsk 1861, Vauxhall Pwlowsk, Sophiensaal Vienna
'S gibt nur a Kaiserstadt, 's giebt nur a Wien. Polka op. 291	Pawlowsk 1864, Vauxhall Pawlowsk, Volksgarten Vienna
Shawl- Polka française op. 343	1871 Sophiensaal
So ängstlich sind wir nicht! Schnell-Polka op. 413	1883
Soldatenspiel. Polka française op. 430	1888 Musikvereinsaal
Sonnenblume. Polka Mazur op. 459	1894
Souvenir-Polka op.162	1854/1855, Etablissement Schwender
Spleen. Polka Mazur op. 197	Pawlowsk 1857, Volksgarten
Stadt und Land. Polka Mazurka op. 322	Vienna 1868, Zum besten der Stadtkrippe
Studenten-Polka op. 263	Vienna 1861/1862, k.k. Redoutensaal
Stürmisch in Lied und Tanz, Polka Schnell	1881, Sophienesaal
Sylphen- Polka française op. 309	Vienna 1866, Diansaal
Sympathieklänge Polka	
Tändelei-Polka Mazur op. 310	Vienna 1866, Volksgarten
Tänze mit Besenstil. Polka française op. 458	1894
Tanzi Bäri. Polka op. 134	Wien 1853, k.k. Volksgarten
Taubenpost. Polka française op. 237	Vienna 1859/1860, Volksgarten
Die Tauben von San Marco. Polka française op. 414	1883
Tik-Tak. Polka schnell op. 365	1874, Volksgarten
Tritsch-Tratsch. Polka op. 214	Russia 1858, Zum Großen Zeisig
Une Bagatelle. Polka Mazur op. 187	Wien 1856/1857, Zum Sperl
Unparteiische Kritiken. Polka Mazur op. 442	Vienna 1892 Sophienesaal

Unter Donner und Blitz. Polka schnell op. 324	Vienna 1868, Dianasaal
Veilchen-Polka op. 132	Wien 1853, Zum Sperl
Vergnügungszug. Polka schnell op. 281	Vienna 1863/1864, k.k. Redoutensaal
La Viennoise. Polka Mazurka op. 144	Wien 1853/1854, Zum Sperl
Violetta. Polka française op. 404	1882, Musikvereinsaal
Vom Donaustrande. Polka schnell op. 356	1873, Musikvereinsaal
Von der Börse. Polka française op. 337	Vienna 1870 Sophienesaal
Vöslauer Polka op. 100	Wien 1851, Gasthof Zum Jägerhof
Die Wahrsagerin. Polka Mazur op. 420	Vienna 1885, Musikvereinsaal
Waldine. Polka Mazurka op. 385	Vienna 1879, Musikvereinsaal
Warschauer Polka op. 84	Warsaw 1850, Palais Lazienki
Was sich liebt, neckt sich. Polka française op. 399	
Wiedersehens-Polka op. 142	Bad-Neuhaus 1853, Ungers Casino
Wildfeuer. Polka française op. 313	
Wo klingen die Lieder (nach der Polka Mazurka Champetre op. 239)	
Zehner-Polka op. 121	1852, Zum Sperl
Die Zeitlose. Polka française op. 302	Pawlowsk 1865, Volksgarten



### 3. The cultural consumption of the polka in London in an age of 'extravagance and exaggeration'.

*"The eye must be astonished as well as delighted, the ear tickled as well as pleased, and the feelings roused as well as captivated. This is the age of exaggeration and extravagance - a used-up age- and requires strong stimulants to keep excitement alive."<sup>366</sup>*

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This chapter traces the popularity of the polka in London. At the same time it is the last chapter of the first part of this thesis that deals with the popularization of the polka in three European capitals. London was left at the end as everything shows that the polka reached the English capital after Vienna and Paris. This, however, does not mean that this new fashion that came from the Bohemia was less intense in London than in the other capitals. As a matter of fact, people needed as much stimulation as in the other cities if not even more. This is clearly explained in the quotation above that appeared in the *Musical World* in 1849 to describe the monster concerts by Jullien, the most successful of public entrepreneurs of the time. This musician is also the main agent whom I will use to study the polka in London. To start with let us take a look at the most significant economic, political and social developments in the English capital that had influenced the expansion of the new fashion-the polka in a direct and indirect way.

The history of England and in particular of London in the nineteenth century is the history of progress and great transition. The great historian Eric Hobsbawm summarized this period of time (1848-1870) with the words *"the world of continuous and accelerated material and moral progress"*<sup>367</sup> During the first seventy years of the nineteenth century London had changed more rapidly than at any other time in all its long history.<sup>368</sup> This was the great age of the so-called Industrial Revolution, when Britain was leading the world towards a new form of culture. With the development of steam power the means of communication and transportation developed rapidly. People started to travel and the diffusion of information was much easier. There was also an increase in London's population on a large scale. This was caused by natural increase and migration into London from the countryside. For this reason the city was full of contrasts. On the one hand it became a global political, financial and trading capital, on the other hand it was a city of poverty with millions of people living in

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<sup>366</sup> *Jullien's Concerts Monstre* In: *Musical World*, 1849: 349.

<sup>367</sup> Hobsbawm (2004): 3.

<sup>368</sup> for ex. Chwalba Andrzej (2008): *Historia powszechna. Wiek XIX*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

overcrowded and unacceptable conditions.<sup>369</sup>

Without going deeply into details all these changes had a great impact on the social activity of the inhabitants of London. The new and prosperous class of industry owners and manufacturers began imitate the social extravagances of the aristocracy, but at the same time customised them to their own more vigorous way of life. This new vigour also meant that almost throughout the century there would be a constant seeking for the new and novel, ideas would be tried out and discarded, fashions would go from one extreme to another. For this reason only the most powerful forms of expression, and those most characteristic of their times, would stand the remotest chance of longevity. One characteristic of the time, was that any kind of changes should be extreme, exaggerated and extravagant. A good example of all these changes was the Great Exhibition of 1851. A beautiful and magnificent Crystal Palace was built for this occasion. It was an astonishing building and monumental edifice made of tonnes of iron and glass.

It could be said that a sort of "euphoria" dominated London and other European cities in this period. Paolo Macry identified this period of time as *"the age of pride and optimism"*<sup>370</sup>. Perhaps for London the optimism was connected with England's international situation. Great Britain was rich, had the biggest navy, many colonies all over the world and the main industrial changes took place there. Making reference to the initial quotation, it is noteworthy that one of the most important British musical magazines had called the mid-century extravagant and exaggerated. In my opinion we can fully agree with this description as different political, social and cultural changes show that the middle of the nineteenth century, in which Jullien flourished, was an era of "bigness", in the arts as well as in industry. In music, it was a time when surprise and novelty were the grand tools of all amusements. With relation to music, the "bigger is better" mentality influenced the rise of new musical forms with larger string sections and new types of orchestral winds and brass. In order to present their works to the public, composers began to arrange concerts on a mass scale.

An important feature of Victorian life was migration in both directions. Between 1801 and 1871 the population of the United Kingdom doubled. In search of a better life, however, many Britons left the UK for America or the colonies. Within the UK, the movement between the countryside and the new industrial cities in search of work could be noted. Self-made

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<sup>369</sup> life of the London poor was mirrored in the writings such as *Oliver Twist* or *David Copperfield* by contemporary writer Charles Dickens.

<sup>370</sup> in presentation by Paolo Macry In: Hobsbawm, Eric J. (2004): *Storia Universale. L'eta' delle nazioni*. Bergamo: Nuovo Istituto Italiano d'Arti Grafiche Spa: VII.

entrepreneurs used their new wealth to rise in society, building large houses, educating their children and employing domestic servants. It should be also added, that by the 1850s, the disquieting variations that had characterised the economy of the previous decades had levelled out and the nineteenth century saw great changes in popular leisure patterns in Britain. This was part of a fundamental transformation in the culture of an industrial working class. The pursuit of leisure won an increasing number of followers. According to Weber,

*"this new labour process of unprecedented regularity and intensity of working hours produced a new formation of leisure activity, whereby the patterns of the 1830s saw noisy drunken riot alternating with sullen silent work."*<sup>371</sup>

The habit of entertainment and enjoyment developed most visibly in the metropolis, where its diffusion was greatly assisted by major improvements in communications. Thus, all these developments gave rise to the so called "mass culture".

The debate about the "mass culture" is not new and different views about its rise were held by scientists over the centuries. Together with the debate over mass culture came the development of the idea of "popular culture". According to Burke, already in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Pascal and Montaigne used the term as a central argument in their writings<sup>372</sup>; others argued that mass culture<sup>373</sup> existed in the Roman empire together with its "bread and circuses". According to Burke<sup>373</sup>, the idea of popular culture is connected with the rise of national awareness in the late eighteenth century and furthermore, Williams states that popular (as a concept) was being perceived from the point of view of the people rather than from those who were looking for power over them.<sup>374</sup> A series of concerns and questions connected to the mass or popular culture developed over the years: Where does it come from? Does it start among the people as an autonomous expression of their interests? Is it enforced by those in positions of power as a type of social control? „Does popular culture rise up from the people 'below', or does it sink down from elites 'on high', or is it rather a question of an interaction between two"?<sup>375</sup> Some of these major questions overlap with issues related to the polka and the polka research in the nineteenth century and will be systematically developed in this work.

It was mentioned earlier that at the turn of the century the public sphere emerged on the European scene. It was also a novelty that the musician could choose his audience.

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<sup>371</sup> Weber (1975).

<sup>372</sup> Pascal was a great mathematician, physician and philosopher. Montaigne was one of the greatest Renaissance philosophers and writers.

<sup>373</sup> Burke, P. (1978): *Popular culture in Early Modern Europe*. London: Temple Smith.

<sup>374</sup> Williams, R. (1976): *Keywords: a vocabulary of culture and society*. London: Fontana: 199.

<sup>375</sup> Strinati, Dominic (1995): *Introduction to theories of popular culture*. London: Routledge: 3.

Musicians started to compose and play for the sake of the art and music and not for the fun of the noble classes. Musicians who dazzled and amazed their audiences, especially those from the middle and working classes, by their skills and virtuosity, became musical superstars. With regards to working class people, they became more and more aware of their rights and possibilities and thus, started to seek entertainment and fun to get through the dullness and difficulties of life and therefore, once again "*Panem et circences*" was of use. With the emergence and development of new forms of culture such as promenades and monster concerts, the middle and working classes started to participate in mass entertainments on a large scale. Thus it could be considered that the mass culture on a larger scale had its real birth in the nineteenth century. Monster concerts, which will be explained more in depth in the next parts, were the rage of the time and Jullien was the leading star of musical bigness.

Interestingly, the polka was introduced just at the time of these changes. It is highly curious that this dance was introduced and became very popular in London only four years before the beginning of the so called "Spring of Nations" and in the time when mass and public culture started to gain great importance. Thus, to have a clearer picture of the diffusion of the polka in London, attention will now be turned to the case of Louis Jullien, a French composer who lived for a great part of his life in London and through whom I analyse the development of the polka in that city.

To understand who Louis Jullien was and why he was significant for the polka popularization in London two matters are important. Firstly, according to most of the opinion-making English magazines and newspapers such as: *The Musical World*, *Punch*, *The Illustrated London News*, *The Times* and a few others<sup>376</sup>, it was Jullien who introduced the polka rhythms and music into British society. The following statement was to be seen in all of these newspapers in 1844: "*La Polka: this dance, which has attained a most unexampled popularity and created a complete revolution in all the Soirees Dansantes of last season, was first introduced at the private Balls of the Nobility by M. Jullien...*"<sup>377</sup> The exact meaning and significance of these words will be analysed later in the chapter, however, a few questions emerge in relation to it. Did the polka really cause a revolution in the London ballrooms? Was it danced only by the nobility? Why French words such as "la polka" or "soirees dansantes" were used in this statement?

The second important reason to use Jullien as a case study for the polka research in

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<sup>376</sup> the detailed description of London press was presented in the first chapter under sources.

<sup>377</sup> this statement was repeated in different numbers of *The Illustrated London News*, *The Musical World* and *The Times* throughout 1844 and 1845.

London is that he was one of the most interesting, colorful and recognizable musical personalities in the English capital at the mid-century and his annual series of *promenades* and *monstre concerts*<sup>378</sup> in London attracted thousands of listeners. Most probably no one did more to create and foster a taste for music among the crowd in London. It seems also that among his listeners could be found all levels of British society. Moreover, the British press considered that it was thanks to him that the great advance of music in England<sup>379</sup> was made.<sup>380</sup>

I realize that the analysis of the polka through the activity of Louis Jullien in London does not clarify all the questions connected with the process of its popularization there. There is a vast range of materials and agents such as for example publishers, dancers, other composers, newspapers, diaries and works of criticism that have much to tell, but cannot be represented here for lack of space. Nonetheless, the case study of Jullien enables us to gain a general picture of the trends and cultural practices that developed with the introduction of couple dances in London in the middle of the nineteenth century and aims at developing a general picture of how the polka fashion evolved. Moreover, it helps us to understand how and why the polka, a Bohemian cultural product, became popular in the English capital. In the following pages, the focus on Jullien's life and the theatrical scene in London will aim to provide a firm description of his life and artistic activity.

### ***Brief Biography of Louis Jullien***

The number of biographies on Jullien is scarce. The first biographical account of his life appeared in 1853 and was called "*A Sketch of the Life of Jullien*". It was published on the pages of the *Musical World* in May, June and July 1853, just prior to Jullien's departure for his great tour of the United States of America. It was not until a century later, in 1951, that Adam Carse published the next biography "*The Life of Jullien*"<sup>381</sup> which focuses on his life as well as on the interesting history of promenade concerts and/or monster concerts<sup>382</sup> in London. The most recent account of the life of this great conductor is "*Louis Jullien: musique, spectacle et folie au XIXe siècle*" written by Michel Faul in 2006. In order to trace the polka transfer to London, the

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<sup>378</sup> separate chapter has been devoted to promenade concerts.

<sup>379</sup> Jullien was based in London but he also travelled with his concerts throughout Britain.

<sup>380</sup> for ex. *The Musical World*, 1847: 22.

<sup>381</sup> the local orchestra of Sisteron in: Carse, Adam (1951): *The life of Jullien*. Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons Ltd.

<sup>382</sup> promenade and monster concerts are the same type of events. The only difference is that a monster concert is a promenade concert for a larger number of people and with even more special and catchy effects than the simple promenade concert.

following part of this chapter draws on these works for a short description of Jullien's life, with a focus on his artistic activity in London.

According to Adam Carse, Jullien was born in the little town of Sisteron in the Basses Alpes in 1812 where his father was the chef d'orchestre to the philharmonic society.<sup>383</sup> As a boy, Jullien took piano, singing and violin lessons. He was also trained to read music and in ear training at the Paris Conservatoire. From his childhood on, he travelled a lot and performed as a violinist in the towns of Italy and the south of France. In April, 1826, at the young age of fourteen, he was appointed bandmaster.<sup>384</sup> Later on, he was admitted as a student to the Conservatoire in Paris<sup>385</sup>, on October 23, 1833.<sup>386</sup> Although Jullien studied with important teachers such as Cherubini and Rossini at the conservatory, he refused to do any exercises, insisting instead on playing new dance pieces in his composition classes. Finally, he left the Conservatoire in May, 1836 and was soon to be found conducting dance music at balls in the Opera and the concerts in the Champs Elysees. His success was so pronounced that he was selected to conduct similar concerts at the Jardin Turc, the Tivoli and the Opera Comique, which were among the most important music gardens and theatres in the first half of the nineteenth century in Paris.

Jardin Turc was a celebrated cafe and music garden, visited mainly by the bourgeois clientele. It was famous from the time of the First French Empire throughout the nineteenth century.<sup>387</sup> The Tivoli was described as follows: "*The Tivoli is the garden where one goes, the garden where one says he has been, the garden where one has to be*".<sup>388</sup> The Opera Comique was founded in the eighteenth century and became a place for the concerts of many important composers in the nineteenth century. Here, performances took place almost every evening

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<sup>383</sup> Carse, Adam (1951): *The life of Jullien*. Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons Ltd.

<sup>384</sup> a bandmaster is the leader and conductor of a band, usually a military band, brass band or a marching band.

<sup>385</sup> It is remarkable that in the first half of the nineteenth century there was growing demand for the training of professional musicians. Before there were many amateur musicians and it was this that led to the founding of special institutions for higher education in music. The first such institution was the National Music Institute in Paris (1793), an offshoot of which was the Conservatory of Music and Declamation, founded in 1795. The Conservatory of Paris became one of the most important educational institutions and, as a consequence, the French model was copied throughout the nineteenth century functioning as a model for the many conservatories that were founded in European cities.

<sup>386</sup> Fétis, François-Joseph (1868): *Biographie universelle des Musiciens*. Paris: Firmin Didot.

<sup>387</sup> Boilly, Louis/ Siegfried Susan L. (1991): *Louis-Léopold Boilly's L'entrée au Jardin turc*. London: Matthiesen Fine Art Ltd.

<sup>388</sup> "*Le Tivoli, c'est le jardin où l'on va, le jardin où l'on dit avoir été, le jardin où il faut être*" In: Langlois Gilles-Antoine (1991): *Folies, tivolis et attractions: les premiers parcs de loisirs parisiens*. Paris: Delegation à l'action artistique de la ville Paris.

apart from during major festivals. Boxes were hired even for a year by wealthy subscribers. Before 1848 a third of subscribers came from the aristocracy, later it became a mainly middle class theatre.<sup>389</sup> At that time it was a real success for a musician to be asked to play in this and other places.

According to Fetis, the founder of a prominent musical journal *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, Jullien left the French capital and went to England in the second half of 1838.<sup>390</sup> It is surprising that in spite of his success in Paris he left the city. According to Carse and Fetis it is unclear whether Jullien was driven away by the jealous hostility of the theatrical managers, by quarrels with the police or by the threat of the bankruptcy. Anyway, it is very probable that his insolvency became a threat to his freedom and he was imprisoned for debts. The first traces of his presence in London are to be found in the 1840s, when the London newspapers started to advertise his concerts. Concerning the polka, the year 1844 is the most significant, for this was the year in which it was probably introduced to the London public. It is noteworthy, that in 1844 the polka began to be included in concert programs and was commented on by the critics there. By this time, Jullien was presenting concerts annually, and this activity ended only with his death in 1859. He was conductor at Her Majesty's Theatre, Drury Lane, Covent Garden, Haymarket, Surrey Zoological Garden and the Lyceum. All these theatres and gardens will be described more in greater depth. Jullien also conducted the Court Balls. According to *The Musical World* in 1860, Queen Victoria and Prince Albert liked him very much.<sup>391</sup> One could have certain doubts about the authenticity of this statement, for it was published after Jullien's death.

A characteristic feature of Jullien's performances was his way of conducting with a jewelled baton and white gloves presented on a silver salver. He added a velvet-covered throne to his podium, onto which he sank exhausted after each performance. Jullien always played with his own orchestra<sup>392</sup>, which consisted of professional and world-famous musicians. He very often invited popular soloists such as: Vieuxtemps, Pischek, Wieniawski, Sivori, Sainton, Rousselot, Hausmann, Koenig, and Lazarus to perform with his orchestra. He toured Great Britain tirelessly every season and seems that he even opened a shop for the sale

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<sup>389</sup> Books LLC (2010): *Opera houses in Paris: Palais Garnier, Théâtre de L'académie Royale de Musique, Opéra-Comique, Comédie-Italienne, Théâtre Lyrique*. General Book LLC or Charlton, David (1986). *Grétry and the Growth*.

<sup>390</sup> Fetis (1868).

<sup>391</sup> *Musical World*, March 31, 1860: 208.

<sup>392</sup> it was quite common in the nineteenth century for famous conductors to employ musicians to create their own orchestras. It was mainly famous conductors who could afford that. Having an orchestra was a large commercial undertaking.



of his music in Regent Street. *The Musical World* wrote of him:

*"M. Jullien appears to have the peculiar faculty of addressing himself to the tastes and sympathies of the people. He takes care that at least a part of his programme, and that not a slight part, shall be of a nature to be understood and felt by his audience; his melodies are of a national character, or bring with them some agreeable association, and he then ventures to add to their intrinsic value a magic of his own through the means of varied harmony with curious and exciting instrumentation."*<sup>393</sup>

This comment invites a few considerations. Firstly, it seems that one of the main means Jullien used to attract the audience was novelty: new musical, rhythmical and harmonic solutions. Secondly, it looks like Jullien composed melodies associated with some national features. Thus, what did the "national character" mean in this context - was it an equivalent for British, French or maybe Bohemian? Finally, who were Jullien's listeners? The above comment could give an idea that his listeners were mixed and came from different parts of society. Thus to satisfy various tastes he played serious (classic) and light music (dances). I think that all these doubts and questions raised above constitute a good starting point for deeper analysis of leisure practices and the introduction of the polka into London society.

### **3.1. Leisure practices and the polka in 1844**

Victorian civilization was infinitely complex. This applied to its culture as much as to its politics, industry and society, which were undergoing constant processes of adjustment and readjustment. Music was already integral to life in eighteenth-century English towns and the middle classes in London and the older provincial centres of England enjoyed a cultural life of considerable energy and sociability. It could be said that in the nineteenth century there was not only the advancement of the Industrial Revolution that was accompanied by structural, economic and cultural changes but the same period of time saw also a "Leisure Revolution".<sup>394</sup> There was a real explosion in the leisure practices among all social classes in London at the end of the first half of the nineteenth century when leisure practices became more public and all social classes could participate in them.

According to the historian Peter Bailey, noise and drink were common accompaniments of popular recreation during the early nineteenth century. The roots of traditional leisure activities reflected the period, were heavily ritualized, depended on the seasons and resulted from the integration of work and leisure in small-scale communal ways

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<sup>393</sup> *Musical World*, 1851: 6.

<sup>394</sup> see for ex. Marcus 1974, Bailey 1978, Lowerson and Myerscough 1977, Cunningham 1980 and Walvin 1978.

of life. The working-class leisure was for the most part located in public houses. Here, the entertainment was provided by amateur musicians and in the course of the years it developed into a more formalized tavern concert. By the end of the eighteenth century a new room in the pub was established: the saloon. It was another prominent manifestation of popular culture, which flourished as a popular institution. By the 1840s a great number of professionals worked in them. The entertainment set before the saloon audiences was diverse in its material, including songs, dances and tricks, which derived from travelling shows and popular theatres. They were vulgar and irreverent in style.

The early nineteenth century was the great age of the fashionable salons such as, for example, that of Holland House, Almack's or the Argyll Rooms, where the guests included writers, painters and actors as well as aristocrats and where to be admitted was a sign of social success. Anyway, even if London had much to offer - shops, bazaars, parks and pleasure gardens, galleries, museums, concerts and theatres, a great deal of entertaining still took place at home. Around the mid-century, the popularity of private salons - which were social gatherings among like-minded people in the seventeenth and eighteenth century - decreased. Jürgen Habermas' stated that the salons had a great historical significance and that they played a crucial role in the rise of the so called "public sphere", which emerged as a cultural-political contrast to court society.<sup>395</sup>

In the nineteenth century the season became more of a hectic social whirl as society became larger and more diluted and the days of the huge private receptions were over. In their place, there was a great proliferation of gentleman's clubs, which were set up at the end of the eighteenth century by and for upper class British men and were popularised by upper-middle class men and women in the nineteenth century.<sup>396</sup> Also the privately-owned pleasure gardens in many of the suburbs were still very popular in the nineteenth century. The pleasure garden, with its pavilions and its groves of trees for polite promenading to the soft sound of the music of a string band, was an essentially eighteenth-century form of diversion. The nineteenth century pleasure gardens ceased, instead, to have any pretensions to fashion and catered for the less sophisticated tastes of a middle-class clientele. Everywhere the formality of the traditional eighteenth-century fare was supplemented by new attractions - fireworks, juggling, conjuring and acrobatics, dioramas and balloon ascents, or indeed by any

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<sup>395</sup> Habermas, Jürgen (1989): *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

<sup>396</sup> Cunningham, Peter (1850): *Hand-book of London. Past and present*. London: Murray.

novelty which would draw custom.<sup>397</sup> Thus, the 1830s and 1840s brought debates on the "Condition of England". English society and especially the urban masses were criticized for their amusements and the way they entertained themselves was described for example as idle and disordered.<sup>398</sup> According to members of the upper and upper-middle classes, leisure constituted a threat to the discipline and cohesion of the middle and working class world, not only by virtue of its unprecedented abundance, but because of its new place in the pattern of life. One of the most widely criticized entertainments of the time was dancing.

The Victorians danced everywhere: in taverns, at home, on the village green, in assembly rooms, at places of entertainment such as Vauxhall and Cremorne Gardens, and at Royal palaces. Dancing was an essential part of life, not only for the aristocracy but also for the newly-rich middle classes. At the beginning of the Victorian age, which started with Queen Victoria's inauguration in 1837 and finished with her death in 1901 old dances such as jigs, hornpipes, country dances, and flash jigs were still popular. However, the rapidly increasing wealth of the middle classes in London influenced both public and private social dancing where the round dancing culture flourished. New dances such as waltzes, polkas and galops were danced and included in the musician's repertoires. Moreover, there was at this time a passion for adopting folk dances for both the theatre and the ballroom.<sup>399</sup>

According to Jane Austen, there were three types of formal ball in the first half of nineteenth-century England and they played an important role in people's daily lives. These events included assembly room dances that were held in towns, smaller dance venues organized at country inns, and private balls given at country homes by private citizens.<sup>400</sup> These social events were used as ways to get to know new people both for professional and personal reasons and very often gave young people an opportunity to find a future spouse. The smallest gatherings were balls organized at private estates by individuals. These events often consisted of dining as well as dancing. Furthermore, among the fashionable parties of the season one could observe the frequent announcements of a *Thé Dansante*, or a dancing tea, where the round dances were danced. A frequent feature of tea dances was the presence of a live orchestra playing light classical music.

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<sup>397</sup> Sheppard, Francis (1971): *London 1808-1870: the infernal wen*. London: Secker&Warburg: 357.

<sup>398</sup> Bailey, Peter (1978): *Leisure and Class in Victorian England. Rational recreation and the contest for control, 1830-1885*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul: 35.

<sup>399</sup> Taruskin, Richard (2005): *The Oxford History of Western Music.*, Vol. 3. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press: 120-123.

<sup>400</sup> Austen, Jane (1813): *Pride and Prejudice. A novel in three volumes*. London: Military Library, Whitehall.

One of the most popular venues for dancing in the nineteenth century were ballrooms which flourished on a large scale. Jullien, our main polka agent, who was known mainly as an inventor of promenade concerts in England, was also the first to reintroduce the grand ball masques here in 1843. However, he knew the difference between the ordinary masquerade and ball masques of the continent, and was informed of the manner in which the former had been usually conducted in this country. He therefore presented to the nobility and gentry entertainments with features such as an excellent orchestra, richness of costumes, and splendid decorations, taking the scene to heights of previously unknown and unequalled brilliancy. London balls were events of a great importance and dress, behaviour and manners played a crucial role in social interaction. Albert Smith shows this clearly in his book "Sketches of London", where he describes a fancy ball in London:

*"The scene is an English Fancy Dress Ball. Observe, not a vulgar Gentish affair, where pasteboard-noses, clowns, and smoking are tolerated, and where of the harmony is likely to be disturbed by some of the company getting intoxicated and fighting with empty bottles. It is an assembly for which no tills have been robbed (save indirectly, perhaps, in the way of some bills that will never be paid) and which will not give the police any trouble in dispersing. The parties present are, in fact, ladies and gentlemen who wear their own dresses, and have arrived, and will depart, in their own private conveyances; and whose doing will be chronicled, at great length, in to-morrow's Post – the readers of which illustrious publication will receive a sort of "Dorling's Correct Card," setting forth the names, wieghts (in society), and colours of the riders of the various hobbies trotted out for the occasion. And before we go any further with our picture, let us stop a while and consider what sort of one the Post will draw of the subject. He will doubtless give a most glowing and bewitching view of the whole affair; and as to truthfulness in every particular of lace, feather, trinket, and ribbon, we will back him for being right to a spangle. On every point on which the valet, lady's-maid, tailor, or dress-maker may be considered an authority, his information may be relied on [...] it may be said that a Fancy-Ball is a fine sight. We grant that, if got up regardless of expense, it is. It is a very fine thing, indeed, to see a spacious and brilliantly-lightes room, thronged with people, dressed in fashions selected from almost every age and country – to say nothing of an immense quantity that never could have been prevalent in any age of country."*<sup>401</sup>

### ***The introduction of the polka***

With regards to the types of dances played and executed in the ballrooms there were a few. First in line was the French quadrille, not only for its rights of seniority (it was danced in England from 1808) but because it held a distinguished position in the generality of balls, where it formed a trio with the waltz and the polka. This means that they were danced as a sequence one after another.<sup>402</sup> The quadrille, a square dance<sup>403</sup>, derived from the English

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<sup>401</sup> Smith, Albert (1859): *Sketches of London Life & Character*. London: Dean&Son. 159-165.

<sup>402</sup> Cellarius, Henry (1847).

<sup>403</sup> Square dance is a folk dance with four couples (eight dancers) arranged in a square, with one couple on each side.

Country Dance, which was exported to France at the end of the seventeenth century, where it became known as the Contredanse Anglaise. Once in France, it was changed in several small ways, and one of the forms that derived from it became known as the quadrille. Thus it was an old dance, which later became popular with the middle classes in the nineteenth century. Once it was back in England, it quickly became the rage of English ballrooms.<sup>404</sup> In Cellarius' view, the decadent quality of the quadrille was copied in the waltz and the polka, where the quadrille was a sort of '*halting ground*' between the two.<sup>405</sup>

The early nineteenth-century London dance scene was dominated mainly by the waltz. After its introduction, criticism of the waltz came from almost all over Europe. In England, the outcry was just as loud and perhaps even more prolonged. According to Franks, the author of the book "*Social dance. A short history*", the waltz gained formal approval in England when it received the official sanction of the Prince Regent. Nevertheless, it was still strongly criticized by the London press for the way in which it violated moral rules and patterns of behaviour.<sup>406</sup> Almost immediately after the French Revolution, the waltz appears to have gained favour in France, where social dancing among the bourgeoisie was gaining a powerful hold. With the waltz, there was also introduced into the social dance the closed hold. In country dances, for example, couples held hands; in the waltz, however, they embraced and this was considered improper and even scandalous. This kind of physical closeness between dancing couples has exerted a powerful influence upon most social forms of dance so far.

According to Vuillier, towards 1844, enthusiasm for the waltz began to show signs of abating, while by contrast, the polka grew more popular. The time was ripe for the flowering of new dances when the Industrial Revolution was well under way. By 1844, the polka had become known in most European countries and it soon reached the ballrooms not only of Vienna, Paris and London but also Baden Baden, San Petersburg and other European cities.<sup>407</sup> When the polka swept across Europe in 1844, it legitimized the waltz in society, and subsequent dance fashions changed social dancing in the cities almost completely into couple dances. Additionally, the waltz and the polka were performed in the ballroom and as part of fancy dancing on stage.

Looking back at the history and introduction of the polka in London it is notable that,

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<sup>404</sup> see for example: Kassing 2007, Cellarius 1847, Sachs 1952, Franks 1963.

<sup>405</sup> Cellarius (1847).

<sup>406</sup> Franks, Arthur Henry (1963): *Social Dance. A short history*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul: 139.

<sup>407</sup> Sachs (1963), Richardson (1960), Franks (1963), Samson (2001), Rustes (1969), Cellarius (1847).

in 1843, Jullien went on a tour of the continent including Paris, where the polka craze was at its heights. Just a year later, the polka was introduced to London. According to *Punch* and *The Musical World*, the "official" introduction of the polka in London was in 1844. What is meant here by "official" are the formal press announcements of the polka performances in London, mainly by Jullien and some famous dancers such as for example Grissi, Cerito, Coralli and Perrot and the introduction of this new dance to the London public. For example, in 1845, the article describing the history, symptoms and progress of polkomania was published in "Punch" and it reported that:

*"The Polkomania, after raging fiercely for some time in the principal cities of the Continent, at length made its appearance in London, having been imported by M. Jullien, who inoculated certain Countesses and others with its specific virus, which he is said to have obtained from a Bohemian nobleman."*<sup>408</sup>

The same was true for *The Musical World*, which stated that the polka which had attained unequalled popularity and created a complete revolution in all the *soirees dansantes* of the season, had first been introduced in the private balls of the nobility by M. Jullien.<sup>409</sup> The same newspaper suggested that the *Original Polka*<sup>410</sup> by M. Jullien was first introduced into England in 1843.<sup>411</sup> Moreover, later Jullien made the polka popular also in the British countryside as suggested by the following press comment: *"Jullien was about to start for the provinces to spread the Polka mania; he has engaged a band of first-rate performers, including several brilliant solo players."*<sup>412</sup> According to *The Times*, the polka was first danced in London at Her Majesty's Theatre by Carlotta Grissi and Jules Perrot on April 11th, 1844.<sup>413</sup> This was also the first stage performance of the polka dance in London.<sup>414</sup> *Lloyd's Weekly London Newspaper* noted Mrs. Rae (dancing mistress), who danced the polka for the first time in London and brought it from Paris. In Richardson's opinion, it was the dancing teacher M. Coulon who brought the dance to England. He had visited Paris and learned it from Cellarius, Laborde and

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<sup>408</sup> *Punch* 1845: 86.

<sup>409</sup> *The Musical World*, No. 50, Vol XIX, 1844: 401.

<sup>410</sup> the first polka written by Jullien.

<sup>411</sup> In the *Musical World* from May 1845 there is a following note on the program of M. Jullien's Concert Monstre: *Polka, The original Polka, with introduction, entitled Invitation a la Polka, with Echo, &c., Grand Finale and Chorus effects, first introduced into England in 1843, by M. Jullien:* 336.

<sup>412</sup> *The Musical World*, January 2, 1845, No. 1 Vol. XX: 6.

<sup>413</sup> *The Times*, April 12, 1844.

<sup>414</sup> Program from Her Majesty's Theatre announcing the polka danced by Grissi and Perrot on April 11, 1844.

Coralli.<sup>415</sup>

This list could be continued; anyway, it seems that the polka reached London between 1843 and 1844 and was officially advertised, played and danced, causing a sort of mania and craze, at least this is how it was presented in the contemporary press and in all the comments presented above. Hence, it is curious if it was only a marketing stunt or if there was really a craziness and madness for the polka and this will be studied later in the next sections.

Furthermore, can we agree with the previous statement that the mid-century was the time of 'extravagance and exaggeration' and what does it ultimately mean for the research on the polka? To answer all these questions, it is necessary to have a look at the culture and dancing practices of the first half of the nineteenth century, especially those that were practiced before the introduction of the polka in London. This information forms the backdrop against which this dance can be better understood. London dancing culture with a special focus on the analysis of the reactions to the polka introduction and performances in London will be presented in the section below.

### 3.2. The polka delirium

*"Who is there in possession of his senses, that has not by this time heard of the polka! The old talk of it, the young and the middle-aged learn it, and all but the crippled of the blind endeavor to dance it. From Almack's to the humblest dancing booth in England, the polka is attempted, and men forget their usual avocations to descant upon the latest fashions, to praise and to admire it"*<sup>416</sup>

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According to the records and reminiscences of the contemporary English dramatist and comic writer, Sir Francis Burnand (1836-1917), the arrival of the polka in London was welcomed with great enthusiasm. In his view, when the polka came to fashion, it "*became the rage everywhere and polkomania seized everybody and no ballets or extravaganzas took place without its being danced, in costume, and words set to its tune.*"<sup>417</sup>

*"There is absolutely nothing now but Polkas. Everything is à la Polka- even the ladies' cloaks"*<sup>418</sup> reported *The Musical World*, describing the phenomenon as a sort of 'mania' among the middle classes. In fact, it could be observed that the ladies' clothes and accessories had polka

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<sup>415</sup> Richardson, Philip J. S. (1960): *The Social Dances of the Nineteenth Century in England*. London: Herbert Jenkins.

<sup>416</sup> Littell E.: *Littell's Living Age* Vol. I. From 11 April to 3 August, 1844. Boston: T. H. Carter & Company.

<sup>417</sup> Burnand, Francis (1904): *Records and Reminiscences. Personal and General*. Vol. 1: London: Methuen & Co.: 57.

<sup>418</sup> *The Musical World*, October 3, 1844, No. 40, Vol. XIX: 327.



patterns. It seemed that people had lost their heads for the polka.

As for *Punch*, the eruption of the polka among London society was initially circular, corresponding to the circles of fashion.<sup>419</sup> All evidence indicates that the polka was first adopted and appropriated by the nobility and as a matter of fact it was very popular among the nobility by the beginning of 1844. Prominent personalities organized evenings with polka performances; for example Baron Nathan opened his old ancestral hall at Kennington for a series of Polka soirées.<sup>420</sup> The London press commented on and described Jullien's new polkas played at the soirees of the upper class:

*"Monsieur Jullien has the honour to announce that he has just published the seventh edition of his Original Polka, with description by E. Coulon, splendidly illustrated by Brandard [...] Also No. 2, the Royal Polka; No. 3, the Drawing Room Polka; No. 4, The Rage of Vienna Polka; No. 5, The Imperial Polka; No. 6, the Douro Polka; No. 7, The Ducal Polka; [...] M. Jullien feels compelled to inform the public that none of those Polkas have been performed at Theatres, and that the above mentioned Polkas, by Jullien, are the only Polkas that Mons. Jullien and Herr Koenig have played nightly at the Soirees where they have had the honour to conduct, viz:- the Duke of Wellington, the Duke of Leinster's Balls, the Countess of Jersey, and the French Ambassador's Soirees [here, the long list of important names continues], and all the leading Balls of the haut ton; also the Royal Academy Ball, The Caledonian Ball, The Polish Fancy Ball, the Oxford Grand Commemoration Festival..."*<sup>421</sup>

This listing indicates not only that the polka was danced by the nobility in London but it shows also that it was appreciated by foreign aristocrats there. Furthermore it seems that it was not only a popular dance among the nobility, but it was also a way to show off in the fashionable circles at the balls and dancing evenings. In any way, it is surprising that a folk-dance which originated in the rural areas of Bohemia<sup>422</sup> (this was discussed in the first chapter) gained the acceptance and interest of this stratum of British society and was adopted by it with such enthusiasm. This enthusiasm was often commented on by the important journal *The Times*. According to *The Times* in June 1844, a grand ball took place at the Town Hall of London, at which the polka was danced. It was announced that:

*"the room was almost crammed to suffocation. M. Jullien acted as conductor, and wielded his baton with his usual unapproachable grace and dignity. The orchestra played a choice selection of music, and the dancing was kept up with very great spirit until late in the morning. Waltzes and quadrilles followed each other in rapid succession and the fashionable polka was danced by*

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<sup>419</sup> *Punch*, 1845, Vol. VIII: 86.

<sup>420</sup> *Punch*, 1846: 215.

<sup>421</sup> *The Illustrated London News*, August 3, 1844.

<sup>422</sup> This is how it was presented in the most of the contemporary dance manuals by Cellarius, Coralli or Ferrero and this is what the music historians have written about the polka till now. In this thesis there is no space for a detailed research on the origins of the polka, anyway, it seems that the dance was discovered in Bohemia and later some national versions came into existence in different countries.

*a number of ladies and gentleman who appeared to have been well skilled in the mysteries of this modern importation. How they could dance at all in such a jam is quite incomprehensible.*"<sup>423</sup>

Furthermore, *The Times* reported that

*"Politics are for the moment suspended in public regard by the new and all-absorbing pursuit - the polka - a dance recently imported from Bohemia, and which embraces in its qualities the intimacy of the waltz combined with the vivacity of the Irish jig. You may conceive how completely is the polka rage from the (I am assured) fact that the lady of a celebrated ex-minister desiring to figure in it at a soirée dansante, monopolised the professor par excellence of that specialite, for three hours on Wednesday..."*<sup>424</sup>

Thus, it is clear that the polka was fashionable among the nobility, though it is not sure why a rural dance became a fashion among the upper classes. Perhaps one of the reasons why they first adopted it was precisely because they felt the need to repolish it before they could accept its public introduction, and it was only afterwards that it began to spread to the other classes of society. According to Francis Rust, history indicates that the generating impulse for new forms of social dance comes most frequently from the 'people' in that any new folk dance tends to be adopted by the court. Here, it will be repolished and refined almost beyond recognition, but can still be seen to possess certain elements in common with the folk-dance from which it sprang.<sup>425</sup> Most probably this was also the case for the polka.

It was mentioned before, that the nineteenth century was the time when the public sphere and mass culture developed and it seems that the emergence of the polka was tightly connected with these phenomena. During the 1830s and 1840s an older, pre-industrial culture broke up and new forms of popular recreation and mass leisure came to life: music halls, public concerts, football associations, religious activities, museums, seaside holidays, libraries, the development of public parks, spectator sports and theatres. The polka was presented to the public around March/April 1844 after having been played by Jullien at the nobility's balls for several months. Who comprised that public of and how did they react to the new fashion?

Jullien was an example of an artist who performed for the "masses" and the popularity of the polka at Monsieur Jullien's monster public concerts was his crowning achievement.<sup>426</sup> He believed that the enjoyments derived from music were designed for the many, and not for the few. He developed so called "promenade concerts" or "monster concerts" which

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<sup>423</sup> *The Times*, April 21, 1844.

<sup>424</sup> *The Times*, March 1844.

<sup>425</sup> Rustes (1969): 5.

<sup>426</sup> Burnand, Francis (1904): *Records and Reminiscences. Personal and General*. Vol. 1: London: Methuen&Co.: 57.

flourished in London from the 1840s onwards. Soon it was reported by the *Musical World* "not only the higher ranks of society which are thus invaded by this novel mental agency. Every public house had its Orpheus-Jullien, with its "novel effects" of Polkas, and other like miserabilities."<sup>427</sup> This comment is highly interesting, as it confirms that firstly, not only the nobility but also the lower and middle classes danced the polka. On the other hand it shows criticism of the new dance and hence, it is even more surprising that the new fashion was accepted by the London upper classes.

There was much more criticism of the dance on its arrival and after its introduction to the public in London, especially, in regards to its negative influence on young people's morals. Below are presented some very suggestive press comments:

*"I think, and have often said, that dancing went out when the polka came in, which I think is not 50 years ago. The polka was the first of the new fashioned dances, as they were then called, which came out, and then by degrees following the fandangled rubbish which is now called dancing."*<sup>428</sup>

*"We go forth on nights and see without the slightest discomposure our sister and our wife seized on by a strange man and subjected to violent embraces and canterings round a small-sized apartment - the only apparent excuse for such treatment being that is done to the sound of music - can scarcely realize the horror which greeted the introduction of this wicked dance."*<sup>429</sup>

*"These sort of bobbies think that people came to balls to do nothing but dance; whereas everyone knows that the real business of a ball is either to look out for a wife, to look after a wife, or to look after somebody's else's wife."*<sup>430</sup>

The literary magazine *Athenaeum* reported that "the polka has taken fast hold on the ambition of young persons of all ages"<sup>431</sup> The British press used a lot of negative epithets such as: *stupid, sensual, unmeaning* or *barbarian*, to describe the new fashion.<sup>432</sup> Authors of *Bentley's Miscellany* doubted that the polka could ever become as popular in London as on the Continent.<sup>433</sup> The editors of *The Times* asked how a dance like this could have turned the heads of Parisians.<sup>434</sup> The same newspapers admired and criticized the new dance at the same time. Clearly, this topic became a means by which to make money for the British press and hence the opinions expressed on the pages of various British journals were often contrasting

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<sup>427</sup> The *Musical World*, 1845: 136.

<sup>428</sup> Kirby, James (1897): *Old times in the bush of Australia: trials and experiences of early bush life in Victoria: during the forties*. G. Robertson and Co.

<sup>429</sup> Article in the English magazine *Belgravia*.

<sup>430</sup> Surtees Smith, Robert (1865): *Mr Facey's Romford's Hounds*. Hardback Bradbury & Evans, London.

<sup>431</sup> The *Athenaeum*, August 31, 1844, No. 979: 798.

<sup>432</sup> for ex. The *Musical World*, 1844: 214.

<sup>433</sup> *Bentley's Miscellany*, 1844: 528.

<sup>434</sup> The *Times*, April 12, 1844.

and biased.

Further criticisms appeared also in *The Illustrated London News* on April 13th, 1844 calling the polka "a waste of time" and "nonsense":

*"The weather-cock heads of the Parisians have been delighted always by any innovation, but they never imported anything more ridiculous or ungraceful than this polka. It is a hybrid confusion of Scotch, Lilt, Irish Jig, and Bohemian Waltz, and needs only to be seen once to be avoided for ever!"*<sup>435</sup>

The quotation above is a sort of criticism of French society that treated any kind of novelty as a fashion. Paradoxically, the British copied Parisian fashions and were very attracted by any kind of news coming from the French capital. This is not surprising because at this time Paris dictated new fashions and all kinds of artists went there to perform, study and observe new artistic tendencies. In fact, the contemporary London press was full of French words and reported a great deal of cultural news from Paris.

This is, however, not the end of the negative opinions about the polka. When it arrived in London, it was compared with a sort of delirium and mania and the composers, dancers and musicians were accused of making the music into a commercial undertaking. It was commented for example that:

*"the polka delirium, in fine, also intruded in the sanctuary of music, and the strolling conductors of bands placed such dismal strepitations at the head if what they had to give to the people. Not satisfied in having made use of this mania of the people in the ball room, the concert room, the tavern, the tap-even the commerce of music is to be defiled by a regular manufactory and wholesale storehouse of this musical blubber, and money to be squeezed out from every possible pore of popular absurdity."*<sup>436</sup>

In fact, Jullien presented his dances and classical pieces contemporaneously on the occasion of the same concerts. Also, the fact that famous ballet dancers performed the polka in the theatres and during important balls or to accompany Jullien's music in his promenade concerts speaks for its popularity. We cannot forget, however, that they did it mainly for money. Very often they earned more by dancing and teaching the new popular dances at the nobility's parties or promenade concerts than by performing ballet at the theatres.

Jullien's succes was such that he even opened his own publishing house, that produced sheet music of his own pieces as well as music of other composers. Thanks to the development of the rotary printing press, it was possible to diffuse sheet music all over the cities and soon, piano sheet music circulated all over London and young ladies performed the polka and other round dances on pianos, which were luxury items in the 1840s, at the parties

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<sup>435</sup> *The Illustrated London News*, April 13, 1844.

<sup>436</sup> *The Musical World*, 1844: 214.

in salons and private houses. Many Victorians originating from the middle-classes enjoyed musical evenings when gathering around a piano and singing. In almost every house there was a piano and hence, there was demand for piano sheet music that sounded difficult without actually being so. The circulation of piano music at low prices made it possible to hear dances, and thus the polka, on almost every corner of London.

It was already mentioned that the polka was considered dangerous for young people's morals. In the first half of 1845 Punch announced that "*her Majesty has entirely set her face against the polka, and has given instructions that it should not be again danced in her presence.*"



Illustration No. 32 from Punch 1845

It was well-known that the Queen was very strict in her views about a woman's role in the society. It might be, that in her and her court's view, the polka constituted a danger to the morals and good behaviour of a modest woman. It is thus not surprising that in British society it was inappropriate to hold a partner closely and whirl around the ballroom. This hypothesis seems to be confirmed in the following words "*no lady ought to dance the polka if she have passed her thirtieth year. After thirty, the Polka only inspires ferocious ideas.*"<sup>437</sup> Perhaps it referred to married women for whom the polka constituted a temptation to look for a new partner, if not for life then at least for one evening. On the other hand, it could be the last call for any single women to find a life partner or live an adventure for one evening. Furthermore,

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<sup>437</sup> Blackwood's Magazine.

it was reported that *"it is also affirmed by Baron Nathan that her Majesty has been heard to speak in contemptuous terms of the polka"*<sup>438</sup>. Therefore, it is quite clear that the introduction of the polka was welcomed at the court with a lot of skepticism. *Punch* joked that Monsieur Jullien suffered severely from the shock he received at the announcement that the queen was against the polka and published Julliens' caricature to show his despair.

Anyway, besides the comments published by *Punch*, a magazine of humour and satire, it seems that there were no similar comments in regard to the Queen's attitude towards the polka in other contemporary journals. Moreover, it seems quite surprising that after initial hesitation, the royal couple quickly accepted the dance and the polka was soon to be seen at the state balls that they attended. It does not mean, however, that the critical words against the polka ceased. Nevertheless, the same journals that first criticized the polka, started to express some positive opinions about it. For example, the same *Illustrated London News* that had initially criticized the polka reported only one month later that *"the polka as danced in Paris, and now adopted by us, is elegant, graceful and fascinating in the extreme..."*<sup>439</sup>

Hence, there is no doubt that the polka was popular in London. To understand the extent of this polka popularity in London it is worthwhile to have a look at the theatrical and literary world. It seems that in reaction to the polka introduction a lot of new literary and theatrical plays and pieces were presented in London theatres. In May 1844, a pleasant little farce entitled *"Polkomania"* was produced by Stocqueler at the Lyceum Theatre. It presented a young couple dancing the polka as an irresistible drollery. In the same year, a farce in one act *"La Polka, or dancing for the million"* was written by Charles Barnett. Literary magazines and specialised newspapers also published articles, poems and short stories about the polka delirium. The *Hood's magazine*, where a short history of the polka origins was published, considered the polka as a revolutionary movement.<sup>440</sup> In August 1844, Charles Henry Knox published an entertaining article called *"The Polka considered as a revolutionary movement"*, which was a long deliberation on the importance of the introduction of the polka in England and its positive and negative impact on British society. *Bentley's Miscellany* published a story called the *"Polkaphobia"*, describing the first polka party given by Mr. Ledbury<sup>441</sup>, where the polka created a furore. Its main character was a young man, Titus Ledbury, who tried to distinguish himself in society by taking polka lessons. His father was against this but he

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<sup>438</sup> *Punch*, 1844, Vol. VI: 14.

<sup>439</sup> *The Illustrated London News*, May 1844.

<sup>440</sup> Ward, F. O. (1844): *The polka considered as a revolutionary movement*. London.

<sup>441</sup> "The Polkaphobia - a little News of Mr. Ledbury" In: *Bentley's Miscellany*, 17 (1845): 305.

ignored his orders and hosted a polka party in his absence. The event went out of control to such an extent that the *"ceiling started to sag, lamps swang recklessly, and the floor buckled to the braking point."*<sup>442</sup> The story is certainly funny, but shows as well a degree of anxiety about English history, culture and tradition being invaded and replaced or destroyed by the new. The dance is used here metaphorically to criticize social rigidity. It means that if society, like a dance floor, is not sufficiently flexible to support a rapid change and movement, it risks collapsing and ruining the civilization it was built to protect and support.

Without going deeply into detail, all these works are mentioned here to show that the introduction of the polka caused a much greater reaction than one could even imagine, having influenced not only music but also art, theatre and literature. All these works also dealt with common questions and matters related to the polka such as its origins, its revolutionary dimension, its inappropriate character and its impact on society which resulted in a sort of mania and craze. Their existence and contents confirmed once again that the polka was an important social phenomenon in nineteenth-century London and quickly spread into all parts of British society.

Summarizing, in the nineteenth century, social and industrial change was inescapable: society was no longer semi-static, and the quickening tempo was reflected in the vitality and diversity of the dance. Gradually, the urban-industrial process brought benefits such as time and money to some members of the working classes. Sections of the working class had an increased economic capacity for musical enjoyment. The expansion and formalisation of leisure time that took place from the middle of the nineteenth century were two of the key social changes of the Industrial Age. It arose from the London public's longing for novelties:

*"Jullien came to London 'in the nick of time'. The public were getting tired of the operas at Drury Lane, and longed for some other means of relaxation. The gardens were shut in the winter, and it was of no use going to Vauxhall, or the Surrey, the public craved for novelty, there had been no actual excitement since Malibran - except the Italian Opera...the public craved for novelty, and yet was ignorant of what it craved for...Jullien found the London public hungry for amusement."*<sup>443</sup>

The dances had to be new and entertaining and any kind of novelty was considered a sort of revolutionary event. This is vividly evoked in the words of John Parry and Albert Smith:

*"It is a melancholy fact in this high-pressure age, that something new- no matter what- must always be the rage; cold water cures, or mesmerists - Jack Sheppard or Thames Darrell, "Bohemian Girls", "Venetian Brides," with Boz's Christmas Carol. And next the wild Ojibbeways played solos on the drum, Chinese Collections, Lantern Feasts, and General Tom Thumb; Then*

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<sup>442</sup> "The Polkaphobia" In: Bentley's Miscellany, March 1845.

<sup>443</sup> Musical World, 1853: 307.



*Esmeralda's Truandaise; until red hot from France. The Polka came, and every one began to learn the dance.*<sup>444</sup>

As a matter of fact, was it then strange that in all the transformations taking place in social and industrial life in London, the dance should not also seek reinvigoration, and that it would shortly express in its own way the new vigour, the restlessness and sense of adventure of the times?

The next sections will reveal more about the character of the polka and its particular features which influenced its evolution and appropriation in mid-century London.

### 3.3. The polka - nervous and passionate

The first 'official' description in London of the polka steps and the way it should be danced was published on May 11, 1844 in *The Illustrated London News*. It was a version of the Drawing-room Polka as danced at Almack's<sup>445</sup> and at the balls of the nobility and gentry in England. It was brought by Mrs. Rae, who learned the details from M. Coralli, the instructor of the young nobles and gentry in Paris. The first main figure was described as follows:

*"At the one, hop on the right leg, lifting or doubling up your left leg at the same moment; at the two, put your left leg boldly forward on the ground; at the three, bring your right toe up to your left heel; at the four, advance your left foot a short step forward; now at the one in the next measure or bar of the tune, hop on the left leg, doubling or lifting up your right leg, and so on-proceeding in this step with your arm circling your partner's waist round the room."*<sup>446</sup>

This is only one of five figures which were possible while dancing the polka, at least according to Coralli. They were all similar and could be danced one after the other; hence just one description is given here. All in all, the same description was accompanied by pictures to show correct way to dance the polka and it concluded as follows:

*"La Polka is a noiseless dance; there is no stamping of heels or toes, or kicking of legs in sharp angles forward. This may do very well at the threshold of a Bohemian auberge, but is inadmissible into the salons of London or Paris. La Polka as danced in Paris, and now adopted by us, is elegant, graceful, and fascinating in the extreme; it is replete with opportunities of showing care and attention to your partner in assisting her through its performance."*

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<sup>444</sup> These words come from the polka composed by Albert Smith and John Parry in 1844 in which they explain the origins and development of that dance. *"Polka Explained"* by Albert Smith and John Parry (1844).

<sup>445</sup> a social club in London from 1765 to 1871, later renamed as Willis's Rooms.

<sup>446</sup> *The Illustrated London News*, May 11, 1844: 300.





Illustration No. 33,34,35

Thus, the description presented in the *Illustrated London News* was of a peaceful and elegant dance, executed mainly by the upper echelons of London society. As a matter of fact, it is not surprising, that the first public description of a new dance was just like that. Most probably, the version presented by the *Illustrated London News* was repolished from all kinds of inappropriate figures. Once adopted by the upper classes it was presented to the public in that form. It cannot be forgotten that everything indicates that the polka was first adopted by the noble classes to be later presented to the lower ranks of society. Nonetheless, as discussed in the previous chapter, the introduction of the polka in London ended in a sort of craze, rage and public euphoria and this kind of behaviour was not necessarily in harmony with the moral rules and principles of London of the Victorian era.

Not surprisingly, the public performance of the polka by two internationally acknowledged dancers, Carlotta Grissi and Perrot, which took place at more or less the same time as the publication of the above article, gave the impression that the polka was something totally different. *The Times* reported that

*"They stamp at one another, and smile at one another, and the lady looks a myriad of coquetries over her shoulder at the gentleman, and then sizes him by the arm, and drags him round and*

*round, as if she thought the arm and the socket of the shoulder should be divorced."*<sup>447</sup>

The manner in which the polka was really danced in London and how the inhabitants of the English capital reacted to the new fashion is also intricately described in the following poem:

*"Oh! sure the world is all run mad,  
The lean, the fat, the gay, the sad—  
All swear such pleasure they never had,  
Till they did learn the Polka.*

*Chorus.*

*First cock up your right leg—so,  
Balance on your left great toe,  
Stamp your heels, and off you go  
To the Original Polka. Oh!*

*There's Mrs. Tibbs, the tailor's wife,  
With Mother Briggs is sore at strife,  
As if the first and last of life  
Was but to learn the Polka.*

*Quadrilles and waltzes all give way,  
For Jullien's Polkas bear the sway,  
The chimney sweeps, on first of May,  
Do, in London, dance the Polka.*

*If a pretty girl you chance to meet,  
With sparkling eyes and rosy cheek,  
She'll say, young man, we'll have a treat,  
If you can dance the Polka.*

*A lady who lives in this town,  
Went and bought a Polka gown,  
And for the same she gave five pound,  
All for to dance the Polka.*

*But, going to the Ball one night,  
On the way she got a dreadful fright,  
She tumbled down and ruined quite  
The gown to dance the Polka.*

*A Frenchman has arrived from France,  
To teach the English how to dance,  
And fill his pocket—"what a chance"—  
By gammoning the Polka.*

*Professors swarm in every street,  
'Tis ground on barrel organs sweet;  
And every friend you chance to meet  
Asks, if you dance the Polka.*

*Then over Fanny Elssler came,*

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<sup>447</sup> The Times, April 12, 1844.

*Brilliant with trans-Atlantic fame;  
Says she, I'm German by my name,  
So best I know the Polka.*

*And the row de dow she danced,  
And in short clothes and red heels pranced,  
And, as she skipped, her red heels glanced  
In the Bohemian Polka.*

*But, now, my song is near its close,  
A secret, now, I will disclose,  
Don't tell, for it's beneath the rose,  
A humbug is the Polka.*

*Then heigh for humbug France or Spain,  
Who brings back our old steps again,  
Which John Bull will applaud amain,  
Just as he does the Polka."*

*"Jullien's Grand Polka."<sup>448</sup>*

This street ballad contains a great deal of information on the development of the polka fashion in London and confirms many aspects of the polka that have already been mentioned. Indeed, it was very popular not only among the aristocracy but among the middle and lower classes. Dancers wore short clothes and executed it with passion and love. Further, dancing masters made money by teaching it. Hence, it seems that the polka had many faces and there were different modes of executing it in London. To understand this issue, two more illustrations are shown below.

Most probably, illustration No. 36 presents members of the working and lower-middle classes dancing the polka, supposedly in a public house. The way they dance is very different from Coralli's description. While the official picture shows an elegant and serious couple performing in a very professional and appropriate way, this illustration gives an idea that the polka was a clumsy, simple and vulgar dance executed through jumps, hugs and erotic glances. Nevertheless, it also gives an impression of happiness and freedom as its dancers enjoy some leisure. This impression is further intensified by the next illustration. With the highest probability, it depicts a private party of middle classes at the moment of polka dancing. The picture shows a crowd of people executing different activities such as: dancing, playing instruments, chatting, flirting, jumping, sitting, gossiping and watching other people. In the

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<sup>448</sup> a street ballad on the polka In: Ashton, John (1903): *Gossip in the First Decade of Victoria's Reign*. London and Kingston: Kelly's Directories Ltd. p. 244 and/or In: Dodds, John (1952): *The Age of Paradox. A biography of England 1841-1851*. New York/ Toronto: Rinehart&Company, Inc.:153.



centre of the picture, there is a man jumping at a woman while dancing. The overall impression is a feeling of chaos and enjoyment. This illustration could perfectly accord with descriptions of the polka as a mania, craze, rage or virus. In contrast with the official picture published in the ILN, this illustration shows a dance that is passionate, ungraceful, chaotic, suggestive and perhaps even a little sexy.



Illustrations No. 36<sup>449</sup>

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<sup>449</sup> Punch, 1847:104.

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF YE ENGLYSHE IN 1849. No. 2.



AN "AT HOME", YE POLKA.

Illustration No. 37 <sup>450</sup>



This passionate and happy way of dancing the polka by the middle and working classes was criticized and commented on in the contemporary British press. Not only people's behaviour in the dance was condemned but also the incorrect and misleading way of executing the polka:

*"then, Sir, the way in which these rustics excute it!...Two or three couples, who have been talking big about it for the preceding three weeks, trot with faces of solemn self-satisfaction round the small circle into which they are hemmed by the gaping crowd, holding each other at arm's length, and rolling their heads most religiously from right to left, according to instructions; this they vary with an occasional attempt at a "toe and heel" step, which consists in stamping their own heels upon other people's toes, and then they march away in triumph to receive the congratulations of their friends, leaving the poor deluded spectators under the impression that they have seen the Polka."*<sup>451</sup>

The polka was also compared to an "exhibition of mere monkevism" and the press made fun of working people who instead of "straining their minds, stretched their limbs."<sup>452</sup> Once again, in the article called "Polkaphobia" the polka was described as "people kicking their heels about in outlandish fashions."<sup>453</sup> According to *Punch* "its chief symptoms were extraordinary convulsions and wild gesticulations of the limbs, with frequent stampings on the floor, and rotary movements of the body, such as accompany lesions of the serebellum."<sup>454</sup> Thus, the sexual connotations of the polka were quite common and in this case wild movements and convulsions of the limbs and rotary movements of the body can be easily associated with the act of making love.

Furthermore, in poems, novels and stories, the polka was very often seen as something suggestive and exciting. For example in a story, published in *Punch*, a married lady, described as very pretty and rosy, was dancing the polka and catching the attention of the ball-participants.<sup>455</sup> It was perceived as something so exciting and inappropriate, that on the occasion of the evening-party at Sir Hilary Jinks' house, it was commented that the polka should not be danced in the drawing room as it was more suitable for the casino. This is how *Punch* described the overall pleasure of polka dancing:

*"The Young Fellows did take their partners by the waist, and these did lean upon the others' shoulders, and with one arm stretched out, and holding hand in hand, they did spin round the room together. but oh! To see the kicking up of heels and stamping of them on the ground, which did mightily remind me of Kim Crow. In truth; I am told that the polka is but a Peasant's Hop, from Hungary, and now to think of Persons of Quality cutting such capers! Hilary to his taste; but*

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<sup>451</sup> *Punch*, 1844: 172.

<sup>452</sup> *Punch*, 1847: 104.

<sup>453</sup> *Polkaphobia*: 305.

<sup>454</sup> *Punch*, 1845: 86.

<sup>455</sup> "The Snobs of England" In: *Punch*, 1847: 53.

*a Minuet for me at Home, with Gentlewomen, and a Polka with Milkmaids at a Maying or a Booth.*"<sup>456</sup>

All in all, the polka caused different emotions, from happiness and pure desire for dancing to jealousy and excitement as shown in the lithograph below made by Leech.



### JEALOUSY.

*Betrothed (who does not dance the Polka).* "I SHOULD LIKE TO PUNCH HIS HEAD—A CONCEITED BEAST!"

Illustration No. 38 <sup>457</sup>

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<sup>456</sup> Punch, 1849: 124.

Consequently, it does no surprise that a great number of humorous and deprecatory epithets related to the polka were to be found in the press between 1844 and 1860. The most common descriptions assigned to the new dancing fashion were: sinful, disreputable<sup>458</sup>, barbarian, unmeaning, stupid, sensual, insane, crazy, sexual, exotic, empty, ridiculous, absurd,<sup>459</sup> frivolous and trumpery<sup>460</sup>. The majority of these had rather a negative undertone and were very often related to the sexual side of human nature.

At this point it is important to mention that one of several ways in which the Victorians dealt with sex was to pretend it did not exist. "*This was the age of stork, cabbage and the doctor's bag*" as Eugene C. Black wrote in his book on Victorian society.<sup>461</sup> Children were kept in calculated ignorance of the elementary facts of life on the specious notion that knowledge meant abuse. Victorian culture was built upon and reenforced well-defined sexual attitudes and a clear concept of the role of men and women. Pleasure was for men and pro-creation was for women. But even pleasure was circumscribed and laden with guilt. The respectable were oriented toward the home: family recreation, family holidays, a circumscribed social life with relatives and friends. No man could misbehave without threatening his own prospects and those of his family. Moral and medical authorities proclaimed the subordination and inferiority of women. Their aspiration must always be towards marriage and the home. They lived and died at home. Most women were very badly educated until the last third of the century. They were usually encouraged to master the skills of painting or playing the piano. That instrument, thus, came to be an important middle-class status symbol. As a matter of fact, music lessons, as a conventional part of middle-class upbringings, dates from the Victorian age.<sup>462</sup>

How was it then possible that the polka could possess all these elements, which are usually associated with sex? Did dancing the polka arouse some erotic emotions? Frances Rust wrote that:

*"Not the epic song, but the dance...constitutes everywhere the most primitive...art...Whether as a ritual dance, or as a pure emotional expression of the joy in rhythmic bodily movement, it rules the life of primitive men to such a degree that all other forms of art are subordinate to it."*<sup>463</sup>

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<sup>457</sup> <http://www.cartoonstock.com/vintage/directory/j/jealous.asp>.

<sup>458</sup> for ex. Punch, August 28, 1858: 91.

<sup>459</sup> for ex. Punch, 1849, Vol. XVII: 234.

<sup>460</sup> for ex. Punch, 1855.

<sup>461</sup> Black, Eugene (1973): *Victorian Culture and Society*. New York, Evanston, San Francisco, London: Harper&Row, Publishers. 384.

<sup>462</sup> Black, Eugene (1973).

<sup>463</sup> Rustes Frank (1969): 11.

Sachs also held the view that a powerful stimulus in dance was "*longing for truth, closeness to nature and primitivism.*" Perhaps this could partly explain the popularity of a simple, rural dance originating in far Bohemian villages. Regardless of origins, wealth, or social status, people are equal in the dance and the more emotion they can excite from dancing the more interested in the dance they are. One of the emotions that might have been aroused from dancing the polka at that particular period of time was excitement. The polka attracted people with its crazy speed, jumping and even closer hold than in the waltz. Comparing various round dances, Vuillier wrote that "*the country dance suits the sanguine, the Galop the bilious, the waltz the lymphatic and the polka the nervous and passionate.*"<sup>464</sup> Furthermore, "*Polka sets young hearts a beating*", commented *The Musical World* in 1850.<sup>465</sup> Perhaps these exact qualities of the dance - passionate, nervous, exciting, quick, sensual, sinful –explain why the polka became fashionable in English ballrooms and concerts halls in the middle of the nineteenth century.

Taking everything into account it could be summarized that there were different ways of dancing the polka and that they varied by performer. When danced by the nobility and upper-middle classes the polka was elegant and graceful and was usually performed in the occasion of the private and public balls. However, due to the lack of a proper documentation of private venues, it is not clear if execution of the polka in private and public parties was exactly the same. By contrast, the polka danced by the middle and working-classes seems to have been simple, passionate and more spontaneous. It was mainly witnessed in the public houses and at the promenade concerts (which will be described later). Furthermore, some common elements of the polka execution could be extracted from the above mentioned descriptions. Firstly, the polka was a dance, which consisted of the so called "close hold". It was one of the first socially acceptable dances that allowed both partners to dance in a relatively close embrace, with the man's hand on his partner's back. This made the dancing even more exciting.<sup>466</sup> Its second feature was whirling around the room. Finally it was characterized by kicking and jumping which usually caused the dress to be lifted up, showing the knees and underwear of the dancing ladies. Thus, it could be concluded that much of the popularity of the Polka was due to its freshness and originality.

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<sup>464</sup> Perrot/Adrien (1845): 61-63.

<sup>465</sup> Musical World, 1850: 632.

<sup>466</sup> Bonds, Mark (2009): *A History of Music in Western Culture*. Prentice Hall: 467.

### 3.4. The polka at the promenade and monster concerts in London (1844-1860)

In the previous chapters it was mentioned that the first half of the nineteenth century was the time when the public had its say. People from the middle and working classes started to participate in different kinds of public events in greater numbers. Moreover musicians could choose their audience. All these developments led to the flourishing of the so called 'mass culture', which was discussed earlier in this work. In 1844 one of the main features of mass culture at the mid-century was the promenade and monster concert, where all kind of dances were played and danced. *The Musical World* wrote about the monster concerts conducted by Louis Jullien in London: "*Who would have dreamed of an evening's musical entertainment at which dances and waltzes should alternate with the symphonies of Beethoven, and Spohr?*"<sup>467</sup>

The main goal of this sub-chapter is to find out where the polka was performed and danced in London and how was it adopted by different social classes. It is done through the study of promenade and monster concerts organized by Louis Jullien. Both terms, promenade and monster concerts, are being used here as they entailed the same kind of event. The only difference between them is that the monster concerts were a type of promenade concerts with a bigger audience. They were referred to as such almost exclusively in London and to a certain degree in Paris. To better illustrate the idea of this section, the next lines will be devoted to the history of the evolution of promenade concerts in London, Vienna and Paris with the main focus on the English capital.

#### ***Brief overview of the promenade concerts in Vienna, Paris and London***

To understand properly the development of promenade concerts at the mid-century it is necessary to have a look at the concert scene a few decades before. Informal concerts had been of the utmost importance to high-status musical life during the eighteenth century. This had changed by 1830s, when they had largely disappeared among the cities' elites. Concerts were differentiated from one another in the middle of the nineteenth century in several respects: repertoire, public and etiquette. The quartet concerts in the 1820s were associated with a public of aristocrats and educated bourgeoisie. Their programs were strict in genres and listening. The cafe-concerts and the music hall, on the contrary, set up the opposite standard during the 1850s. They had the widest public with mixed repertoires, not necessarily just classical music. The promenade concerts ended up in the middle, linking both

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<sup>467</sup> *The Musical World*, 1844: 396.

classical music orchestras and music halls or café-concerts.<sup>468</sup> It was the type of event which dramatically displayed the union of the classes in popular taste. Though similar to benefit concerts in their basic form, they had scale and prestige of an extreme order since their sponsors managed to obtain the most fashionable musicians in the two cities and attract the most concentrated elite audiences to the events during any season. Blending aristocratic elegance with bourgeois commercialism and working classes simplicity, they lasted over four hours and consistently drew crowds in London and Vienna.<sup>469</sup> By contrast, fashionable monster concerts were not as powerful in Paris.

The term was first used in England in 1838 when the Lyceum theatre announced "Promenade Concerts a la Musard" in London.<sup>470</sup> Musard was a musician from France, and had introduced open air concerts in the English style in Paris. Later, he arrived in England and conducted some of the performances in the Lyceum Theatre. Programmes of his concerts consisted mainly of popular instrumental solos, overtures, quadrilles and waltzes. Musard's success in London had an impact on the further development of musical promenade concerts which became a marked feature of musical life in the British capital.<sup>471</sup> Musical entrepreneurs<sup>472</sup> blended aspects of eighteenth-century pleasure gardens with public balls and industrial show palaces to create a cultural synthesis of their own identity. Promenade concerts differed from orchestral concerts in their construction as a visual as much as a musical show. Promoters aimed to engage listeners' eyes just as much as their ears. Therefore the spaces used for promenade concerts were showplaces beautifully decorated with eye-catching adornments and bright lighting. Concert spaces usually provided areas where people could walk about freely and thus they were not only places where people listened to the music; their function was much more complex. As a matter of fact, it cannot be forgotten that place and space are familiar words denoting common experiences and are regularly conceptualized in daily and political life. At the mid-century, places such as theatres, gardens and dance halls became spaces in which people could interact and although they danced and enjoyed the

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<sup>468</sup> Weber, William (2008): *The great transformation of musical taste. Concert programming from Haydn to Brahms*. New York: Cambridge University Press: 208.

<sup>469</sup> Weber (1975): 41.

<sup>470</sup> Kennedy, Michael/ Bourne, Joyce (1994): *The Oxford dictionary of music*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press: 696.

<sup>471</sup> Scholes, Percy Alfred (1970): *The mirror of music, 1844-1944: a century of musical life in Britain as reflected in the pages of the Musical times, Tom 1*. Michigan: Books for librarie press: 192.

<sup>472</sup> it was the time of musicians-entrepreneurs who made business by playing what people liked.

music, they also talked, walked and discussed current issues.

Promenade concerts presented programs made up entirely of instrumental music which alternated between dance pieces and overtures, and the dances rotated among the quadrille, the polka and the waltz.<sup>473</sup> Each of the most successful promenades was focused on a flashy personality who functioned both as conductor and entrepreneur. They all toured Europe to conduct each other's orchestras. Entrepreneur-conductors gained international prominence in a whole host of cities and the principal players in the orchestra were usually featured as soloists. There was not only Jullien in London and Musard in Paris, but Strauss and Lanner in Vienna, Josef Gung's in Berlin, Hans-Christian Plumbye in Copenhagen, Joseph Labitzky in Karlsbad and Charles Lenschow in the United States.<sup>474</sup>

The promenade concerts were attended by various members of the labouring public from artisans to clerks and shop attendants. In fact, these were the low-status concerts which had the strongest indigenous roots in lower-middle class life and which provided a major new direction in concertizing. They identified the critical middle ground of taste and sociability within the expansion and reorganization of the musical world in the middle of the nineteenth century. This led to a large-scale commercial enterprise in all three capitals.<sup>475</sup> The number of audiences far surpassed those of all other concerts; reports of their crowds ranged from 1500 to 5000 with a rough average of about 2500.<sup>476</sup> Some members of the upper-middle class also attended the most famous of the promenade concerts, especially those of Musard in Paris, Strauss and Lanner in Vienna and Jullien in London. As for Weber, for many of these visitors the participation was social slumming but they did not have any influence over the social tone of the events. What is meant by this is that they came to the promenade concerts to watch how the lower classes enjoyed their free time and this was a sort of amusement for them. Most probably, attending this kind of event was also a way to exert control over the lower and middle classes.

This can be seen for example in the illustration No. 39 entitled "*Gents at the promenade concert*"<sup>477</sup>, which depicts upper and upper-middle class members attending Jullien's monster concert. It can be seen that they are seated in the special boxes and observe the proceedings of the concert. It is also notable that they do not dance. Usually the price for a box was much

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<sup>473</sup> Weber (2008): 210.

<sup>474</sup> for example: Weber (2008): 211 / Samson (2001): 551.

<sup>475</sup> Weber (2008): 208.

<sup>476</sup> Weber (1975): 109

<sup>477</sup> Graves, Charles Larcom (1857): *Mr. Punch's History of Modern England: 1841-1857*. London: F. A. Stokes: 289.



higher than for a simple ticket and this was the way to show off and stand out in society.



Illustration No. 39

The promenade concerts resembled one other in the three cities more than any other kind of low-status concerts. However, the differences among them arose from the nature of the three societies and their respective stages of the urban development. One of the differences laid in the union of dancing with listening. The tradition of promenade concerts in Vienna was tightly connected with the Viennese waltz, whereas in the other two cities their repertoire was predominantly comprised of international genres of dance and program music. Consequently, according to Weber, Vienna was the only city among three of them, where the real dancing took place during promenades. This, consequently, influenced the development and appropriation of the polka in all three cities as already discussed earlier. Another important difference lay in the extent of attendance by the cities' upper-middle classes. They were least numerous in London. It turned out that the low prices of tickets was a greater social deterrent there. Such snobbery stemmed from the unusually long tradition of concert-going among the English elite during its fashionable spring season.<sup>478</sup> Furthermore, according to Weber, the bourgeois elite went to the informal concerts in greatest numbers in Vienna, where Johann Strauss built up a large, highly inclusive public.

The other important difference between all three capitals was the frequency and

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<sup>478</sup> Weber (1975): 110-111.

stability of the concerts. They were most numerous and stable in Vienna. In Paris on the contrary, promenade concerts had a brief and intense period. They were lead by Musard until 1846. After 1846 Paris did not have its own leading conductor of promenade concerts and that seems to be one of the reasons why the polka was diffused mainly by the dancing masters there, but this will be discussed in greater depth in the next chapter. In London promenade concerts were less numerous than in Paris but had greater stability thanks to Jullien, who held a series of nightly concerts for an intense four to six weeks during the winter and spent the rest of the year touring the provincial cities of Britain. He maintained his concerts until 1859, one year before his death.<sup>479</sup>

Finally, it is impossible to speak about the promenade concerts without mentioning their repertoires. According to Weber<sup>480</sup>, during the early nineteenth century, two fundamental changes in musical culture took place. One was the rise of the idea of "classical music": the performance and study of old or ageing works perceived in canonic terms. The other change was the increased hierarchization of taste, the distinction between music seen as "serious" and that termed "light". It won't be discussed in detail here, but it was significant for the categorization of the polka and reactions to it. The polka was a dance and thus, it was a form of "light" music, which was widely criticized at that time. One of the main characteristics of the promenade concerts was the juxtaposition of classical music and dances. The guiding principle of programming at public concerts was the mixing of diverse genres and tastes which during the first half of the nineteenth century created separate cultural worlds. To perform a symphony after a quadrille or an opera fantasy was now condemned as charlatanesque and unprofessional within the classical music world.<sup>481</sup> As a result, they were played alternately. In consequence, the performance of opera overtures and symphonic movements at promenade concerts provoked a discussion whether such pieces should be performed for the masses. In 1845 a Viennese commentator declared that, *"For the masses it is Strauss, for the elite Beethoven, at least that's how I see it, and how it shall be, because it never was any different."*<sup>482</sup> Jullien suffered similar derision at the hand of the rising violinist Joseph Joachim. In 1857 Joachim wrote to his brother as follows: *"it makes me really angry when the fellow, in his character as conductor introduces his charlatanism into the works of Mozart and*

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<sup>479</sup> Carse (1951).

<sup>480</sup> Weber, William (2004): *The musician as entrepreneur, 1700-1914: managers, charlatans and idealist*. Indiana: University Press.

<sup>481</sup> Weber (2004): 16.

<sup>482</sup> AMZ, 1 April 1845: 154-5 In: Weber, William (2008): 212.

*Beethoven*".<sup>483</sup> What can be seen here is that Joachim condemned Jullien for violating the sanctity of classical works by combining them on a program with pieces deemed unworthy such as for example the waltz or the polka.

It needs to be added that the promenade concerts flourished when the music business and musical entrepreneurship were at their height. Even the criticism itself became something of a business and the high-level musicians endeavored to find the ways to sell the serious music, as David Gramit puts it in his essay.<sup>484</sup> However, this opinion seems to me a bit oversimplistic. Perhaps some of the nineteenth-century musicians wanted to educate the masses and the will to make business was a secondary goal or not a goal at all. Maybe, this educational purpose was not the case for the family Strauss in Vienna, but it might have been the case for Jullien. He was the first conductor in London who presented the "classical" music to the crowds. Moreover his concerts were of a high quality and the music was played and danced by the most recognizable musicians in Europe. It is also known that Jullien never earned much from his concerts, because he spent more on paying the musicians and venues than making money. Anyway, the combination of classical and dance music was a topic for constant criticism and the conductors of this kind of event were accused of manipulating the public with flamboyant clothing or behavior. Finally they were considered a sort of "charlatans". Thus, not surprisingly, those "charlatans" were the main agents who popularized the new polka fashion and which was considered at the time a "mania, plague and rage". Perhaps, the use of these words together is not coincidental. A closer look at this issue will be taken in other parts of this thesis.

#### ***The polka at Jullien's monster concerts***

It was already mentioned that Jullien was a great inventor of the promenade concerts in London in 1840s. They were public events and usually took place in London theatres and gardens such as: Drury Lane Theatre, Her Majesty's Theatre, Surrey Zoological Garden, Lyceum Theatre, Covent Garden and Haymarket Theatre. In addition, Jullien also conducted the public masquerade balls and played at the private balls of the nobility and upper-middle classes. Sometimes he played at some of the fashionable London clubs, although not much evidence of this exists and therefore it is difficult to conduct a reliable analysis of his performances in the clubs and public houses. Through the following analysis, it will be shown

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<sup>483</sup> Joachim, Joseph (1972): *Letters from and to Joseph Joachim*. California: University Press.

<sup>484</sup> Gramit, David (2004): *Selling the Serious. The Commodification of Music and Resistance to It in Germany, circa 1800*. In. Weber (ed). *The Musician as Entrepreneur*: 81-101.

who listened to the polka and who danced it, where it took place and why it was popular among the British society. Before going deeply into the proper analysis of the primary sources in the form of contemporary journals and reminiscences, a short overview of the theatrical scene and London pleasure gardens where Jullien performed will be given.

In order to gain a more complete understanding of the conditions and cultural situation of London in the middle of the nineteenth century, it is important to understand that during the early years of that century, the theatre became much more a part of urban life than it had been before, and although playhouses were limited in number they were far more numerous than they had been during the preceding century.<sup>485</sup> They also catered for a far wider audience than concerts did. It was all these social "divertissements" together which united the various social groups that made up the so-called London "season". This extended from March or April through to July, when everybody with any social pretensions went off to the country, for to be seen in London in late summer or autumn was not acceptable. While the season was on, however, everybody who mattered was in London.<sup>486</sup> This was the time for the world of politics and high society to come into its own, for fashion in dress and taste in art to be celebrated and for the world of drawing rooms, balls, soirees, entertainments and operas to be experienced. Furthermore, during the season, members of the upper classes made their dynastic marriage alliances.

Nevertheless, the London theatre as a whole did not enjoy a great period during the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century and the drastic transformation of London's theatrical life took place in the 1830s.<sup>487</sup> This depression was caused by artistic and financial pressures and by a change in the public and legal perception of the established companies. During the 1830s, an intensely competitive environment threatened and eventually destroyed the previously pre-eminent position of the Theatres Royal, Covent Garden and Drury Lane as London's principal venues for theatrical and musical entertainment. Notably, the dramatic increase in the market for music in the course of the nineteenth century led to a proliferation of places and spaces for its performances, with an increase in concert halls and dance halls as well as pleasure gardens and theatres. The steady increase in the number of so-called minor theatres during the 1820s and 1830s, which obtained annual or bi-annual licences for the performances of musical entertainment, generated an acute rivalry over repertoires and artists, since the liberal interpretation of these licences posed a considerable financial threat

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<sup>485</sup> O'Daniel, W (1859): *Inns and outs of London*. Philadelphia: S.C. Lamb.

<sup>486</sup> Sheppard (1971): 349.

<sup>487</sup> Sheppard (1971): 359.

to the patent theatres. Moreover, many of the plays and operas originally performed at the patent theatres increasingly found their way into the repertoire of the minor theatres, where they were performed in greatly adapted versions. The artistic and managerial structures of these established companies proved too rigid to adjust sufficiently to the changing theatrical landscape. As a result, Covent Garden and Drury Lane were forced out of the dramatic domain in the mid-1840s and were turned instead into major venues for opera and other musical presentations such as for example promenade concerts.<sup>488</sup> The same places were let for commercial reasons to stage performances and events of minor importance. For example, in the season of 1842-43, Covent Garden was advertised to let "*for theatrical performances, for public or private meetings, concerts, exhibitions, or any of the various purposes to which is available.*"<sup>489</sup>

In 1847, Covent Garden Theatre became the headquarters of London opera. Louis Jullien held five highly popular series of Promenade Concerts there. They lasted between one and four months and provided the proprietors with their most regular income and brought a return to fame and opulence. It was described in 1859 that in December 1847 Jullien held a grand Bal Masque there.

*"The beauty of London, in fact of the country, was present. The large hall was crowded. The gay costumes of the masquerades, the sparkling of diamonds, the glitter of gold, and the light shed upon the scene by a thousand gas-lights, conspired to render the gay show indescribably bewildering..."*<sup>490</sup>

Drury Lane suffered a similar fate after 1843, when it was used primarily for English opera and series of concerts. The same contemporary author O'Daniel wrote that "*I have called Drury Lane the rival sister of Covent Garden. Apparently from records existing, the greatest rivalry was in 1816.*"<sup>491</sup> Both theatres had similar histories; however in the 1840s Covent Garden held a more prominent place than Drury Lane and was visited by a more sophisticated audience. All in all, even after the change in repertoire from plays to opera and concerts, both theatres remained the most popular for the middle and upper classes in London. Until the building of St. James's Hall in Piccadilly in 1858, there was only one adequate concert hall in London, the Philharmonic Society, built in 1813, and Her Majesty's Theatre, where Jullien's promenade concerts and ball masques enjoyed great popularity.

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<sup>488</sup> Diderikson, Gabriella (2002): *Major and minor theatres. Competition in London in the 1830s*. In: Boedeker/Veit/Werner: *Le concert et son public. Mutations de la vie musicale en Europe de 1780 a 1914 (France, Allemagne, Angleterre)*. Paris: Editions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme Paris: 303.

<sup>489</sup> Diderikson (2002): 312.

<sup>490</sup> O'Daniel (1859): 119.

<sup>491</sup> O'Daniel (1859): 121.

According to O'Daniel, Her Majesty's Theatre was the most imposing place of amusement in London. He also wrote that

*"it has five tiers of boxes, all private property, or let for the season. Thus it is often very difficult for a casual visitor to secure a seat...Dress is extremely favorable to good seats. A man that is dressed most, whether best or not, is sure to get the best seat. Admission is totally impossible without dress coat, black pants, and fancy waistcoat; and the the nearer ladies come to carrying a fancy silk store, the better, infinitely so, for them. Here only, the greatest vocalists of the world appear..."<sup>492</sup>*

From the early 1830s until the late 1840s, it played host to the heyday of the era of the romantic ballet, in which the ballet company, known as the Ballet of her Majesty's Theatre, was one of the most renowned troupes in Europe. Throughout the era of the romantic ballet, the theatre presented performances by notable ballerinas such as: Marie Taglioni, Carlotta Grissi, Fanny Eissler, Lucile Grahn and Fanny Cerito performing together with Perrot, Taglioni and Saint-Leon, acknowledged ballet masters. Curiously, the same names are to be found on the polka advertisements and covers of polka piano sheet music. These dancers danced balet as well as couple dances on the stages of the same theatres. Sometimes, Jullien invited them to participate in his balls and monster concerts and in this way he enriched his programs. Surrey Zoological Garden was another venue where Jullien performed. O'Daniel reported that:

*"Surrey is in every sense of the word a garden of amusement. The entertainment begins on Monday morning and is kept until Sunday night. Entrance is obtained by ticket at one shilling each person. Although the admission is so little the entertainment is great, and often ten thousand persons participate in the revelry. Some hours through the day the gardens are open only to nurses and children. The principal performances begin about dark. The first duty consists in refreshing the inner man at some of the refreshment tables which are scattered everywhere through the gardens. This can easily be done by making a telegraphic signal to one of the black coat, black pant, black vest and white cravat gentry, who ever on the lookout for his doceur is simultaneously on the lookout to serve the "gentleman hand lady". Whatever is called for if it be in the eating or drinking line can be obtained. Having performed this operation entirely to the satisfaction of all concerned, the band (Jullien's celebrated) prepares to allow all that desire to engage in a dance to do so. This is kept up in a lively manner for some time, when the band retires to the Concert Hall, leaving only a few violinists to play for those who would rather dance than listen to the concert. This Concert Hall is a tremendous establishment. It holds many thous and is nightly filled with the gay of the city. The galleries, four in number, are arranged in rather an irregular order one above the other supported by stone columns. The attractive feature of Jullien's concerts for some time have been Mdlls. Grisi and Alboni and Miss Poole. This Hall is a fair example of the "life and death, the bane and antidote," that the poet talks of. The crowd assembles to drink wine, and beer, to dance, play cards and carry on all kinds of games until twelve o'clock Saturday night. Again it assembles on Sunday to hear the celebrated Rev. Spurgeon preach everlasting destruction to all sinners. On Sunday the crowd is greatly increased by the curious Dukes, Duchesses, Lords, and other whom Spurgeon's wrathful denunciations occasionally reach. From twenty to twenty-five thousand persons assemble at Surrey Hall every*

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<sup>492</sup> O'Daniel (1859): 113.

*Sunday morning to hear him...Besides the "sports," enumerated at the Surrey, balloons are ascending every moment, there are boat rides out of the fancy ponds, there are hermit's cells to visit, Venetian serenades, and everywhere on every side, nothing is heard but music, laughing, and merry talking with the rushing and hissing of fireworks. Nothing is seen but joy and animation, though these are often but the indices of sorrow and wretchedness at heart. The performances conclude each night between twelve and one, with a grand display of fireworks."*<sup>493</sup>

For some short periods Jullien performed also in two less important theatres and these were the Lyceum and Haymarket. The Lyceum was associated with performances of Dickens's novels and Christmas books. Again, the contemporary O'Daniel wrote that

*"it is one of the prettiest houses in London, and, while large enough to enable the poetical drama, even in the case of the heaviest Shakspearean play, to be effectively mounted, is not too large for the requirements of a modern audience. It may be noticed that evening dress is more commonly in vogue in the stalls and dress-circle here than at other theatres, but there is no absolute rule."*



Illustration No. 40 <sup>494</sup>

<sup>493</sup> O'Daniel (1859): 173-174.

<sup>494</sup> picture from the Victoria and Albert Museum Collections dated to 8.04.1844 from the collection "Haymarket 1844", was probably taken from the playbill of that date as this announces that 'La Polka, composed by Jullien will be performed for the first time as a preview to the 'Extravaganza'.



The Haymarket Theatre was built in 1720. It was a small theatre and was frequented by a less sophisticated audience drawn from the middle and lower-middle classes. Most probably, Jullien presented and introduced the polka to the wide public there in 1844. From illustration No. 40 it can be also seen that some of the events in this theatre were also attended by the upper-middle classes. The illustration comes from the Albert and Victoria Museum collections and it was most probably sheet music of some of the polkas. It shows some members of the upper-middle classes dancing the polka. It was common for the sheet music of popular theatrical songs to be printed and sold for mass consumption during the mid to late nineteenth century; therefore these kind of sources are very important for research on nineteenth-century musical life.

Jullien was considered to cater for the masses and numbered all classes among his listeners. It was also commented that the progress of music in England at the mid-century had been remarkable thanks to Jullien and that he had become the chief medium of the public. He believed that the *"enjoyments derivable from music are in their broad features, manifestly designed for the many, and not for the few."*<sup>495</sup> This is at least how it was commented on by *The Musical World*. With regards to the polka, Jullien's public was described as allied under one single banner of the 'fast' and the 'slow' schools.

*The "fast" man may listen to his favourite polka and applaud the variation of his predilection; the "slow" man may feast upon a symphony of Beethoven or Mendelssohn; and what is not the least important matter, the polka and symphony may be heard to equal perfection...*<sup>496</sup>

Thus, music by Beethoven and Mozart was played together with polkas and other round dances during Jullien's concerts and therefore, at the beginning of his career, he was accounted a charlatan and a quack. *Punch* made jokes that: *"Jullien has a polka for nearly every day in the month, which he names after the persons by whom, - or the squares, lanes, or alleys where, - they were first danced."*<sup>497</sup> A quick look at the table of Jullien's polkas, presented at the end of the first section, reveals that *Punch*'s comment was most probably just a sort of advertising stunt and the number of polka pieces composed by Jullien was in reality lower. However, it is known that a lot of Jullien's sheet music was burnt in one of the theatres; nevertheless, the pieces from the table are also the polkas that were mostly commented on and advertised in the contemporary press and on the playbills. Anyway, this number was still significant and all in all Jullien brought a great number of polkas into the concert repertoire of

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<sup>495</sup> *The Musical World*, 1844: 397.

<sup>496</sup> for ex. *The Times*, 1852, *The Musical World*, 1852: 804-805.

<sup>497</sup> *Punch*, 1844, Vol VII: 115.

the time. Some of them became very famous throughout the United Kingdom and therefore it is not surprising that he was sometimes called by the contemporary press *"the man of polkas"*. Consequently a lot of jokes and comments were published about him and his polkas in the British press. Another contemporary British journal described Jullien as:

*"a popularizer of good music in this city...He gave his public waltzes, "Row Polkas", and explosive Army Quadrilles, but he also sandwiched Beethoven and Mozart between the coarser viands of this musical menu...and we must never forget that he was the first conductor to introduce symphonic music to the masses."*<sup>498</sup>

Hence, one matter seems to be quite clear; Jullien introduced the polka to the masses. Who were these masses? 'Masses' is a term usually associated with the working class. However, it is not clear that this was the case when one looks at the places where Jullien performed. The majority were London theatres with an important history and position in the British society. Many were visited by the upper, upper-middle and middle classes. By contrast, there is almost no documentation, which could allow a hypothesis that Jullien played his concerts only for the working classes. The only places where this could have occurred were the Lyceum and Haymarket theatre, because they were usually visited by less sophisticated audiences. As a matter of fact, very few manual labourers could be found dancing the quadrille or the waltz, and although some did gain admission to large public concerts of the kind staged at the Crystal Palace, working-class men and women were occasional interlopers in an essentially middle-class environment. But the rapid progress of industrialisation during the boom years of the 1840s, 1850s and 1860s increased both the overall size of the working class and the disposable income of many of its members. Anyway, it seems that the real boom in working class enjoyments came not necessarily with the introduction of the couple dancing culture but one or two decades later.

It seems, therefore, that the polka was a rather middle-class dance, performed and executed for large audiences (masses) which consisted mainly of middle class members and occasionally the upper-middle and upper classes. It was also not surprising considering that the middle class became a powerful and important part of British society at the mid-century. The middle class had more money, more free time and they had more say in political and social life. This is confirmed by the following statement that:

*"the enjoyment of music among the middle classes received much of its impulse from Jullien and his concerts drew together a large number of musical people in a way that no other public concerts have ever before been able to attract."*<sup>499</sup>

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<sup>498</sup> Graves, Charles Larcom (1857): *Mr. Punch's History of Modern England: 1841-1857*. London: F.A.Stokes: 289.

<sup>499</sup> see for ex. *The Musical World*, 1852: 84/ *The Musical World*, 1852: 803

Furthermore, another comment can be found in *The Musical World* where it was reported that "the Drury Lane theatre presented a most brilliant aspect, the boxes being completely filled with the elite of fashionables...Among others we recognized His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge in private box, who seemed greatly to relish the entire performance."<sup>500</sup>

Also illustration No. 41, presented below and published in *Punch* in 1849, demonstrates how far this assumption is probable. The picture shows one of the monster concerts, played by Jullien. The famous conductor is on stage together with his orchestra surrounded by members of the middle-classes, standing and ready to dance, chat and interact. In the boxes, the representatives of the upper-middle and upper classes can be noticed. They all sit and observe the events from a distance. Thus, it can be concluded that Jullien's public consisted mainly of the middle classes and the masses mentioned in the previous comments related mainly to this part of society. Exclusively for the upper classes he played mainly on the occasion of some private events such as state or nobility balls and the guest lists of those venues were usually published in the contemporary journals. Sometimes, the nobility also came to his promenade concerts to show off and to be seen. Sir Burnand summarized the reason for the massive popularity of the polka in his *Records and Reminiscences*:

*"it is easy to account for the universal popularity of the polka. It was a case of the masses versus the classes, and the masses won. Why? Simply because the polka appealed to that vast majority of dancers everywhere, in all grades of society, who, especially in the case of the male dancers, find it utterly impossible to keep their heads in a valse, especially with a fast partner. The mildest-mannered man that ever figured in a galop at the finish of a quadrille, or a country dance, soon discovered that he could easily acquire a reputation as quite a gay votary of Terpsichore by learning and dancing the polka. "The new polka" was a social leveller, not in the sense that the mad galop or fast valse had been, when the inefficient, who soon lost his head, concluded a succession of bumps by sprawling on the floor, dragging his unhappy victim of partner with him, but as a sort of go-as-you-please-in-four time dance which would let in a lot of outsiders; an so for one who sat out after a quadrille and waited patiently for another, there were now fifty, who at the sound of the polka, started up, obtained partners, and danced for all they were worth, and more. For many years the polka held its own, and danced in a comparatively free-and-easy manner in the disguise of polka-mazurka or modern schottische."<sup>501</sup>*

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<sup>500</sup> *The Musical World*, 1847: 704.

<sup>501</sup> Burnand, Francis (1904): *Records and Reminiscences. Personal and General*. Vol. 1: London: Methuen&Co.: 58-59.

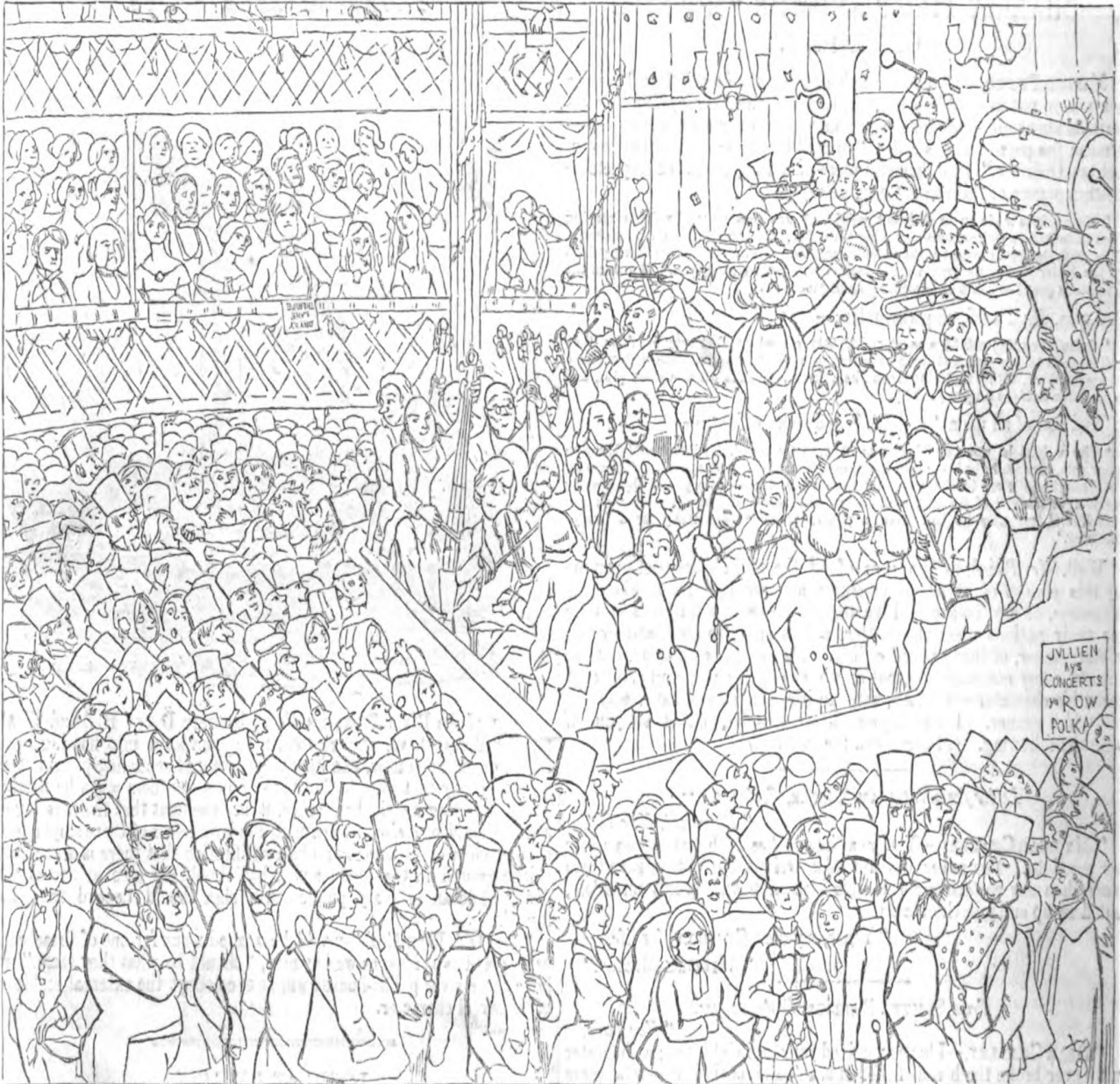


Illustration No. 41<sup>502</sup>

***In search of novelty: why and how did the polka affect the London society?***

As illustrated in the previous chapters the polka became very fashionable in the middle of the nineteenth century in London. All contemporary sources indicate that the polka remained very popular in the English ballroom for at least ten years following its first appearance in 1844. In 1851 for example, *Musical World* reported that polkas seemed to be "at a premium and good polkas too." This was highlighted, for example, - on Jullien's playbills throughout all his artistic activity in London. It needs to be mentioned that there was not only Jullien who composed the polka in London, but among the most fruitful musicians who composed this

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<sup>502</sup> Punch, 1849 Vol XVII: 234.

kind of dance there we can also mention Koenig and Albert. The leading British journals were full of advertisements for polka piano sheet music composed by various composers at that time. All the same, none of these, ever achieved such great success as Jullien. The London press described Jullien as *"Our French Orpheus, who plays to an audience of wild beasts every night, and has taught many of them to dance the polka."*<sup>503</sup> The fashion for the polka was also visible in the contemporary press comments that provided different reasons for its popularity. For example in 1848 it was written that

*"the rage for this species of dance has not yet evaporated, nor will it, we think, for some time to come. As long as the polka is admired, new polka tunes will be eagerly sought after, and composers, who might otherwise have directed their aspirations to music of a different class, conveying the public taste, will devote themselves wholly and zealously to the manufacture of this sort of dance-music. We are of those who do not disdain a polka tune when it is a good polka-tune; on the contrary, we can listen to these musical trifles, when they are spontaneously and neatly written, with much pleasure."*<sup>504</sup>

Both quotations above confirm the great popularity of the polka but they also express criticism of it. First of all they compare it to a musical trifle, something trivial and without any importance. Moreover, the process of composing the polka is compared here with a manufacture or a sort of mass production of dance music. Finally, Jullien's audience is described as wild beasts who behave in a crazy and unrestrained way when dancing the polka. As a matter of fact, these crowds of people squeezed together dancing with kicks and jumps and showing their undergarments were not necessarily very well regarded in British society at that period of time. Furthermore, not only was the polka criticized but also the events themselves, where the music was subjected to mass consumption.

Not incidentally, it was commented in the previous chapter, that the mid-nineteenth-century could be described as 'the age of extravagance and exaggeration'. It was a time when the public was no longer satisfied with the habits and customs of their ancestors and their tastes changed: *"they have passed the equinox of taste, their sensorium is palled, and now they require spices, hot peppers, and curries from far Ind, or craving for newness and strangeness..."* People longed for novelty. Thus, one of the reasons, why the polka became popular in London was this novel character. Novelty held immense sway with representatives of all social levels in London. Londoners needed some novelty and the polka was new. They also needed something recreational and the polka was happy, fast and very entertaining; *The Musical World*, for example, while commenting on one of Jullien's polkas, stated that *"nothing can be*

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<sup>503</sup> for ex. Punch, 1850: 17.

<sup>504</sup> The Musical World, 1848: 813.

*more sprightly, more exciting, or more replete with novel effects, than the 'Row Polka'.*<sup>505</sup>

One of Jullien's tools was simplicity. He used the original rhythms and melodies of the polka to attract his audiences. Usually, between the seasons, he travelled all over Europe in search of novelties and unknown melodies. As a result, he was able to present new polkas to the public each season. In 1848 we find these comments:

*"The latest novelty from M. Jullien's pen is a set of polkas, entitled the 'Drum Polka'; they are written in M. Jullien's usual felicitous style; the melodies are exceedingly pretty. A number of side drums are used, which appear to delight the company immensely...The polkas increase nightly in popularity, and will rival the celebrated 'Original Polka', 'Olga Polka', and even the 'Bridal Polka', which met with such unprecedented success."*<sup>506</sup>

Furthermore, it is also remarkable that Jullien's dance compositions were not just simple short dances, but they consisted of complicated harmonies, included national melodies, were made of many parts and were performed by large orchestras, sometimes mixed with military bands, solo players and other accompaniments.

It was mentioned before that there was a sort of mania or plague connected with the arrival of the polka in London. Moreover, some of the sources spoke even of something like a "revolution" caused by this new dance fashion. The entire phenomenon will be analysed in greater depth in the next section. However, a brief look at the revolutionary aspect of the polka in relation to Jullien's performances is needed. It is striking that by looking at contemporary posters and playbills from theatres and places where Jullien performed, one can notice that a set of different dances and musical pieces were usually played at promenade concerts, very often much more space was devoted to quadrilles and classical pieces than to the polka. Hence, it is quite surprising to find the contemporary descriptions of the whole phenomenon that classified it as a sort of revolution (see for ex. the illustration below). As a matter of fact, it cannot be forgotten that the nineteenth century was a time when people craved freedom. Any kind of novelty elicited enthusiasm and was considered a little bit revolutionary. From the existing contemporary documents it cannot be stated that the polka caused any cultural or ideological revolution; however, it can be considered part of social and cultural changes that were taking place at that very moment in history. This was also highly expressed in the way the polka was danced in some of places in London, showing a slow process of breaking with the old and conservative way of thinking.

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<sup>505</sup> The Musical World, 1849: 727.

<sup>506</sup> The Musical World, 1848: 792.



HARPER, PLATT, RICHARDSON,	LAVENU, THIRLWALL, HILL,	JARRETT, CHIPP,
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**Pianistes, Messrs. BLAGROVE & Henri LAURENT,**  
**Principal Cornet-a-Pistons,**  
**HERB KENIG,**  
**1st Leader, M. TOLBECQUE.**  
**2nd Leader, M. NADAUD.**  
**Conductor, M. JULLIEN.**

Such an array of Talent as the above list displays has never been combined in any one Orchestra in this country; and M. JULLIEN feels assured that it will enable him to produce some of the Grand SYMPHONIES and OVERTURES in a style as yet unheard in England.

**NOVELTIES OF THE SEASON.**  
**LA POLKA.**

This Dance, which has attained a most unexampled popularity, and created a complete revolution in all the Soireés Dansantes of last season, was first introduced at the Private Balls of the Nobility by M. JULLIEN, but has never yet been performed by the Author in Public. It will therefore be played for the first time, and with that perfection with which this unrivalled Orchestra alone is capable,

**NEW QUADRILLE.**  
As a companion to the Royal Irish, the Real Scotch, and the English Quadrilles.

Illustration No.42<sup>507</sup>

The same novel character and the juxtaposition of classical and dance music were subjected to many critical reactions, expressed mainly by classical music composers and players, critics, some specialised journals and members of the nobility. They thought that the prevalence of quadrilles, waltzes and polkas in these concerts was likely to vitiate public taste, already unsound from lack of education, and that classical music should not be played together with dance music. Magazines and journals expressed dissatisfaction with the current tastes of the young men of the humbler classes who listened to such „trash as 'Minnie'<sup>508</sup> and 'Bobbing Around'<sup>509</sup>. British society was criticized for seeking only simple pleasures and entertainment in music without any deeper scope. In 1852, the British press commented that Jullien's "*audiences assembled with the sole purpose of seeking pleasure and relaxation -*

<sup>507</sup> Jullien's concert poster from the Covent Garden theatre dated to Nov. 15, 1844 in Victoria and Albert Museum Collections in London.

<sup>508</sup> one of Jullien's polkas has this title.

<sup>509</sup> Punch, August 15, 1857: 67.



*quadrilles and polkas, big drums and cornet-a-piston, a glittering theatre and a gay promenade were sufficient to satisfy their utmost wants.*"<sup>510</sup> Positive and critical opinions mingled together in the course of the years.

All in all, it can be concluded that the polka constituted an essential part of public entertainment culture in the nineteenth century in London. It did not lead to a cultural revolution in London although its impact on British society was significant. It made all people of mid-nineteenth-century London dance and enjoy the freedom of entertainment. As written in *Punch*:

*"in searching for the causes of the revolution thus effected, we find the polka at the bottom, as well as at the top of every one of them. The polka has broken down the old aristocratic barriers of the formal Qaudrille, and opened the doors of the dance to all, by removing its old limits. The Qaudrille, though favourable to the formation of sets, was opposed to that broad and universal spirit of equality which the polka encourages. It is true that, like other free institutions, the polka has sometimes been abused, and carried to an objectionable extent; but, on the whole, the freedom it has introduced into the ball-room has not been destructive of order or propriety."*<sup>511</sup>

### 3.5. Nationality as a medium: the 'originality' and 'exoticism' of the polka

In 1844, most British journals announced that *"every dance professor held his own version of this dance which he declared to be genuine. One has been to Paris on purpose to learn it; another has acquired it in Germany; and a third one has been taught the dance by a Bohemian nobleman."*<sup>512</sup> What then was the real nature of the polka? Was it Bohemian, German, Russian, French, Irish, English or maybe Polish? While this is not the main question of this chapter, it should, however, not be forgotten that a great deal of mystery and myth surrounded the birth of the polka and the meaning of the name. No proper academic analysis has been carried out on that issue; nevertheless, most musicologists and historians agree that it was originally a folk-dance from Bohemia, probably called 'Polka' or 'Polish girl' by the Czechs as a compliment to Poland, and to express admiration for the Polish revolution of 1831.<sup>513</sup> The main goal of this part is to find out what were the other characteristics of the polka that determined its success in London. To better understand the idea behind this section, a short introduction to the political European situation in the mid-nineteenth century with the focus on London is presented below.

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<sup>510</sup> *The Musical World*, 1851.

<sup>511</sup> *Punch's guide to fashionable dancing* In: *Punch*, 1847: 254.

<sup>512</sup> *Punch*, 1844: 169.

<sup>513</sup> for ex. Michel, Artur (1944): *The Czech Polka world sensation of 1844*. New York: Reprinted from *Dance Magazine*, Jan. and Feb. 1944. 20pp. paperback. 3 copies. or Rustes Frank (1969): 72.

The mid-nineteenth century was a period of political unrest. During this time Europe faced political instability and turmoil. In 1848, a series of upheavals, known as the Spring of Nations, spread all over Europe. These revolutions were caused by various factors. Technological change revolutionized the life of the working classes, national governments were being reshaped by liberal and radical politicians, political awareness grew thanks to press development. Thus, new values such as nationalism, popular liberalism and socialism began to spring up. The revolutions had the greatest impact in France, Italy, Germany and Austria and were of less importance in Britain, its colonies or the United States. Generally speaking, the Victorians were conservative people; thus they did not believe that governments could be overthrown by threats or violence. Therefore, it is not surprising that Great Britain decided to remain neutral in responding to the revolutions on the continent. However, Britons themselves felt a considerable sympathy for some of the liberal movements in other parts of the European continent. Thus, the liberal-nationalists in Poland, Greece and Italy, for example, consistently enjoyed the moral support of the British public.<sup>514</sup> Nevertheless, on the whole, the British approach to the national revolutions in Europe was rather ambivalent and selfish and England did not warmly receive revolutionary change either on its own territory or on the continent.<sup>515</sup>

The increasing significance of nationalism as a political, social and also cultural force in the nineteenth century was reflected in music and the other arts. Many musicians expressed their sense of national belonging or conviction by adding some native elements to compositions, such as dances, legends and folk song that were unique to their national cultures. Moreover, due to the miscellaneous use of various elements such as new melodic tunes and timbres, modality and interesting rhythmical solutions peculiar to respective nations, there was a growing diversity in musical language. This growing importance of nationalism can be seen most of all among people from Central Europe, notably Czechs and Poles, who were still partly or wholly under the dominance of foreign governments. In those countries a great revival of national feeling and culture came into being and this took the form of a revival of traditional national songs, music and dances in culture.

Thus, in the nineteenth century the discovery of folk can be observed.<sup>516</sup> It was clearly

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<sup>514</sup> Sir Ward, William Adolphus/ Gooch Peabody, George (1923): *The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, 1815-1866*. Cambridge: 128.

<sup>515</sup> see for example: Bourne, K. (1970): *The Foreign Policy of Victorian England 1830-1902*. Oxford / Seton-Watson, R. W. (1937): *Britain in Europe, 1789-1914*. Cambridge / Ward, A. W. & Gooch, G. P. (1923): *The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, 1815-1866*. Cambridge.

<sup>516</sup> Taruskin, Richard (2005): 120-123

visible with the great explosion of published folklore that through its artistic imitations enhanced the national awareness of all peoples. The discovery of folk was to a certain degree a mere recycling of an old idea of primitivism. This was the conviction that early cultures, which were technologically backward were superior to those of contemporary civilization, in other words, those things that are least socialized and least civilized - peasants, children, savages, plain speech, raw emotion - are closer to truth.<sup>517</sup> According to Taruskin, another way in which nationalism influenced the music of the nineteenth century was with regards to its aesthetic standpoint. The prevailing principle for the popularity of any kind of genre was novelty and originality. Consequently, unfamiliar music was appreciated if it was authentic; by contrast the tradition of imitation was now condemned. According to Richardson, this state of affairs may perhaps account for the fact that the polka - a dance from Bohemia - captured first France and then the world.<sup>518</sup> Which polka features and characteristics determined about its popularity in London?

The character of the polka can be explained in many ways and here it is analysed through the polka playbills, sheet music covers and contemporary press comments in relation to Jullien. Research on Jullien's theatre playbills between 1844 and 1859 shows that the polka was advertised in various modes. Firstly, there was an emphasis on its originality. Jullien was the author of the "Original Polka" and this was also his first polka. Why would he have named it thus? It seems, that he was convinced that emphasis on the polka's origins and its transfer among the European cities would lead to its success among the London audiences. In fact, it was advertised "*as the dance recently imported from Bohemia and danced in the soirees dansantes in Paris, Vienna and London*"<sup>519</sup> and this can be seen below, in the illustration which was a music cover sheet of Jullien's polka. Two characteristics come the fore while looking at this illustration. Firstly there is a strong emphasis on the origins of the polka, hence the couple dancing the new dance is wearing Bohemian national costume. Secondly, the need for legitimacy is visible in the subtitle of the cover. The statement that the polka was danced in soirées dansantes in Vienna, Paris and London indicates that the polka was formally adopted and accepted among the upper classes and therefore it could be introduced to the London public.

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<sup>517</sup> Taruskin (2005): 120-123.

<sup>518</sup> Richardson (1960): 80.

<sup>519</sup> playbills from the Covent Garden theatre 1844 in the Victoria and Albert Museum collections.



Illustration No. 43

Below, there are a further two examples of polka music cover sheet, again presenting couples in national Bohemian clothing.



Illustration No. 44<sup>520</sup>



Illustration No. 45<sup>521</sup>

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<sup>520</sup> the music cover sheet to the Bohemian polka composed by Herrman Koenig.

<sup>521</sup> the music cover sheet presenting two famous dancers Fanny Cerito and Arthur Saint Leon



These three cover sheets are introduced here to show that the origins of the polka were not without any importance to its popularization in London. A more in-depth analysis of the polka music cover sheets in London and Vienna will be conducted in a separate chapter. Nevertheless it is interesting to note that the roots of the polka were clearly exotic to London listeners. Exoticism was a strong trend in nineteenth-century Europe. It was a search for new effects rooted in the folk music of other lands and peoples, generally those considered to be less spoiled by civilization. Occasionally composers, attracted by another country's national cultures, would for specific reasons use these particular national characteristics in their music to affect audiences. According to Taruskin, exoticism or orientalism may seem a far cry from nationalism. In their early phases, nationalism and exoticism were opposite sides of the same coin. Both reflected an interest, at least potentially benign, in human difference (ours from them, theirs from us).<sup>522</sup> Indeed, Bohemia was perceived by the European capitals, especially London and Paris, as such, and therefore an increased interest in its culture and music was observed.

Moreover, paradoxically, almost all the dancing masters who taught the dance in London were foreigners and went to Paris to learn the polka from Cellarius, a dancing master, who most probably brought the dance from Prague to Paris. To give an example, in 1844 *The Times* was full of advertisements for polka lessons. On April 13, it announced that

*"Miss Prince having had the honour of acquiring from a Bohemian nobleman the true character of the Polka (...) In consequence of the numerous application made to Mrs. James Rae for instruction in this fashionable Dance, in its most recherche and perfect style, as danced in the elite of society in Paris...Madame Michau and her Daughters, [...], not being satisfied with the above fashionable dance as danced at the bals masques and public halls, have been induced to go to Paris to see it as danced in the elite of the society there."<sup>523</sup>*

One could come to the conclusion that the most original and perfect polkas were to be acquired from Bohemian dancers living in Paris! Further, Paris was the most pretentious and most strongly admired city in nineteenth-century Europe. Paris launched new fashions, its influential critics took over the right to decide what was of good and bad taste. In brief, Paris was exotic, fascinating and exciting and as presented earlier, the polka was very exciting and highly erotic in this city. Indeed, Cellarius suggested in his dancing manual that the polka could, despite its foreign origins, be considered French because it owed its fashion and

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in the polka dance.

<sup>522</sup> Taruskin (2005): 192.

<sup>523</sup> *The Times*, April 13, 1844.

character of universality to France.<sup>524</sup> In fact, again according to Cellarius, "it was first presented to the French ball-room under the auspices of fashion and its success was instantly confirmed."<sup>525</sup> Furthermore, Richardson wrote that the birthplace of the polka could be considered the salons of Paris for it was here that it became fashionable as a ballroom dance. The rage started in Paris in 1844 and its principal promoters were dancing masters: Cellarius, Laborde and Coralli. *The Times* reported on the events in Paris by saying that

*"Politics are for the moment suspended in public regard by the new and all-absorbing pursuit - the polka - a dance recently imported from Bohemia, and which embraces in its qualities the intimacy of the waltz combined with the vivacity of the Irish jig. You may conceive how completely is the polka rage from the (I am assured) fact that the lady of a celebrated ex-minister desiring to figure in it at a soiree dansante, monopolised the professor par excellence of that specialite, for three hours on Wednesday..."*<sup>526</sup>

It was not unusual to find announcements of Jullien's state balls and nobility soirées where 'la Polka' or the polka 'a la mode at Vienna, Berlin & Prague' was performed.<sup>527</sup> Paradoxically even the London dancing evenings were called 'soirées dansantes'. It seems that there was a sort of an inseparable bond between London and Paris with regard to their fashions and cultures. Inhabitants, musicians, artists and opinion-making bodies of London tended to copy Paris fashions and thus, the polka which became a rage in Paris was quickly adopted in London. Moreover, in London it became fashionable not only because it came from mysterious Bohemia, but because it was considered exotic. This exoticism was connected with its origins and with its popularity in the French capital. Interestingly, some people even considered that the polka originated in France.

This is however not the end. A closer analysis of Jullien's programs and press comments in the years 1844-1859 reveals that the polka had many attractive sides to it. On the one hand, it was original because of its Bohemian roots and French character. These features and its novel character made it exotic to London audiences. On the other hand, it was exotic because it was "multinational". What is meant by multinational is that many people attributed to the polka different origins and considered it as their own national dance. The example below found in *The Musical World* gives a better idea of what is meant by that:

*"In Europe the dance is performed in two ways. Carlotta Grissi and Perot dance an ebarming figure, which they call the polka: but the real one is executed by Cerito and St. Leon, who dance*

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<sup>524</sup> Cellarius (1847): 18.

<sup>525</sup> Cellarius (1847): 18.

<sup>526</sup> *The Times*, March 1844.

<sup>527</sup> see for ex. *The Times*, May 6, 1844.



*the Redowa, or original Polka of Hungary. This one has more national character about it than that performed by Grisi, though the step is nearly similar in both dances.*"<sup>528</sup>

Furthermore, *The Times* wrote that

*"The Reformer observes that the polka has become our national dance. We make one step in advance, and two to the rear (en arriere). Example - In the affair of Dupetit Thoours, M. Guizot danced a Polka. The French Gouvernement has during 13 years and 8 months executed this dance in the European concert. It is, therefore, most unjust that the Polka should absorb the attention of France. The dancers in the drawing-rooms have taken the places of our political jumpers. M. Cellarius, the great professor of the polka, eclipses M. Guizot. The latter has but one manner of resuming his advantage over Cellarius, which is to decorate him."*<sup>529</sup>

As a result, one can see that the polka was considered at once Bohemian, French, English, Hungarian or Irish and perception of its origins depended on where and by whom it was danced. The nineteenth century witnessed the onset of many social changes, and therefore, not surprisingly social dances can also be said to have passed through a period of transition. In this period of change selections from national melodies, little known in Britain, combining some highly original airs, including Danish, Moravian, Icelandic, Magyar, Hungarian, Croatian, Bohemian or Polish melodies were also among Jullien's novelties.<sup>530</sup> Perhaps this is the reason why the polka was so very popular: it was true and native everywhere and could therefore be adopted in each place and by any kind of people at all levels of society. It was thus original, but at the same time national. In short, maybe it was the possibility of being able to identify the polka, a 'fashionable Bohemian dance from Paris' with 'us', that made the dance attractive in London.

Given this evidence it can be seen that even the titles of most famous and important polkas composed by Jullien seem to confirm that the polka in London was exotic because of its origins. This was one of the qualities that decided its popularity in the English capital. The polka titles depict and mirror their audiences and places in which they were composed. Among over 60 polkas, one can find the Original, American, Hungarian, British, German (Rhine) and Viennese polka. Some were composed for the royal couple and played at the royal court and in the drawing rooms, the others were devoted to people and situations related to Jullien's life and experiences. All in all, they were all different and new, and reflected the everyday life of nineteenth-century people.

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<sup>528</sup> The Ladies National Magazine, 1844. Philadelphia: C. J. Peterson: 70.

<sup>529</sup> The Times, April 13, 1844.

<sup>530</sup> for ex. The Musical World, 1849: 688.

<i>TITLE</i>	<i>YEAR AND PLACE OF THE FIRST PUBLIC PERFORMANCE IN LONDON</i>
The Original Polka	1844 Covent Garden
The Royal Polka	1844 Covent Garden
The Drawing Room Polka	1844 Covent Garden
The Douro Polka	1844 Covent Garden
The Fourth Polka	1844 Covent Garden
The Nobility Balls Polka	1844 Covent Garden
Polka composed expressly for the Maestro	1844 Covent Garden
The Imperial Polka	1844 Covent Garden
The Queen and Prince Albert Polka	1845
The Hungarian National Polka	1845 Covent Garden
The Polka-Quadrille including 5 favourite polkas	1845 Covent Garden
The Cricket Polka	1846 Covent Garden
The American Polka	1846 Covent Garden
L'Invitation a la Polka (introduction to the Original Polka)	1846
The Polka-Mazurka	1847 Drury Lane
The Comic Polka	1847 Drury Lane
The Camelia Polka	1847
The Figlia del Regimento	1847
The Rhine Polka	1847
The Girlanden Polka	1848
The Queens Polka	1848
The Gondola Polka	1848 Drury Lane
La Polka D'Elephant	1848 Drury Lane
New Comic descriptive polka	1848 Drury Lane
The Drum Polka	1848 Drury Lane
The Caroline Polka	1848 Drury Lane
The Cossack Polka	1849 Drury Lane

The Row Polka	1849 Drury Lane
The Polka Galop	1849 Royal Surrey Gardens
Thank's a good time coming, boys Polka	1849 Surrey Zoological Gardens
The Derby Polka	1850
The Trab Trab Polka	1850
The Crystal Fountain Polka	1851 Drury Lane
L'echo du Mont Blanc	1852 Drury Lane
Polka des poignards from the Auber's opera, arranged by Jullien	1852
The dawn of day, polka quick step	1853
The Ethiopian Polka	1853 New York
The West Park Polka	1854
The Max Sutaine Polka	1854 Drury Lane
The Katydid Polka	1854 Drury Lane
The Sleigh Polka	1854 Drury Lane
The gallants, or, Katy-did polka, with brilliant variations	1854
'Tis the witching hour of love polka, arranged from the Katy-did polka	1854
The Eclipse Polka	1855
The Flirtation Polka	1856 Her Majesty's Theatre
The Tambourine Polka	1856 Her Majesty's Theatre
My Mary Ann Polka	1857 Drury Lane
Polka-Mazurka	1857 Her Majesty's Theatre
The Minni Polka	1856 Her Majesty's Theatre
The Fife Polka	1858 Her Majesty's Theatre
The Kiss Polka	1858 Her Majesty's Theatre
Les Folies de Paris Polka	
The Ducal Polka	
Polkachucha	
The Old Dog Tray Polka	1858
The Original Polka Quadrille	

The Dromio's Polka	
The Rage of Vienna Polka	
Fern Leaves Polka	
La Garde Nationale	1856
Polka Militaire "Drummers to the Front"	
The National Guard Polka	1850

## 4. Paris, Vienna and London: one dance, multiple appropriations

There are many facets and factors such as gender, race, class and age which influence dance in a complex way and contribute to meanings of the dance product and dance performance. With regards to the topic of this study, the nineteenth century was a period of social changes with new ideas, particularly those of liberty and equality promoted by the French Revolution. There was the growth of a new middle class which gained wealth from the development of commerce and industry and there was a need for reform within the arts. It was a time of industrial production, accelerated urbanization and the birth of working class' and women's rights, moreover it was a time of intellectual and artistic movements such as nationalism, conservatism, socialism, liberalism, Darwinism, realism and impressionism. By the mid-century, revolutions in politics, art, literature, and thought had begun and found their highest expression in Paris. However, all of this would not have been possible without the French Revolution (1789) which provoked a cessation in the course of the events. This amounted to a total structural and irreversible change that transformed the face of Europe.

Until now the geographical approach was used to analyze the development of the polka. Thus, I've chosen to examine each of the three main cultural centres where the polka was made fashionable. Hence, this work consists of three chapters focused on Paris, Vienna and London. The study showed that the mid-nineteenth-century European sphere of social customs, habits and behaviours was to a certain degree turned upside down by the explosion of the new „revolution” – polkomania. In the course of 1844 the polka had become a very popular form of social dancing in Europe and America and its emergence was noted by most important international journals. Normally it is believed that the polka originated as a fashion in Prague and Vienna to be later spread into further European cities. In the previous chapters I demonstrated that it was in fact in Paris that it was first made fashionable. Later, it was adopted in Vienna and finally the new fashion was copied in London.

The following chapter, which is also the final chapter of this thesis, aims at comparing the developments in all these cities. It is based on three main arguments which are the results of the previous analyses. The evidence seems to indicate that several factors contributed to what we might call „the polka fashion” in Europe. The first was the excitement of the dance itself. Thus, thanks to the polka, which came on the heels of political revolutions and struggles for women's liberation, males and females could finally dance together touching, squeezing, hugging and rotating each other in a way that strongly suggested the erotic pleasure of love-making. Secondly, the growing commercialization of life created a sort of polka market, thus

shaping a new cultural and consumption good. Finally, changes in the structure and power relations of European urban societies - connected with the rise of the bourgeoisie - strongly influenced the popularity of the polka.

These three factors are the focus of this chapter. They are analysed by means of comparison of the developments that took place in the three capitals as well as through the analysis of some additional sources such as various sheet music covers, lithographs, poems, newspapers and journals.

#### **4.1. Polka, its places and audiences**

The analysis heretofore showed clearly that the polka offers an interesting comparative element to explore how a new consumption good proliferated in different places and spaces and how it was addressed by different social classes. In separate studies dedicated to individual European capitals, it was shown that officially, the polka adhered to no limits of age, gender or class. However, it was also noted that the attendance at the balls and participation in dancing fetes was often limited by the financial circumstances of the participants, political issues, social requirements and connections, and finally by the conditions imposed by the organizers of the dancing events and by the owners of the venues. Taking into consideration new political, social and cultural developments of the nineteenth century, this chapter aims at comparing the performers and audiences of the polka in all three cities discover the places and spaces where it was executed. Consequently, it will be seen who the main recipients and practitioners of the polka were in European context.

The nineteenth century was a tumultuous time. European economies, societies and politics were affected by the Industrial Revolution which drove many changes that took place. For example, the invention of the steam engine accelerated production to unprecedented levels and at unheard-of speeds. This destroyed to a certain degree hand-crafted production in favour of mass production. New technologies associated with the Industrial Revolution made travel and commerce faster and more wide-reaching. Moreover, technological advances enabled the production of instruments and printed music on a wide scale. New methods of promotion and sales made the distribution of the products more feasible and successful.<sup>531</sup> Improvements in printing and publishing technologies enabled the wider dissemination of sheet music, opened domestic music-making to an even larger segment of society, and allowed for the rapid expansion of music journalism. In fact, in all three cities analysed in this

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<sup>531</sup> Weber (1975): 6.

thesis, new music press were established: Vienna- Wiener Musikzeitung, Paris- Revue et Gazette Musicale and Les Menestrel, London- Illustrated London News and The Musical World.

In the nineteenth century, composers, performers, listeners, publishers, and critics lived in a dynamic community, in which they were significantly affected by their choices. The half-century between 1830 and 1880 saw many changes in musical and cultural life in Europe. Many of them involved shifts in audience behaviours and demography and in the social uses of music. Put another way, the receivers and producers of music negotiated a new relationship with one other in the nineteenth century. As individual artists sought and found new patrons for their works beyond the aristocracy, a new economy of music making, mostly based on freelance composition and performance activities, emerged. In this new system, the bourgeoisie and middle classes became the primary receivers of musical works, whether by purchasing tickets for professional performances in concert halls or by purchasing published music, taking music lessons, and participating in amateur choirs and ensembles. As published music circulated throughout Europe, music-lovers rallied around their favourite composers, genres, and styles, creating networks and communities of similarly minded, largely middle-class consumers, or audiences. In a certain way, by carefully choosing musical language according to the taste, education, and demands of their audiences, composers were not simply responding to market pressures, but communicating with members of the musical world.

By the end of the century, a great variety of popular genres had emerged and each had its own specific characteristics. This resulted from the growth of the music market and was influenced by the increased professionalization of the musical world. London, New York, Paris, Vienna and St Petersburg were particularly remarkable as places in which new, original and influential forms of popular music developed: the music hall had arisen in London, while New York was the birthplace of minstrelsy, in Paris there was the cabaret, St Petersburg became a new centre of balet, and finally Vienna was the centre of popular dance music for couples.<sup>532</sup> New art spaces were being created with the establishment of new musical techniques, new conventions, new organizations, and new networks of distribution. At the same time there was a rise of composer-conductors, musical and dancing masters and this could be regarded as an early form of profit seeking mass-culture. The masters were now concerned as much with artistic as commercial endeavour. This was visible in many saleable forms such as lithographs, medallions, busts, and a great variety of literary expositions and it developed directly from the burgeoning industries of instrument manufacture, music publishing, and

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<sup>532</sup> Scott (2008).



concert management.

After the Napoleonic wars a new period in the history of concert life in Europe began. Economic migration took place and the population was displaced in Europe's key urban centres. This mobility had an important impact on shaping social structures and culture in general. Between 1815 and 1848, musical life flourished. This was mainly due to relative political stability and economic growth throughout most of Europe and America.<sup>533</sup> With the nineteenth century the music was written and performed on the occasion of public concerts and festivals. These venues were visited by large audiences of paying customers, who were very often ignorant and had no idea about music and thus music writing and playing started to gain a new dimension. It was no more music in service to the aristocracy but, as Eduard Hanslick - the most influential musical critic of the nineteenth century - commented, "*by 1800 the concert had become the main medium for music per se*"<sup>534</sup>.

The birth and democratization of the public sphere, with which the cultural activities such as 'public concerts' constituted a significant part, played a crucial role in the popularization of the polka in Europe. This was also connected with the increase in the importance and role of the middle class in the European societies. The main reasons for this lay in the good health and stability of the capital's economies, which led to a great sense of well-being. Moreover, the middle class' standard of living rose and, thanks to the continuing peace, there was little worry over the general economic crisis. Increased leisure time led to provision of a vast range of entertainments in the major cities. Consequently, during the 1830s and 40s, concert life in London, Paris and Vienna constituted a real cultural explosion.<sup>535</sup> Many new types of musical genres appeared in the programs such as medleys of opera tunes, sentimental ballads, and finally dance music. By 1840, almost all magazines and newspapers covered concerts extensively, and at least one specialized music magazine was published in each city. Anyway, there were still many differences with regard to concert life in European cities.

#### **4.1.1. The transformation of the public sphere: polka at the public concerts**

Characteristic of the nineteenth century was the intermingling of tastes. At the same time as the patronal tradition collapsed and the printing industry rose, musical taste suddenly started

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<sup>533</sup> Samson, Jim (2001): *The Cambridge history of nineteenth-century music*. London: Cambridge University Press: 57.

<sup>534</sup> Hanslick, Eduard (2006): *The Beautiful in Music. A Contribution to the Revival of Musical Aesthetics*. Kessinger Publishing.

<sup>535</sup> Weber (1975).

to balance between extremes of frivolity and seriousness. On the one side there were the virtuosos, the entrepreneurs who started a fashion of popular demand for music which caught the ear but did not require any mental effort. On the other side there were the musicians who belonged to the tradition of learned music-making. They thus supported newly founded symphony orchestras that attempted to maintain the old order of studying and performing music. The 1840s marked a turning point in musical life and was comparable to the changes in political history. A transformation occurred within musical culture through a fundamental change in taste, repertoire and musical values, with new kinds of concerts such as ballad concerts, programs of opera excerpts and songs and cafes-concerts. These were often organized for the general public. The most obvious marker of these changes was the rapid growth of public concerts together with a widespread professionalisation of musical life including the music shop, the benefit concert, subscription series, the conservatory and the manufacturer's *salle*.<sup>536</sup> By 1848, almost every city enjoyed commercial concerts and the middle classes and/or bourgeoisie exerted powerful control over them.

We cannot speak about the development of the public concert without mentioning the emergence of the '*public sphere*'. Both issues were inextricably connected. With the rise of the bourgeoisie in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a public sphere became an auditorium in which private people could come together and form a public. Jürgen Habermas defined a model, which he called the "*bourgeois public sphere*" after taking a broad view of developments in European countries such as Germany, France and Britain in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. His model was described in a significant book "*The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*" which draws on different disciplines such as linguistics, philosophy, sociology, economics and history. According to him:

*"the bourgeois public sphere may be conceived above all as the sphere of private people come together as a public; they soon claimed the public sphere regulated from above against the public authorities themselves, to engage them in a debate over the general rules governing relations in the basically privatized but publicly relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social labour."*<sup>537</sup>

What Habermas denominated the "*bourgeois public sphere*" was a series of social spaces in which individuals met and discussed common public issues and to co-ordinated themselves together against arbitrary and oppressive forms of public and social power. Thus, the public sphere was a space that provided freedom of speech and assembly, a free press, the right to free participation in decision-making and a platform for political debate.

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<sup>536</sup> Samson (2001): 11.

<sup>537</sup> Habermas, Jürgen (1989): *The structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology: 27.

Leon Botstein<sup>538</sup>, following Habermas, has tried to account for the emergence of the late eighteenth-century concept of a public sphere. According to him, it resulted in developing literacy, improvement in print technology, growth in urban life and the development of a market economy. The Industrial Revolution itself thus facilitated not only the more efficient consumption and commercialisation of music but also the development of different musical institutions. This legitimization of collective opinion (together with freedom of expression and exchange of ideas) coincided with the emergence of the public concert mentioned before. Thus, the public sphere as an arena of productive, active public involvement in ideas flourished in the early nineteenth century but, according to Habermas, gradually became debased into a passive consumer society as the century progressed.<sup>539</sup> In this way, after 1848, concert life also underwent its final period of development, which consolidated the innovations of the previous two decades. Concerts became more stable and better managed, commercial practices took on greater clarity and regularity, and patterns of taste became more ordered, less unforeseeable. As a consequence, in the second half of the nineteenth century musical life was tightly associated with a wealthy industrial bourgeoisie and a capitalist economy. It was clearly visible in the growth of new markets for cultural goods and in the commercialisation and professionalisation of music. Other features of this new musical life were the struggle of the bourgeoisie for cultural domination and a growing rift between art and entertainment.

Indeed, in each of these three cities, a rapid boost in population and the growth of a large market for entertainment was to be noted. It is true that the majority of people continued to live in the countryside; nevertheless the nineteenth century was a period of expansive urbanization. In capital cities such as London, Paris or Berlin there was the growth of a middle-class public with more economic means and plentiful leisure time. Furthermore, these cities became stages on which commerce, government, and culture played leading roles. Returning to my case studies, the power exerted by the upper classes started to weaken earlier in Paris than in London, and was slowest to give way in Vienna because here the bourgeoisie mingled least with the aristocracy. Moreover, in Paris and Vienna there were major reconstructions taking place in the second half of the century and this was one of the reasons why in both cities working-class communities were uprooted and displaced. Thus, the most fundamental division with regards to the cultural life in the three capitals was the issue

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<sup>538</sup> Botstein, Leon (1992): *Listening through Reading: Musical Literacy and the Concert Audience*. *19th Century Music* 16, 2: 132.

<sup>539</sup> Samson (2001): 220.

of social class. The prices charged for tickets created a sort of hierarchy of concerts and listeners. In each city, prices fell into three main categories which can be named the lower, middle, and upper brackets.<sup>540</sup> In Weber's opinion, while the kinds of concert found in each city differed, the social standing of people who could afford them corresponded closely.

### ***Public concerts and mass culture***

Returning to discussion of the development of the new public sphere, it could certainly be perceived as the beginning of the evolution of mass culture, though on a small scale compared with current understandings of mass culture. In the field of music the term *mass culture* should be perceived as performance or diffusion of music with a primary goal of reaching a wide public and not being limited to personal relationships between musicians and the public. The main feature of musical mass culture was primarily the anonymity and impersonality of relationships between audiences and performers. The main goal instead, was the active exploitation of a large audience by the music business. This opportunity was first taken advantage of by the publishing industry through the opening up of a vast new market of music played by amateurs at home. Between 1780 and 1850 both publishing and retailing of music became a burgeoning consumer business which was facilitated by technological breakthroughs and a new, direct entrepreneurship. The technological advances were exploited quickly for the specific need of musical merchandising. For example, publishers made use of lithography immediately after its creation at the turn of the century, printing sheet music for home use with attractive, colorful illustrations which proved cheap and easily saleable. New methods of movable type and improvements in engraving techniques, which are discussed in the last section, provided another sort of convenience in the development and diffusion of mass culture.<sup>541</sup>

One of the areas in which these early dynamics of mass culture emerged might be considered public concerts, often called promenade, popular or monster concerts. They were large-scale institutions from the very beginning and their orchestras provided the fullest and most stable basis for mass concerts. The earliest form of popular concerts originated in the 1830s in different European cities. They were informal events held usually in dance halls in the winter months and parks during the summer. In London they were called „promenades”

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<sup>540</sup> Weber (1975): 7.

<sup>541</sup> Weber, William (1977): *Mass Culture and the Reshaping of European Musical Taste, 1770-1870*. In: *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, Vol. 8, No. 1. Pp. 5-22. Croatian Musicological Society.

because people were allowed to talk and take refreshments during the performance. Most probably, the term *promenade concert* was first used in England in 1838 in the occasion of 'Promenade Concerts a la Musard' announced by the London's Lyceum Theatre. Philippe Musard was a French musician and he had introduced open air concerts in the English style in Paris. In 1840, he came to England to conduct some of the concerts with programmes containing waltzes, overtures and quadrilles and his success here led to the development of further musical promenade concerts, both in London and elsewhere in England. According to Adam Carse, the origins of the promenade concerts can be sought in the need for both summer and winter amusements. The two sources from which promenade concerts emerged are: summer garden concerts; and public ball rooms.

It was mentioned in the previous chapters that pleasure gardens that provided different types of entertainment had become extremely popular in Paris, London and Vienna by the eighteenth century. In fact, all large continental towns had their gardens where music was to be heard in summer time, and all had their public ball-rooms. The main difference between a ballroom and promenade concert was that, whereas people came to the ballroom to dance to the music, they came to the concert only to listen to it. Originally, a promenade concert was not so much a concert as an entertainment designed to attract the ordinary man or woman who never went to a concert and could not afford to do so, but who wanted a pleasant evening's entertainment at a low price. They were in fact, the low-status concerts which had the strongest indigenous roots in lower-middle and middle class life and which provided a major new direction in concertizing. Thanks to unusually cheap ticket prices they drew people from the whole of the middle class and also young, unmarried apprentices from the more prosperous artisanry. The keynote was enjoyment, recreation and relaxation without intellectual effort.

Public concerts had the widest public with mixed repertoires and were a sort of venue linking both classical music orchestras and music halls or cafes-concerts.<sup>542</sup> Their programmes offered only orchestral music with some additional exceptions such as waltzes, opera overtures, songs, opera selections, quadrilles, and potpourris<sup>543</sup> on opera tunes or topical themes. The venues where they usually took place became spaces with people gathering together, dancing and exchanging ideas in free conversation. Big spaces meant big orchestras, big audiences, low prices and social diversity. By 1861, five thousand people were

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<sup>542</sup> Weber (2008): 208.

<sup>543</sup> one of forms of popular music.

attending concerts in Paris every week.<sup>544</sup> In England, large audiences were being attracted in the provinces. The democratic implications of cheap public concerts were obvious; everything was completely commercialised and vulgarised. Here too there was space not only to listen to music but also to show off glamorous and stylish clothes, in other words people came here to see, and even more importantly, they wanted to be seen. Throughout these concerts one can observe a desire to identify with a popular mass of people, a lust to celebrate the rising urban-industrial civilization with a mass gathering in public places. Thus, places were gaining more importance and became spaces where different social interactions took place. In this way, the musical mass culture of the middle of the nineteenth century involved both passive attendance and active social interaction.

The key feature of this type of concerts was always a showman or the so called entrepreneur whose function was first to solve the difficult managerial problems of such an undertaking and secondly to succeed in capturing public attention from the podium. In London there was Louis Jullien, in Paris Phillip Musard and in Vienna Joseph Lanner and the Strauss family. They all offered programs consisting mainly of light dance music and adaptations of opera hits. In the 1840s and 1850s promenade concerts played an important role in the spread of the polka in Europe, especially in London and Vienna where Jullien and Strauss were their predominant organizers and conductors. However, public concerts played by Strauss and Jullien were so prestigious and both conductors attracted such large audiences, that they were often visited by the upper and upper-middle classes. As a matter of fact, they gathered together people of all classes because they managed to identify the critical middle ground of taste and sociability within the expansion and reorganization of the musical world in the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>545</sup>

For the rich ones, leisure was a lifestyle, and not just a question of a few hours of rational relaxation. Of course ordinary people have always danced- in pubs, at local festivals, at weddings, and so on. But dancing as regular, organized activity was much more recent. In particular, the official balls were strictly controlled gatherings, serving rather to show the hierarchical structure of the court and exert social disciplining and power than to allow rhythmic intercourse. This control could also be maintained thanks to the growing standardization of dances. Thus, everyone was now doing the same steps, though in different spaces. Furthermore, largely as a result of the great interest throughout Europe in various forms of national dance, and largely as a result of the need for the several famous ballet

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<sup>544</sup> Commettant, Oscar (1861): *Concerts populaires de musique classique*, L'Art Musical 2, 3: 19.

<sup>545</sup> Weber (2008): 208.

dancers of the time to find new variety (a contrast to the classical ballet which sent them round the capitals of Europe and beyond to make their fortunes), a number of national dances were taken to the stage. There they were stylized and made more spectacular for public consumption and - gaining sufficient acclaim - were simplified for use in the ballroom. All in all, the attendance of these events by the lower and lower-middle classes means that the polka was one of the first couple dances aimed at all strata of society and one of the first couple dances fully accepted to be performed and danced in public by everyone.

#### 4.1.1. Polka, a social leveler?

*"It is easy to account for the universal popularity of the polka. It was a case of the masses versus the classes, and the masses won. Why? Simply because the polka appealed to that vast majority of dancers everywhere, in all grades of society, who, especially in the case of the male dancers, find it utterly impossible to keep their heads in a valse, especially with a fast partner. The mildest-mannered man that ever figured in a galop at the finish of a quadrille, or a country dance, soon discovered that he could easily acquire a reputation as quite a gay votary of Terpsichore by learning and dancing the polka. "The new polka" was a social leveller, not in the sense that the mad galop or fast valse had been, when the inefficient, who soon lost his head, concluded a succession of bumps by sprawling on the floor, dragging his unhappy victim of partner with him, but as a sort of go-as-you-please-in-four time dance which would let in a lot of outsiders; and so for one who sat out after a quadrille and waited patiently for another, there were now fifty, who at the sound of the polka, started up, obtained partners, and danced for all they were worth, and more. For many years the polka held its own, and danced in a comparatively free-and-easy manner in the disguise of polka-mazurka or modern schottische."<sup>546</sup>*

In his records and reminiscences, Francis Burnand defined the polka as “a social leveler”, a dance that appealed to all social classes. Could we agree with his opinion? Was the polka indeed danced by all social classes within Paris, Vienna and London on the same scale and in the same way? In this section I try to summarize everything that was written up to now about the audiences, performers and listeners of the polka to answer a question of what was the main public of the polka dance in a European context.

For most Europeans at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the great transformation was the virtual destruction of one social class, the aristocracy, and the hegemony of a newer one, the bourgeoisie. As a matter of fact, two words „liberalism” and „middle-class” define two richly variable phenomena that played a major part in shaping the political and social development of Europe in the nineteenth century. In this period of time, and not least as a result of industrialization, the middle class expanded while tending to do increasingly well. In some European countries such as England and Prussia/Germany, less so

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<sup>546</sup> Burnand (1904): 58-59.



for different reasons in France, social and political processes were at work tending towards the formation of a new composite and increasingly non-noble ruling class. In general, where they did not already dominate, bourgeois elements increased in importance while noble influence receded. According to Carl Dalhaus, the author of "*Nineteenth-century music*", it is common to say of nineteenth-century music that "*it belonged basically to the middle class, or bourgeoisie[...]*"<sup>547</sup> Furthermore, in his opinion, for centuries composers and performers came from the middle classes, apart from a few aristocrats and plebeians who were the exception.

The word bourgeois was invented in France; in German it can be translated into „Bürger“. „Class“ terminology was first used by the physiocrats in the mid-eighteenth century. By the late 1760s Mably<sup>548</sup> was describing groups with different economic functions as classes. By the nineteenth century the two terms were interchangeable, although some writers used ‘bourgeois’ to put a higher emphasis on social and financial rank, defining ‘middle class’ as less wealthy. Thus, the range of status, occupation and wealth encompassed led to the adoption of subdivisions such as: grande, moyenne, petite bourgeoisie; upper, middle and lower middle class.<sup>549</sup> Consequently, in such a vast research as this, it is impossible to analyze the relationship of the polka within all small parts of various classes. Therefore when using the term middle-class I have in mind mainly middle and upper-middle classes. When talking about working or lower classes I usually take into consideration also the petite bourgeoisie and lower-middle class.

When attempting to define the common and essential characteristics of the middle class, two theories seem plausible. On the one hand, the European middle class developed as a post-corporate, social formation within different regions in the second half of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. According to Weber, the middle class consisted on the one hand of shopkeepers, clerks and members of the lesser professions. On the other hand the second group constituted a "second elite" often overlapping in taste and cultural aspiration with the aristocracy that continued for some time to hold considerable sway over musical life.<sup>550</sup> Thus, merchants, capitalists, entrepreneurs, ministers, judges, professors, journalists, and high-ranking civil servants varied from one another in many ways, but also shared a feeling of social differentiation and distance from the privileged aristocracy and, on the continent, from the absolutist monarchy. They believed that achievement and education, self-

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<sup>547</sup> Dalhaus (1989).

<sup>548</sup> French philosopher and writer (1709-1785).

<sup>549</sup> Pilbeam, Pamela M. (1990): *The Middle Classes in Europe 1789-1914. France, Germany, Italy and Russia*. London: Macmillan Education Ltd.: 4.

<sup>550</sup> Weber (1975).

reliance and work underpinned a modern, secularised, self-regulating, post-corporate and enlightened 'civil society'. This 'civil society' contradicted the privileges and absolute monarchy of the 'ancien regime'. Simultaneously, an even sharper boundary divided the middle class from the lower strata such as the emerging working class, petite bourgeoisie and lower middle class.<sup>551</sup> Thus, the middle class became a social formation consisting of various professional groups, class positions and sectors.

While developing congruity in opposition to members of the other classes, the middle class distinguished itself by its culture of respect for individual achievement. For families and members of various middle-class categories individual achievement justified their claims for recognition, reward and influence. Furthermore, in bourgeois culture, family life was essential and hence, it was considered an end in itself. It was also a sphere of privacy. Bourgeois culture expanded usually only in towns and cities and in order to be part of it one had to secure an economic status, much beyond the minimum necessary for life. Thus, a community was held together by emotional ties and fundamental loyalties. In this way, the middle-class groups had two qualities in common: on the one hand there were interests and experiences formed by common oppositions and a common culture. On the other hand, they differed in everything else: experiences and interests based on occupations and economic status, region, gender, religion and ethnicity.

A crucial factor which diverged substantially from one place to another was the relation of the middle classes to the nobility. In France and Britain, a tendency existed towards the blending of middle-class and aristocratic components. This fusion influenced a gradual, relatively smooth decrease of the aristocratic element and a similarly gradual increase in the significance of the middle class. With regards to Austria, the nobility there was more powerful and retained a special legal status together with other privileges until the end of the First World War. This was in sharp contrast with Western Europe. In Austria, the middle classes acquired a smaller share of political power and gained less social and cultural dominance than did their counterparts in the West. Furthermore, although the social distinction between the middle class and those below them was not new, it became relevant, only in the second part of the century with the experience of the revolution of 1848/1849. With the revolutions, the masses started to emancipate themselves from middle-class leadership and challenged the middle-class world. Thus, in the second half of the century the structure of politics was changing from a system of distinguished politicians to mass and class

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<sup>551</sup> Kaelble, Hartmut (2004): *The European Way. European Societies in the 19th and 20th Centuries*. New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books.

politics.

The considerations above show clearly that the middle class was not homogeneous in any of the three cities which are in the focus of this work. It is therefore very important to emphasize that, despite differences in the participation in cultural life by the middle classes and/or bourgeoisie in all three capitals, the bourgeoisie influenced the musical and cultural choices and tastes of all these cities in a very significant way. Indeed, it could be said that at that time the bourgeoisie was the main social class that dictated cultural and musical tastes and that it influenced them in a very dynamic way. As Dalhaus stated:

*„bourgeois can refer to a large part of the institutional framework that sustained music culture, or to what Levin Schücking called 'the taste-bearing stratum' whose judgements on music of distinction were definitive, or finally to the social character of the principles or conceptions upon which the central genres of music were based."*<sup>552</sup>

France is an obvious starting-point for an investigation into the role of the middle class in daily life with a focus on cultural life because in 1789 and subsequent years this country experienced what might be described as a 'bourgeois revolution'. As a matter of fact, the revolution of 1789 contributed most to the denotation of the bourgeoisie as a social class. It was also in precisely these years when the traditional concepts that divided society into estates or orders were replaced by definitions based on class.<sup>553</sup> The bourgeoisie of early nineteenth-century France consisted in a minor part of businessmen and industrialists, who were primarily landowners too. It also included professional families, officials working at many different levels, members of the intelligentsia as well as, at the bottom of the scale, a lower middle class of small businessmen, shopkeepers and artisans - in other words, much the same mix as before 1789. The French Revolution, while reshaping political structures, appears to have had only a very limited impact on the elites who were in control. The elite remained a combination of wealthy nobles and bourgeoisie.<sup>554</sup>

Compared with Britain and the countries of southern and central Europe, liberalism in France occupied, in one respect, a peculiar position. *„In the great revolution, France swept feudalism away and established the hegemony of the bourgeoisie, doing this with an exemplary completeness not achieved in any other European country"*<sup>555</sup> Nineteenth-century liberalism was apparently quintessentially bourgeois. Nineteenth-century liberals were members of the

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<sup>552</sup> Dalhaus (1989): 41.

<sup>553</sup> Berger, Stefan (2006): *A Companion to Nineteenth-Century Europe 1789-1914*. UK: Blackwell Publishing.

<sup>554</sup> Pilbeam (1990): 10.

<sup>555</sup> Davis, J. A. (1981): *Merchants, Monopolists and Contractors: A study of Economic Activity and Society in Bourbon Naples, 1815-1860*.

political and social elite in their respective countries. Some were nobles, most were bourgeois. Many were landowners and the bulk formed part of the traditional middle class of professionals, bureaucrats, etc. In France those with commercial and industrial interests were involved in liberal politics from the 1820s, elsewhere considerably later.

With regard to England, the period between 1780 and 1832 was a time of transition. The change was strongly visible in the shift from an aristocratic and mercantile-capitalist society with land as the major source of power, to an industrial-capitalist society with a large and influential bourgeoisie. However, the wealth and power of the aristocracy increased in the nineteenth century and Britain was still dominated by aristocratic rather than bourgeois entrepreneurial groups to an extent unmatched elsewhere in Europe.<sup>556</sup> Nevertheless, it seems that the definition of the middle-class in England was based on economic experience. Political economy saw the crucial division between the owners of land and capital. Economic transformations that seemed revolutionary to contemporaries had dramatically increased the role of the business class. In brief, entrepreneurs and especially manufacturers in the expanding new industrial areas were considered the most significant part of the middle-class.<sup>557</sup> In the absence of classification by rank and estate, the lines that separated the middle classes from those above and below were vague. The border between the middle classes and the upper classes was equally permeable. Though the traditional upper class of nobility and gentry safeguarded its estates until the agrarian depression of the late nineteenth century, it was notoriously open to penetration by outsiders. Moreover, intermarriage between the high aristocracy and the acceptable branches of business became quite common.

With regard to occupations, due to the population growth, industrialization, urbanization, and above all the increasing importance of the state, the existing professions started to fade away or became less popular. New occupations acquired recognition as professions. At the same time, professionals considered themselves as a sort of elite, that had a social duty and honor. Most crucial to the emergence, description, and expansion of middle-class groups was education. The development of education in the course of the century resulted from middle-class initiative. Nevertheless it was also mainly for their benefit. Moreover, it was a tool managed by the middle class not only to spread enlightenment values but also to implement social control. Education was not for everybody and was divided along gender as well as class lines. Elementary schooling was developed to teach the most lowly in

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<sup>556</sup> Lieven, D. (1992): *The Aristocracy in Europe, 1815-1914*. London: McMillan. 7.

<sup>557</sup> Hobsbawm, Eric (1993): *The Example of the English Middle Class*. In: *Bourgeois Society in Nineteenth Century Europe*. ed. Juergen Kocka and Allan Mitchell. Oxford: Berg Publishers.

society, including the lower middle class and urban and rural workers. Meanwhile, secondary and tertiary education was enjoyed exclusively by members of the higher classes. Education at this level was also restricted by high fees and obligatory Latin. With regard to girls' education, until almost the end of the century it was limited to primary levels and they studied usually in Roman Catholic state schools run by nuns.<sup>558</sup>

Thus, it is clear that the middle-class in England recognized that knowledge was power. However, it was commonly perceived that only men had the right for power and knowledge, women instead had no need for a vigorous intellectual training. Some men even considered that they would be damaged by the experience and that it would lead to a neglect of their all-important household duties. Thus, the middle-classes educated their daughters as „decorative toys” or in other words as „ladies”. They possessed fine accomplishments, they knew how to draw, dance and sing, but very little else. They were superficially charming, but incapable of fulfilling any serious role in society. Furthermore, it was argued that women had to develop their intellects only and mainly in order to understand the challenges their husbands faced in public life. However, a distance needed to be maintained from the public sphere, in order that they could exercise a beneficial and calming influence.

With regards to culture, English' desire to move into the ranks of the middle class pushed them to look to dance professionals to teach them the manners and movements expected by those who already enjoyed this status. These dance professionals learned the manners, either directly or indirectly, from royalty and passed them on to their students in dance class. In fact, there were dancing masters travelling from other parts of Europe, especially Paris, to teach English people ways of dancing new fashions. Thanks to them, some women became important consumers of culture in the mid-nineteenth century, because women were predominantly interested in this type of cultural developments.

Unlike Britain and France, there was no buffer between the Austrian high nobility and the middle classes. According to Samson, in the case of Vienna,

*"the very recent acquisition of capital status resulted in a bourgeoisie of lesser means and lineage which tended to look inwards to itself and the remain more cohesive and perhaps less opulent (given the lateness of industrialisation) than that in London or Paris."*<sup>559</sup>

The period following the Congress of Vienna, which lasted till 1848 and the time when the polka was introduced in Austria was the time of the so called Biedermeier. It was originally a style in furniture which came to be associated with a whole epoch of cosy bourgeois

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<sup>558</sup> Berger (2006): 90-91.

<sup>559</sup> Samson (2001): 238.

domesticity, good music, and a theatre depicting local colour, comedies of manners etc.<sup>560</sup> To this day, it denotes a world of cosy domesticity and bourgeois self-confidence. The Biedermeier era was marked by a flowering of aesthetic sensibility and concern for economic matters at the expense of political participation on the part of the bourgeoisie. Also, a new urban middle class developed mainly thanks to the growing urbanization and industrialization of the cities. Music, of all the arts, was most immune to censorship and flourished. It was the city of Beethoven, Haydn, Schubert and finally Strauss. It was during this period that Strauss II was a boy. Music was dominated by the middle class, which was distinguished by the increased prosperity.

In historical retrospect, it was a time when the structural changes were underway in the societies and economies of Europe which led to a widespread revolution in 1848. For scholars of the Habsburg monarchy, 1840-1848 is called the Vormärz or pre-March. This is a way of saying that the antecedents of these outbursts in Austria, Hungary, Bohemia and elsewhere were taking shape. The Habsburg monarchy was vulnerable to this unrest as well.<sup>561</sup> Vienna and Prague had become growing industrial centers along with smaller cities such as Brno where the opportunity for work in wool mills led to a doubling of the population. The middle classes in Austrian lands, especially in Vienna, were the chief beneficiaries of these changes. Merchants and factory owners were joined by professionals and an assortment of bureaucrat-intellectuals. While such people did not seek to abolish the monarchy, they wanted a constitution that assigned real power to some form of popular representative body. Joseph II had used censorship and police surveillance to combat sedition. Intellectual life thus suffered heavily, particularly at its highest levels of expression. Higher education lagged behind its counterpart in the better German universities to the north. Nonetheless, the general cultural environment of the years 1815-1848, soporific and stifling as it may have been to some, had its distinct charms and satisfactions. Increased economic activity and stability gave the urban middle classes the discretionary income to cultivate the aesthetic side of their private lives.

Next to Emperor Francis, Prince Clemens von Metternich was the most important political personality in the Empire from the settlement of 1815 to the revolution of 1848. He was aware of the problems that had long plagued the Habsburg administration: its lack of coordination and the disconnect between policy-making and its implementation. In the

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<sup>560</sup> Okey, Robin (2001): *The Habsburg Monarchy c. 1765-1918*. London: McMillan Press: 79.

<sup>561</sup> Fichtner Sutter, Paula (1997): *The Habsburg Empire: From Dynasticism to Multinationalism*. Florida: Krieger Publishing Company.

Metternich era, the rulers and peoples of the Habsburg lands were more receptive to economic liberalism. The dynasty's needs for economic growth, regardless of the ideological auspices under which it took place, were immediate and clear-cut. For military reasons, the Habsburgs were drawn to modern transportation technology, especially the railroads. Between 1848 and 1859, the empire took other decisive steps toward reaching the economic standards already present in many parts of western Europe. In 1859, guilds were at last abolished, an act which fostered a far more positive climate for new industrial and commercial undertakings. The tax system was unified and standardized as well. This economic development within the Habsburg territories helped to raise living standards for large numbers of people from many walks of life. A sizeable and often sophisticated class of wealthy businessmen, bankers, and industrialists emerged. Among them were some who were affluent enough to become major patrons of the arts, once the exclusive function of the ruling dynasty and the great nobles associated with it.

With regards to culture, it was an area where the middle classes were gaining more and more power over the whole of society. The beginning of the century was characterized by the changes in patronage from private patrons to state financing. Thus, museums, art galleries, libraries, theatres, and concert halls were usually built by local authorities, governments, and from time to time by private associations of wealthy citizens. The middle classes also occupied themselves with running literary societies, academies, and musical associations. Bourgeois citizens and their families were the main consumers of culture. By contrast, the poor were excluded mainly by price and other social and political reasons.

In the course of the nineteenth century, patronage of science and the arts was increasingly bound up with the middle-class's sense of its own 'civilizing mission'. Hence, for example, music, dance and entertainment of middle class or the bourgeoisie in all three capitals was well represented by public concerts and balls. In Paris, the boulevard theatres and the fashionable cafés were places to which middle class audiences flocked for the musical entertainments known as café-concerts. In England, the popular music halls developed from drinking establishments that provided entertainment and dancing. In Vienna, crowds gathered to enjoy the balls and promenade concerts organized by Johann Strauss. As a result, the spirit of the bourgeoisie found its musical manifestation in the public concert, especially in Vienna and London. Public concerts were regularly reported in journals and newspapers, private concerts only rarely. Compared to the other two cities, Vienna hosted more promenade concerts probably because they were 'petit bourgeois' by nature, catering to tastes developed in pleasure gardens, parks, cafes and taverns. The 'haute bourgeoisie' tended



instead to go mainly to the most popular and prestigious of the promenade concerts, such as those conducted by Philippe Musard in Paris, Johann Strauss I and II in Vienna and Louis Jullien in London. One of the conclusions of the previous analysis was that the polka owed its popularity in a great part to the public concerts and balls organized by Jullien and Strauss. These venues were visited by many members of all kinds of middle classes. The polka was not so popular at Musard's concerts. In Paris, the main venues for this form of dancing were salons and theatres where the polka was popularized by the dancing masters and Parisian courtesans.

The result of the previous study on audiences and participants in balls and promenade concerts in Paris, London and Vienna showed that even if the polka was a dance for all, it was, in fact, mainly the bourgeoisie that enjoyed its pleasures in all three cities. Certainly, there were some differences in the frequency and intensity of participation in the public concerts and balls in the three capitals. In Paris and London, the polka fashion began among the elites at their private balls and to a certain extent among the students and young people. Later, however, it diffused among a range of members of the Parisian and London bourgeoisie and remained fashionable among them for years. Thus, the same dances performed at the private balls were also practiced in the pubs with the ballet master operating as a teacher and role model. The bourgeoisie was dominant in Paris at the mid-century, dictating tastes and fashions, which very often were copied by foreigners. This occurred when the British adopted the polka from France. The polka in Paris became a very popular dance form among the bourgeoisie and it was danced and performed all over Paris. As a matter of fact, it seems that this class was so strongly influential and dominant in the French capital that the polka fashion was developed mainly thanks to this social strata. Without doubt, it was also danced by the upper and working classes, however, their attendance at polka performances and dancing was not as obvious and visible as the participation of the middle class.

In contrast with Paris, it seems that even if the polka gained a great popularity among the middle classes of London, it was actually equally popular among the upper classes. Among three cities researched in this work, London seems to be the one where the polka was enjoyed by all kinds of classes with more or less the same intensity. Middle and upper class members danced it because of its exotic and new sound, working class people danced it to for distraction from the dullness of everyday life. According to Kassing, in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, more and more people in Europe were employed in factories, as the industrial age expanded. Seeking escape from their dull lives, people began to attend ballets

and other forms of theatre.<sup>562</sup> They wanted to be entertained, swept away to faraway lands or fantastic places.

As for Vienna, here the polka was also the entertainment for everybody, especially for middle and upper classes who could afford to go to listen to promenade concerts organized by the Strauss family and balls taking places in famous dance halls all over Vienna. Moreover, this general participation in Viennese events was a consequence of the traditional attitude of the Austrians to music and dancing. Vienna was the city of balls and entertainment and thus, dancing was after all the entertainment of the aristocracy and then also of the middle and to a certain degree the working classes. It is, however, much more difficult to trace the participation of working class people in events with polka dancing and this is probably caused by the international character of Vienna's population at that time. Wiesmann points out that "*Vienna's musical culture grew less tied to its aristocracy and more dependent on a 'rapidly growing class of officials' who favoured the so called 'art music' "*. Nevertheless, music was consumed also by other social groups here, but the domination of aristocratic and bureaucratic members of the taste-defining stratum played a significant role in ensuring Vienna's status as a "*leading musical city in Europe*".<sup>563</sup>

These considerations, however, do not mean that the polka was danced by all social classes on the same scale and in the same way. As for information on the polka performances in different European capitals, I did not encounter many documents that could testify to the regular presence of members of the working class in public polka dancing. Hence, although they were permitted to attend the public events, they were often precluded from doing so by the cost or fatigue caused by long hours of work. Thus, it is highly probable that, with some exceptions, this social strata danced mainly at private events such as weddings, local parties and festivals, and in some suburban theatres and ballrooms but did not attend the public balls on a large scale. In this way, dance as a reflection of the social hierarchy continued throughout the nineteenth century. The commercialization of dancing, which developed more or less simultaneously with that of concerts, did little to break down barriers. Practically, people entered the assembly rooms and dance halls that were destined for their specific social level.

To conclude, without a doubt, the dramatic increase in the market for music in the course of the nineteenth century led to a growth in the places and spaces for its performances. The birth of public concerts made it possible for the wider public to participate in concerts

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<sup>562</sup> Kassing (2007).

<sup>563</sup> Wiesmann S. (1990): *Vienna: Bastion of Conservatism*, in A. Ringer (ed.), *The Early Romantic Era*. London and Basingstoke: 85.

and dancing. The time of the polka popularity in Europe was a period when dancing and entertaining was no longer the privilege of only the aristocracy. All social classes had the right to enjoy the popular dances. Analysis of the audiences of promenade concerts, balls and other forms of entertainments and thorough study of the dance halls, theatres and salons in all three capitals leads to the conclusion that even if dancing and concert going belonged to all classes, at the mid-century it was the main dominion of the middle classes. This was due to the rapid growth of the importance and role of this social class, which dictated tastes and fashions in all three cities. Yet the great mass of the population continued to be excluded. Working-class men and women were very much occasional interlopers in an essentially bourgeois space. There existed a sort of a natural selection of the public for certain social events dictated by economic and social conditions and thus, even if the polka was danced by all social classes in Paris, London and Vienna, it is clear that its main audience and performers were drawn from the bourgeoisie.

Only later, did the rapid progress of industrialization during the boom years of the 1840s, 1850s and 1860s increase both the overall size of the working class and the disposable income of many of its members. The music hall was created specifically for this new group of consumers. Although singing in pubs was as old as time, toward the middle of the nineteenth century, music-making in these establishments became both more ubiquitous and more ambitious. In the course of the next decade, these informal but often semi-professional venues developed into the full-blown music halls that would dominate popular urban entertainment for the next generation or so. Nevertheless, it happened when the popularity of the polka started to fade away.

## 4.2. Polka as a body language

*“And now and then, as they skip and jump, The giddy couples together bump, With a crash and a smash and a terrible thump, That ends at times in a spilling.”<sup>564</sup>*

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Nowadays, dance studies not only research the history of a dance but constitute an important part of studies on gender and gender identities. In comparison with the other performance and art forms such as theatre spectacles, dance has been in many societies one of the few sites where women’s public performance was approved of. Nevertheless, while there have been many studies on dance and history of the dance forms, surprisingly only a few of them have spoken to the larger debates considering gender and sexuality.

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<sup>564</sup> Hood, Tom (1868): *The Physiology of the Dance. A set arranged in eight figures.* London: London Society.

In the previous chapters it was shown that the display of women's sexuality was a very important part of the popularization of the polka, especially in Paris and London. The display of the human body was very much part of the consumer culture and it was viewed as a vehicle of pleasure. Indeed, in the nineteenth century there was a fundamental shift with regard to ideas connected with sexuality in Europe. In this period prostitution was researched from a variety of social, legal and medical points of view, concepts of perversion were explained and theorized within medical discourses, birth control became on the one hand an issue of political importance and on the other hand a social problem. At the same time general moral attitudes towards sexuality were in great flux and this was reflected in new understandings of the self in relation to gender, society, religion, as well as individual psychology.

Even, if in dance the female body becomes the symbol of beauty and power, female sexuality was always a site of confusion and oppression. Women's bodies were always displayed as objects of male desire. Women were subjected to systematic mistreatment and social injustice because of their gender. Hence, at the mid-century two aspects of the polka in relation to women seem to become evident. Firstly, because of the popularity of dance within the middle classes and the opportunities it allowed for the female body to escape the constraints of modesty, dancing caused an anxiety related to sexual display. In particular, the legs of the dancers were the focus of the fetishizing gaze of the male spectator. As a matter of fact, the gendering of stage spectacle in the nineteenth century has long privileged the male choreographer and male spectator as the possessors of the gaze, while the female occupies the position of the object of that gaze.<sup>565</sup> Above the stocking the leg was bare, under the skirts, underskirts, and petticoats, the woman's body – her sex – was exposed. The salient fact is that until the twentieth century it was only the legs of dancers or entertainers that were publicly on display. Secondly, the fast pace of the dances augmented physiological concerns about the negative effect of movement on women's reproductive organs, leading to many discussions concerning women's health.

In this chapter I deal with the problem of the vulgarization and immoral consequences of the polka dancing and its negative effect on women and women's health. I do it through a comparison of the results of the polka research conducted in three cities - Paris, Vienna and London -, and through the use of contemporary press comments, lithographs and illustrations published in *Punch* and *Charivari* in the 1840s. Furthermore, to contextualize my comparative approach, I use the secondary literature dealing with sexuality, gender issues and health in

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<sup>565</sup> „*The Female Dancer and the Male Gaze*”: *Feminist Critiques of Early Modern Dance*, In: *Meaning in Motion*, ed. Jane Desmond. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1977. 153-66.

the nineteenth century. To start with, this chapter offers a short introduction to the situation of women at the mid-century and to the discourses of sexuality and the family.

#### 4.2.1. Performing a forbidden pleasure

I would like to open this chapter with three quotations, already presented in the previous sections. Each was published in the contemporary press in one of the cities that are the main case studies of this research and each describes execution of the polka.

*“Some time ago the fashion brought amongst us a new **pleasure**. The most elegant and charmant women fell in **love** with this new and bizzare dance- the polka...she leaps her hips and arms in a malicious way, she turns and falls again on her feet, then on the other one; she **gazes** at the partner and shakes her arms in a nonchalant way, finally she provokes her cavalier with **voluptuous movements** and glances directed at him. La Polka is a dangerous dance for young women....”<sup>566</sup>*

*“its chief symptoms were extraordinary convulsions and wild gesticulations of the limbs, with frequent stampings on the floor, and rotary movements of the body, such as accompany lesions of the cerebellum.”<sup>567</sup>*

*Instead of dancing graciously and slowly, people **jump, turn** around and glance at other dancer’s partners. In comparison to a Vienna music-hall Oxford and Canterbury are temples of art and morality; and yet well-to-do Austrians take their wives and daughters- young modest girls-to such places, where the whole jest of a song lurks in its imperfectly veiled indecent.<sup>568</sup>*

It can be noted that a common characteristic of these comments is their relation to women, especially young ladies, for whom the polka was considered to be very dangerous. In fact, it was the cause of some immoral behaviours such as: voluptuous movements, gazes, convulsions, wild gesticulations, rotary movements of the body, jumping, turning and all in all it was a source of pleasure. Clearly, these comments contain contemporary concerns about the so-called “women question”. As a matter of fact, this topic embraced an array of issues

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<sup>566</sup> „La mode a colporté depuis quelque temps parmi nous de singullers plaisirs. Les femmes les plus charmantes se sont éprises subitement d’une danse bizarre, la Polka. Russe ou bohême, polonaise ou hongroise, cette nouvelle reine a des allures bien burlesques, bien hardles! Voyez, s’il vous palit, avec quel laisser-aller elle sautille en secouant malicieusement ses hanches et ses bras; elle tourne, retombe sur un pied, puis sur l’autre; elle lance un oeil de fen, agite ses bras nonchalamment, et provoque, par de voluptueux élancemens, les regards de son cavalier. La Polka est une danse dangereuse pour le jeunes femmes...” In: La France musicale, 1844: 84

<sup>567</sup> Punch, 1845: 86.

<sup>568</sup> „Statt die Tänze langsam und graziös zu schleifen, springt man hier rasend herum, und da alles dabei untereinander tanzt, so schleudert alle Augenblicke der Tänzer seine Dame gegen ein anderes Paar, dass die Köpfe krachen, und das nennt man Vergnügen!” In: Wiener Theaterzeitung, 1858: Nr. 22/ 28.1.

concerning not only political capacity and social location but also the physiological nature and moral character of women in European societies. The issue of women's place in politics and society arose most acutely in the times between the French Revolution, the Napoleonic Wars, and the revolutions of 1848-9 and continued intensely towards the century's end. This „women question” was almost practically a „gender question”. To be more precise it fundamentally regarded the relational character of both sexes. It was deliberated and discussed in relation to different aspects of daily life. Women argued against the limitations enforced on them in such basic areas as marriage and family, education and property rights and civic rights within cities, communities, nations and republics, they claimed also new rights and duties.

The far-reaching transformations confronting Europeans in this age such as the mixing of burghers and workers in new social classes; the physical changes affecting the countryside and cityscapes; the expansion of empires and founding of nations-states; the development of new cultures and sciences; the principles of nationalism, feminism, socialism and liberalism. These developments transformed cultural and social networks including hierarchies of gender. Relations between women and men and family and state, influenced by the constant and rapid pace of these transformations were in continuous need of the kind of reshaping and remodeling that constituted modernity. Step by step, in the 1830s the “woman question” that emerged during the French Revolution became a constant characteristic of public life in nineteenth-century Europe and it was no longer possible to stop it through revolutions, reform initiatives or even wars. The revolutions of 1848-49 were the culmination of conflicts that took place throughout the 1840s. Moreover, women not only participated in these revolutions, but also the extent of the “woman question” both expanded and became more differentiated, with constitutional, national and social implications. One of the outcomes of the 1848 revolution in France was the elaboration and delineation of citizenship rights and duties, affecting both the propertied and labouring classes.

I am not going to enter deeply into the detail of women’s history in Europe, their liberation movements and the entire process of emancipation. My aim is rather to look - through the polka - at the situation of women in the public sphere, the relation between men and women, and at the transformation of women's position in all three cities at the mid-century.

#### ***The role of the family and women at the mid-century***

The family was considered the basic unit of nineteenth-century European society and was promoted as a moral unit with particular roles: the husband and father provided financial

security, the mother provided domestic comfort, and obedience was expected from the children. With regards to England, the Victorian family became a sort of noble social institution and its continuance guaranteed the fineness and the stability of British civilisation. In addition, limiting a wife and a daughter to a totally domestic area was evidence of the family's wealth and good social position. This emphasis on women as domestic beings was the idea of the new bourgeoisie that was made between 1780 and 1830. Furthermore, in Victorian times women were considered intellectually inferior to men and hence the purpose of their education was mainly to train them for duties connected with marriage and the home. The ordinary curriculum for girls, therefore, consisted mainly of the cultivation „accomplishments” such as drawing and painting, needlework, singing, dancing, and instrumental music. There were a number of private schools for girls, and some daughters of the well-to-do were under the care of governesses.

The Industrial Revolution transferred a great number of productive activities exercised at home to factories and thus, relieved women of many household burdens. It compelled the women of the newly-formed proletariat to accept work in factories and in this way to neglect their homes and children. On the other hand, with the development of the factories, wives were obliged both to raise children and to manage the servants and the home. At the same time, this state of affairs meant that middle class women were excluded from the economic process and made their lives idle and futile. As a consequence, the social problem of the working-class woman was essentially different from that of the middle-class and upper-class woman: those of the working class required protection, while those of the bourgeoisie expected equality with their male peers.

With regards to middle-class women, their social function was to be „*a living testimony to their husband's social status*”.<sup>569</sup> Consequently Victorian girls' characteristics were innocence, inexperience, purity, sense of status and a cultivated fragility and delicacy that served to attract a husband, the only object in life.<sup>570</sup> The bourgeois ideal of the family became a dominant element of the Victorian culture and, by the 1830s and 1840s, was being promoted through propaganda as the only proper way of living.<sup>571</sup> Women were often featured as the moral and spiritual force of the family. This notion was intensified by the cult

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<sup>569</sup> Press, Sylvan (2013): *Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians: an historic revaluation of the Victorian Age*. London: LLC. 264.

<sup>570</sup> Grylls, Glynn R. (1949): *Emancipation of Women*. In: *Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians: an historic revaluation of the Victorian Age*. London: Sylvan Press. 254-267.

<sup>571</sup> Sally, Alexander: *Women's Work in Nineteenth-Century London*. In: Mitchell and Oakley (eds): *The Rights and Wrongs of Women*.



of the Virgin Mary, promoted by the Roman Catholic Church. As a result women took an important role in running laying-in societies, organizing charity and arranging creches. In this way they found a public role outside the home.

By contrast, in many ways, aristocratic women in London were in a position of extraordinary political privilege at the beginning of the nineteenth century, in relation both to other women and to most men. Their traditional roles in the organization of aristocratic society were probably at a peak in this period. At the same time, aristocratic political power was at its zenith. The combination of women's enhanced importance in the aristocratic family and the aristocracy's enhanced powers of political control over society at large gave noble women a wide array of potential political functions. Less publicly, women on terms of intimacy with powerful men could also exercise – in the salon, the dining room, or the bedroom - considerable influence over public life.

With regards to France, throughout most of the nineteenth century middle- and upper-class women lacked entry to the occupations, legal rights, and the freedom to participate independently in public life. They were formally and practically under the protection of men. This old patriarchal system regulating sexual roles and rights was accepted by women and men for centuries. This system survived the French Revolution; however its form in the nineteenth century had changed. The revolution allowed women to “violate” public spaces. Nevertheless the Napoleonic Code decided their return to the private realms of domesticity, maternity and marriage. This Code accepted on the one hand the equal rights of all French citizens but excluded women from the definition of citizenship on the other hand. Women's position in society had been lowered to the status of a legal caste. In short, the main idea of the Civil Code with regards to men and women was that a husband was obliged to govern his wife and she owed him obedience.<sup>572</sup> Traditionally, a married French woman was expected to spend the major portion of her adult life bearing or nursing children.

All in all, the Napoleonic code and the rebirth of national feeling almost all over European continent actually encouraged a new gender order for the nineteenth century. In fact, the restoration that started after Napoleon's defeat aimed at the cancellation of all evidence connected to revolution from the European landscape. It restricted civil liberties and reinforced the authority of monarchy, aristocracy and church. Thus, it meant a strengthening of family structures and restricting of public political domains to men while assigning women to the spheres of domesticity and motherhood. This was particularly pertinent to Paris and

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<sup>572</sup> Moses Goldberg, Claire (1984): *French Feminism in the 19th Century*. New York: State University of New York Press: 17-39.

Vienna. It applied less to London where industrialization dictated the work of women.

In the middle of the eighteenth century, in most European countries, fertility rates were high. Births outnumbered deaths and the population increased rapidly. In France, however, the situation was unique. There, the decrease in fertility rates started at the end of the eighteenth-century and resulted in two-child households by the mid-nineteenth-century. This drop was not accidental. Already by the end of the seventeenth century, some women were openly manifesting their will to limit the number of children they bore and they demonstrated awareness that this was indeed possible.<sup>573</sup> The Industrial Revolution changed dramatically the lives of poor women too. During the nineteenth century, a significant number of French working women kept on labouring in the agricultural sector of the economy, being also increasingly able to supplement their families' incomes by taking on piecework. The domestic manufacturing sector was the second largest employer of nineteenth-century French women. However, because of low salaries and overwork, the crisis of nineteenth-century working-class poverty was particularly acute for young and single women. Thus, a common solution to overcome the financial difficulties of life was prostitution. In fact, in Paris, there were many young and beautiful working class single girls, the so called lorettes or grisettes who were nothing other than courtesans. I presented some of them with regards to the polka in the previous chapters. It was also clear from the investigation that they played a great importance in the fashioning of the polka in Paris.

With regards to bourgeois women, in France they generally had more power than in any other country. Furthermore, the economic circumstances of their lives were never so miserable as those of working-class women, and they were largely protected from sexual abuse. In the middle classes, the wife had the entire management of domestic arrangements such as ordering, superintending, and administering all the home expenses. French women learned arithmetic, and the true value of money: it was a portion of their education.

As for Vienna, the situation of women was more complex and this was mainly due to the fact that this city was a part of the Habsburg Empire which was a particularly heterogeneous state and embraced different structures characterized by tremendous ethnic diversity. Members of dominant groups tended to merge their „national” culture with the politics of the host country. Thus, sexual classifications, in particular those of national women were tightly connected with national origins and related mostly to linguistic, cultural, or racial understanding of nationality. As a consequence, domestic sexuality and female beauty was

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<sup>573</sup> Moses (1984): 21.

understood and perceived as „a symbol of collective national worth and a source of collective national pride.“<sup>574</sup> It was not part of the amorphous population of the entire Habsburg Empire but belonged to one or another „nation” that inhabited the country. Instead, a general image of bourgeois women of this period was based on the passive „virtues” of domesticity, self-effacement, and especially, female sexlessness.

Although historians have studied women in the Biedermeier time, the position of peasant and urban women during this period as well as their role during the upheaval of 1848 require further investigation. The tracing of women’s history in the Biedermeier period is difficult, because the fight for women’s rights in Vienna, women’s sexuality and women’s situation has to be analyzed from different, national, points of view. It cannot be forgotten that women’s situation in Vienna was tightly connected with the variety of nations that populated the Austrian capital, and thus national movements and revolutions aiming at liberty were the focus of the mid-century Austrian politics. Women question was one of many aspects of these movements. However, at the mid-century it is still difficult to observe strong national women’s movements in Vienna.

The “woman question” that appeared during the upheavals in German-speaking countries, was focused to a large extent on prerequisites rather than actual participatory practices of citizenship. Here, the difference with the women’s liberation movements in Paris and London was that middle-class women on the one hand promoted a notion of women as “responsible” and self-determining citizens with the right to higher education and professional training, but on the other hand they encased the notion of women's citizenship in the idea of “true womanhood” limiting women's nature and social needs to those of mothers and wives. Furthermore, they demanded women's rights and more meaningful participation in society and politics, but on the other side rejected notions of women's sexual emancipation.<sup>575</sup>

### ***Emancipation through the dance***

The emancipation of women was another facet of progress on the European scene. It was the effect of the particular climate of changes at the time and it had all the features of its age: the desire for social reform, moral enthusiasm, the faith in progress, optimism, religious doubts and the self-confident conviction that all that was needed was the removal of restrictions. The

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<sup>574</sup> Maxwell, Alexander (2005): *Nationalizing Sexuality: Sexual Stereotypes in the Habsburg Empire*. In: *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (Jul. 2005): 266-290.

<sup>575</sup> Canning, Kathleen (2006): *The „Woman question”* In: *A Companion to Nineteenth-Century Europe 1789-1914* ed. Stefan Berger. UK: Blackwell Publishing: 193-208.

women who attempted to improve their lot and reform their position were not exploited class in the sense that they suffered material hardships. In fact, the place where, for example, the Feminist Movement was born in England was the Victorian middle-class drawing-room and not the mine, or the factory. The comfortable drawing-room was a room in a house where the visitors could be entertained. Here, one played the piano, another painted and in the corner the eldest daughters received the attention of their suitors. It was the one point of stability in the rapidly expanding and changing world and to preserve this sanctuary men took great care to exclude from it all the harsh realities of life. However, this rosy picture was shattered in the course of the years and was connected to the changes related to the Industrial Revolution and growing consciousness.

The women's movement did not emerge as an organized or even mass movement. Many women acted individually or together with other women. It was possible to cross the border between private and public because of its fluidity, and even those who strove to define the boundary rigidly were not agreed about precisely where it should be set. The classical women's movement of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was a movement by women and for women. They desired general change in gender relations and this was to be obtained by improving women's condition from political, economic, cultural and social perspectives. Their main scope was not to change gender roles or make them equal but they required liberation from subordination depending on their sex. The women's movement stressed not individualism but rather individuality as self-development, the search for their own subjectivity and independence or autonomy. Women wished to develop their own strengths and eliminate the barriers erected by tradition and law. Not only the great French Revolution but also the 1848 revolutions in France, Austria and many German states ended with a ban on women's participation in political associations.

I am not going to go deeply into details of women emancipation movements, because this is not the topic of this work. It is, however, important to notice the relationship between the popularity of the polka and other social dance forms and the idea of the classical women's movement that opposed the notion that women were merely "sexual beings"; both sexes were seen as human. It did not sweepingly deny sexual difference but rejected their specific assignments made on that basis, the gender hierarchy and thus the core of misogynistic discourse: female inferiority and male superiority. Women of this movement demanded dignity and freedom for them.

Dance was the ultimate mid-century entertainment and women used it to express their desire for liberty, equality and freedom. Nineteenth-century dance was concerned with bodily

experience, women's bodies, and the subjectivity shaped through them. Therefore, those dancers and women who have understood that rejecting restrictions and finding self-determined expression can have its own potential, proved that through the human body one can assert power.<sup>576</sup> The American dancing master, Charles Durang, wrote in his 1856 work that dancing

*"gives to the influence of woman to wean the male sex from those very gross habits of drinking, smoking, gambling, chewing and revelling, to which it is prone when left undirected; while it develops the inherent power of the female sex, when clothed with the polite accomplishments, to correct and reform from these revolting practices, restoring man to his original dignity and usefulness; which he repays by his chivalry, protection, attentions and agreeable society."*<sup>577</sup>

Therefore, the emotional opposition against women's liberation was gigantic. Men were concerned about their delicacy, purity, refinement and elevation of their whole nature. Hence, with the new crazes of the nineteenth century for round dances, came also treatises condemning dance and ball-going. They condemned the balls, that excited undesirable feelings and claimed that the social interactions of the dance might lead to idleness. Others were against social dancing because it was inconsistent with profession of Christianity and finally there were those who considered anybody who danced in a modern way as fallen, depraved and wicked. Further, people participating in round dances were compared to animals: *"massing together of a jostling crowd of mute or merely gibbering animal"*.<sup>578</sup> Finally, dancing was denounced as dangerous for the health and was described as a waste of time and money. In fact, the nineteenth century dances with constant turning and squeezing fueled discussions among doctors about the influence of dizziness on female minds and their reproductive bodies. They were highly concerned that tight embraces, sweating bodies, and closed rooms with bad air ventilation could have a very negative effect on female bodies. The dance was not only problematic in the new field of gynecology, but it also contested the broader gender ideologies that cast women as the gentler, softer sex, hence more fit to maintain the domestic harmony and morality of the home. Interestingly, such conflicting signs did not diminish the centrality of the ballroom during the social season, to protect the minds and bodies of daughters and soon-to-be wives; they instead justified the creation of more rules, more religious training, and more visits from the family doctor in the effort to protect

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<sup>576</sup> Adair, Christy (1992): *Women and Dance. Sylphs and Sirens*. New York: New York University Press. 40-41.

<sup>577</sup> Durang, Charles (1856): *The Fashionable Dancer's Casket*. Fisher & Brother, Philadelphia.

<sup>578</sup> Wilkinson, William (1869): *The Dance of Modern Society*. Oakley. Mason & co., New York.

the sanctity of the viable social location.<sup>579</sup> Although its plots often continued to preach of the dangers of evil, its popularity was largely due to its legitimation of low culture and its connection to the eroticized subculture of dancers.

The ball was a place where erotics circulated. It was especially valid for Paris and London. Not only young women awakening sexually to experienced men who by the nature of the dance had license to touch and hold them while others watched, but also the stage on which they were expected to perform, innocence was being constructed discursively as perilous and sinful. Therefore, dance lessons were a primary component of girl's education. From the age of thirteen to fifteen, most adolescent Christian girls underwent a form of religious training that culminated in confirmation at age sixteen, the point at which they stopped their studies and concentrated instead on social deportment. The season offered young women a space in which to exercise their bodies and their minds in a relatively unfettered space between the schoolroom and the altar. However, this freedom was tempered by parents who filtered terror, dread, and shame into the affective registers capable of producing pleasure.

At this point, I would like to refer once again to the quotations mentioned at the beginning of this section. It is clear that the polka was considered vulgar and dangerous for women's morals. Not surprisingly, however, it were mainly men who held this opinion. It was men who wrote the articles that criticized this new fashion, who drew funny and highly erotic caricatures or published novels and literary and theatrical pieces where they criticized the polka. The results of the analysis carried out in the previous chapters showed that Paris was the city where the erotic and immoral dimension of the polka could be observed in its all ostentatiousness. It is not without reason that the polka here was named „*une danse aphrodisiaque*.” It was danced all over Paris and provided many possibilities for married men to frequent the balls where lorettes, grisettes and courtisans were the hostesses of the events. In fact, these ladies played a great role in eroticizing and popularizing the polka in Paris. They were usually working class, young and beautiful girls who tried to earn their living by dancing and coquetting men visiting the places where they danced. Even, the typical dancer at the Paris Opera of the 1840s was a lower-class woman dancing for an upper-class, largely male audience, and angling for a wealthy patron.<sup>580</sup>

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<sup>579</sup> Engelhardt, Molly (2009): *Dancing out of line. Ballrooms, Ballets, and Mobility in Victorian Fiction and Culture*. Ohio: University Press. 51-51.

<sup>580</sup> McCarren, Felicia (1998): *Dance Pathologies. Performance, Poetics, Medicine*. California: Stanford University Press: 71.

If the dance in earlier times could be associated with love, in the 1830s and 1840s it came to be viewed as a vehicle for sexuality rather than love; hence its appeal to men who wished to attract their sexual opposites or to watch and fetishise the female dancers. For women especially, the ball constituted a temporary public space in which to express themselves with their bodies. Presenting their desires, realising dreams, exemplifying femininity and contesting restrictive social rules, women utilised the signifying practice of dance subversively to graph in space their silenced subjectivity even as social constraints determined how the dancers gave their bodies to the dancing.<sup>581</sup>

In London the situation was a bit different and this city could be seen as a transition point between Paris and Vienna. On the one hand the people of London were excited about everything that was new from Paris. The English were amazed at the Parisian mania for fashion and it is not a surprise that they copied Paris fashions for centuries. Foreign imitations of fashions originating in Paris were not always accurate, but they were sufficiently similar to trace the line of origin. On the other hand, it was still a city with a very rigid social structure and women's situation there was quite difficult. It has become commonplace to attribute to the Victorian age or to civil society a specific, circuitous and unambiguous image of gender relations: a strict separation of man's and woman's spheres, a sharp dividing line between the male public sphere and the female private sphere. Nineteenth-century women were not merely victims of social change. Irrespective of the fact that women were forced to earn low wages and perform unpaid housework, the real problem was not the lack of work but poverty and dependence. The idealized image of woman, regardless of class, did not correspond to social reality. Therefore, also in London, we encounter the problem of prostitution among working class women that constituted for them the only possibility to earn their living.

For all these reasons, in London the erotic character of the polka faced much more criticism than in Paris and Vienna. The eroticism of the polka there was not as openly exhibited as in Paris. Nevertheless the immoral character of this new dance was still highly criticized. Men were concerned about the young girls and married women who could be tempted by the polka. As a matter of fact, it was considered that the dancer should not be an ordinary woman, wife, or mother, but an independent abstraction of woman: „ *the performing artist; as an artist, has no family.*”<sup>582</sup> Without doubt, women's consciousness and will for liberation and change was much stronger in Paris. Women in the French capital had more power and more freedom, hence suspect amusements such as dancing, squeezing, showing

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<sup>581</sup> Cordova (1999): 246.

<sup>582</sup> Janin, Jules: *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*, August 24, 1832: 3.



legs and other parts of the body were more easily accepted here than for example in London.

As for Vienna, the political and social situation was extremely different. Vienna between 1815 and 1848 was a harsh police state for the Viennese. Metternich's aim was to isolate Austria completely in order to prevent the intrusion of any supposedly subversive ideas from abroad. All intellectual activity was officially discouraged.<sup>583</sup> Creative minds were considered dangerous. Strict censorship was established. The individual citizens were officially encouraged to indulge in their favourite pastime, in order to escape from reality and their exclusion from any participation in public affairs. In fact, many Viennese did live daily life without facing important issues. Instead they often fled into the sphere of their imagination, their dreams, and their music. These behaviours were nicely summarized by Hans Sassman:

*„As an artist enjoys his work, the Austrian enjoys life; in haunting fear that it might escape him, since he knows it to be merely a dream, a fancy; yet, he also enjoys it in exquisite wastefulness, since he knows that it is a merely play.”<sup>584</sup>*

The Emperor Joseph II once said: *„When Vienna is gay, the situation is truly grave.”<sup>585</sup>* As a matter of fact, it seems that Viennese had a great capacity to escape from reality and take things easy. The problematic character of Viennese life such as for example war, revolution, starvation, inflation, the downfall of the Habsburg monarchy, were only bearable if one tried to forget it either by dreaming or escaping into music and dancing. The only composers the Viennese celebrated while they were alive were Johann Strauss Father and Son. But these, as we shall see, were also the chief architects of the myth of gay Vienna, providing the daily bread of escape from reality. Vienna, home of the dance, was and will remain the poignant symbol of grace and song. The music of Johann Strauss was synonymous with the sound of Vienna. In this period Vienna laughed and sang and it lasted until 1848, when the revolution broke out. Behind the curtain of gaiety and happiness, there were the economic plight of the working class and shocking housing conditions.

Summarizing, a veritable dance mania had seized the Viennese. The Viennese danced immediately after Napoleon's conquest of Vienna in 1805 and 1811, through the Congress of Vienna and during the Pre-March period. This dance craze mounted. However, it was approved and highly natural.<sup>586</sup> The state encouraged people to dance and not concern

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<sup>583</sup> Taylor, A. J. P. (1941): *The Habsburg Monarchy*. London: 31.

<sup>584</sup> Sassmann, Hans (1932): *Das Reich der Trumer; Eine Kulturgeschichte sterreichs vom Urzustand bis zur Republik*. Berlin: 241.

<sup>585</sup> Quoted by Comte de Saint-Aulaire, In: *Francois Joseph* (Paris 1945): 431.

<sup>586</sup> Schnitzler, Henry (1954): *Gay Vienna – Myth and Reality*. In: *Journal of the History of Ideas*,

themselves with the political and social problems of the time. The Viennese escaped into a whirl of pleasure. As an example, the highest expression of the lack of seriousness of the Viennese was the defeat of Austria in battle of Königgrätz in 1866. On the day after the catastrophe had become known in the capital, thousands enjoyed a Venetian masquerade at the Prater.<sup>587</sup>

#### 4.2.2. Sex in the ballroom

The mania for dancing emerged at the beginning of the century and throughout the whole century there was a demand for illustrations showing the precise steps and correct hold of a partner when performing these new dances. In fact, the French and British press was full of images and caricatures presenting the polka, polkomania and polka dancers in various daily situations. It is therefore vital to understand images related to the polka in the nineteenth century. Firstly the quantity is significant and it is clear that they said something about the polka. Moreover, through the polka, they delineated the social and political power to which individuals and marginalised groups had access at the mid-century. One of the characteristics that was noted in the previous chapters was a large number of caricatures full of sexual and erotic meanings published at the mid-century in Paris and London. Hence, this section deals with the caricatures as a means to express and speak about the political and social reality of the mid-nineteenth-century Europe and to reveal the relationship between women's sexuality, dance and nineteenth-century European societies.

To historians, cartoons represent a priceless primary source of information about the passing generations. They offer insights into the 'unofficial' attitudes and reactions of ordinary folk. Thus, in a certain way they refer to 'the truest history' of the times. A caricature in a satirical journal is part of a system of communication. It may be related to the text in the same journal, or to articles in conventional newspapers. In the best of the caricatures, there are important meanings that transcend the anecdotal or the historical particulars that inspire them. The illustrated journals in which they appear are a product of collaboration between artist, printer, journalist, editor, and publisher. The cartoonist is concerned with the creation and manipulation of public opinion. Nevertheless his actual effect, even though often undoubtedly great, has sometimes been exaggerated. The birth and rise of caricature, taking into consideration the technological conditions for reprinting and distribution, could be associated with conditions of national and international conflict. With regards to its content,

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Vol. 15, No.1 (Jan., 1954). University of Pennsylvania Press: 94-118.

<sup>587</sup> Schnitzler (1954): 113.

the cartoon in the sense of a drawing aimed at publication and commenting on social, political, or religious situation. A meaningful distinction can be drawn between cartoons that deal with the internal domestic policies and those which reflect the international situation. The cartoonist reduces the tension of solemn political debate by introducing a joke and thus enables the debate to continue in a more natural and civilized way. However, on the international front, cartoonist's contribution is not always as much helpful.

The term 'cartoon' was primarily used in artistic circles and only later was introduced to the wide public in a new sense, that of satirical illustration. In a short time, it was applied to any comical, satirical or ironic graphic comment meant as a parody or burlesque of some features of human behaviour. Substantially, the cartoon is an aggressive medium, a sort of an offensive weapon whose impact can be really devastating. The defamatory personal caricature is the least subtle and potentially most damaging form of cartoon; its basic techniques, its undertow of cruelty and derision, are the very taproots of all comic art. The portrait caricature is, in effect, an unmasking process: the victim becomes a marionette, completely at the mercy of the cartoonist. Thus, through caricature, the hidden reality is exposed. They are stereotypes or negative definitions and their scope is to dramatize aggressive tendencies by defining the targets. They interpret events, figures and nations and help to supplement the news presentation with statements of „meaning”.<sup>588</sup>

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the centre of cartoon was England. As a matter of fact, it developed and became very popular in the Victorian age when there was a heyday of both public and private social dancing. Indeed, there was a continual demand for fashion illustrations because between 1830 to 1870 the fashion journals proliferated rapidly. The literary testimony of the novels of the period, the extraordinary wealth of drawings to be seen in *Punch*, notably those by John Leech and later by George du Maurier, and the earlier caricature drawings of George Cruikshank, suggest how essential a part of life dancing was, not only with the aristocracy but also with the newly-rich middle classes as well.

Around the 1830s the centre of cartoon moved to France when the journalist and cartoonist, Charles Philipon founded a weekly magazine, *la Caricature*, which carried illustrations by some of the most distinguished graphic satirists of the day. Meanwhile, he brought out a second daily satirical journal named *Le Charivari* in 1832 and from 1849 the third one *Le Journal pour Rire* (*Le Journal Amusant*). In *Le Charivari*, series of lithographs and satirical articles by different groups of artists and writers focused on particular social,

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<sup>588</sup> Streicher, Lawrence H.: *On a Theory of Political Caricature*. In: *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (July, 1967): 427-445. UK: Cambridge University Press.

political or historical themes. It continued to be published, virtually without suspension, until 1893. It was remarkable for being one of the most effective agents of political and social criticism of its time and for its resilience as an organ that survived in a century of highly regulated censorship.<sup>589</sup> The most eminent, and one of the most regular, of Philipon's contributors was his lifelong friend, Honoré Daumier, who was attracted by the caricature after several false starts, as a booksellers' assistant and law-court messenger. Daumier produced a total of nearly 4000 lithographs, and his prodigious talent was acclaimed by the novelist, Balzac, who saw him not as a mere entertainer, but as a satirist equal in stature to Molière or Cervantes.

Another very prominent caricaturist was Paul Gavarni, a lithographer and painter, who, like Daumier, was a friend of Balzac. According to Geipel, „*he had an urbane and polished wit and a technical finesse*”. His observations of French social manners are remarkable for their accuracy and attention to detail. Gavarni came to fame during the early 1830s with his illustrations depicting scenes of everyday life.<sup>590</sup> Gavarni created fashion illustrations for "*La Mode*", as well as for the *Journal des Dames et des Modes*, *Petit Courier des Dames*, *Fashionable*, *Sylphide*, *La Vogue*, and many other magazines. He was not primarily known for his fashion work, but rather for his illustrations of modern Parisian life. The grisettes, lorettes, and Opera Balls of Gavarni were and remain more famous than his fashion plates. If Daumier was, perhaps, the greatest. Nevertheless Gavarni represented a new type of artist. The multiple images they produced were not high art, nor were they examples of the crude and anonymous popular imagery that had existed for centuries. Technological innovations made "*good images cheap, and cheap images good*,"<sup>591</sup> while socioeconomic changes created a mass market for images, words and fashions.

Finally, Charles Vernier, who is mostly interesting for this work because of the great number of caricatures he devoted to the polka in Paris, was a French artist, caricaturist and lithographer and worked for Charivari. He published plenty of illustrations presenting contemporary life, grisettes, public and masqued balls, holidays, various entertainments and venues, and Parisians themselves. Through these illustrations he expressed his interest and concern with the political and social issues of the day.

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<sup>589</sup> Childs, Elizabeth C. (2004): *Daumier and Exoticism. Satirizing the French and the Foreign*. New York: Peter Lang.

<sup>590</sup> Geipel, John (1972): *The Cartoon. A short history of graphic comedy and satire*. London: David&Charles. 58-78.

<sup>591</sup> Baudelaire, Charles (1955): *Some French Caricaturists*. In: *The Mirror of Art: Critical Studies by Charles Baudelaire*, trans. Jonathan Mayne. London: Phaidon Press. 171, 173.

Back to the satirical journals, in the same year when *Caricature* was founded, a London publisher, Thomas McLean, began to issue a *Monthly Sheet of Caricatures, or the Looking Glass*. Out of these publications emerged a new magazine entitled *Punch*, which was destined to long outlive its more vulgar contemporaries. It existed for 130 years and maintained the extremely good taste of intellectual sophistication and good humor. As a matter of fact, the cartoonists of mid-nineteenth-century Europe, England and the western hemisphere, often worked for a newspaper or a journal which included trained staff. It was John Leech who quickly rose to eminence as the leading political cartoonist with the infant *Punch*.<sup>592</sup> His comics were primarily concerned with social subjects, and were quite imperfect and rough in execution. Gradually his method improved, his subjects became more explicitly political, and by 1849 he was widely reknowned and his works were enjoyed all over London.<sup>593</sup>

### ***Women's sexuality and the polka***

According to Foucault, the nineteenth century was „*an age obsessed with sexuality*“.<sup>594</sup> There was a growing anxiety in relation to sexuality across Europe. It was determined by concerns about changing demographics, with an increase in city populations, ideas of insecurity and danger associated with these developments, an increase in prostitution, the visible signals of degeneration and poverty, and an expanding of eventual sexual possibilities that city life gave rise to. The sexual worries of the nineteenth century often resulted from issues connected with public and private activities. The most significant feature of sexuality that characterized the nineteenth century was the idea that moral attitudes towards sexual issues had different forms and depended basically on gender. The general understanding of sexuality in the nineteenth century was based on ideas that men, who were naturally sexual beings were allowed occasional indiscretions. At the same time women who were naturally passive and pure had to remain loyal to their husbands. Another interesting issue connected with these different understandings and interpretations of morals was that during the nineteenth century different authors classified Europe's population into separated and homogeneous national groups according to sexual characteristics.

Thus, in the Habsburg Empire while male sexuality reflected the patriotic desire and political nationalism, female sexuality was connected with cultural or linguistic ideas of nationality. The Austrian Civil Code, formulated in 1812, was the most progressive of its time,

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<sup>592</sup> Geipel (1972): 79-114.

<sup>593</sup> Powell, Firth William (1981): *John Leech; His Life and Work*. Wisconsin: R. Bentley.

<sup>594</sup> Foucault, M. (1984): *History of sexuality*. New York.

ensuring women a great deal of economic independence which, as a matter of fact, they had enjoyed in many regions of the Austrian monarchy since the late Middle Ages. In contrast to most of the German states, in Austria men had no fundamental guardianship over women. Unmarried women were independent legal beings who could manage their possessions alone and were capable of suing and being sued. Even if, in common with the other countries, a married woman was dependent on her husband, who had the role of head of family, in Austria a wife was clearly in a better position with regard to her economic opportunities than in the other places. Unlike the French Civil Code and most of the German legal systems, the Austrian Civil Code granted married women full legal rights, separately to those of their husbands. Moreover, they retained rights to their property when they married. This protection of female property guaranteed married Austrian women a much better starting point when they wanted to become start their own business. On the other hand, the wives of small businessmen and farmers crafts, trades, and food services were actually obliged to help their husbands' businesses without being paid, as far as it was acceptable for that kind of business and compatible with the responsibilities of housekeeping and childcare.<sup>595</sup>

The same period was considered as an era of sexual repression in Victorian England. As a matter of fact, even the English word „Victorian” was deprecatory where sexual matters were taken into consideration. This view originated in the evangelical vision of family life, where the father figure was central to the family and where respectable women could not enjoy the pleasures of sex and children were commonly considered as sexless beings. The scope of sex was purely procreative and not for pleasure. The subject of sex became a sort of taboo and a conspiracy of silence was established. Moreover, the Victorian epoch was also an age of aggressive money-making industrialism, still in its infancy when Victoria became Queen, thus sex was pushed into the background:

„Marriage to a man of their own or a higher social grade was the only recognised vocation for women not compelled to earn their own livelihood. It was this society life which absorbed nearly half the time and more than half the vital energy of the daughters of the upper and upper middle class [...] *This heterogeneous society was devoted to riding, dancing, flirting, and dressing up*”<sup>596</sup>

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<sup>595</sup> Beachy, Robert / Craig, Beatrice / Alastair, Owens (2006): *Women, Business, and Finance in Nineteenth-Century Europe: Rethinking Separate Spheres*. UK: Berg.

<sup>596</sup> Beales, H. L. (1949): *Victorian Ideas of Sex*. In: *Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians: an historic revaluation of the Victorian Age*. London: Sylvan Press. 351-364.



Illustration No. 48<sup>597</sup>

This devotion to flirting, dancing and dressing up, described in Beales' book, is clearly visible in the illustration made by Leech, portraying The Hunt Ball and "Ach Mamma Polka" (illustration no. 48). Here, polite English society is busy with dancing, flirting, chatting and searching for future spouses. Also the title of the polka performed here is very suggestive and refers to the young girls who under the attentive eyes of their mothers flirt and dance with men and engage in their first social experiences.

As mentioned before, sexual morality had different meanings for the two sexes. It was held that an essential characteristic of masculinity was a high and polygamous sex drive. Moreover, men had a right and were legally authorized to be fully sexually active long before marriage and with different kinds of partners, starting from family servants and finishing with prostitutes. By contrast, unmarried women were expected to be ignorant of and indifferent to sex. This contradictory code of sexual behaviour was notably bourgeois; however, also royal and aristocratic men were often shamelessly immoral. With regards to the poor they were deprived of any respect for even formal codes of sexual morality. Considering that bourgeois

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<sup>597</sup> The Hunt Balls "Ach Mamma Polka" by John Leech.



wives were supposed to be sexually cold and indifferent, prostitution was perceived as an inevitable outcome of the appetite of men for sexual encounter and experience and sexual desire required a pool of available women to satisfy their needs.<sup>598</sup> Consequently, uncontrolled prostitution provoked an alarming growth in sexually spread diseases such as syphilis.

During the nineteenth century prostitution seems to have advanced and it was caused mainly by the sexual standard, which condoned and even encouraged men in seeking their pleasures outside of the institution of marriage. To a certain degree prostitutes had no other possibility of earning than selling sex because the range of occupations available to women was very limited and poorly paid factory work presented worse conditions. Moreover, the amount of men ready to pay for pleasures with prostitutes was huge and hence it was quite easy to find work in this profession. Ironically, the legal code put the ballerina's work, along with the courtesan's, above common prostitution, and simultaneously classified her public performance as a kind of common prostitution. Its public visibility became an act of prostitution. The nineteenth-century theatres, operas and dance halls prostituted not only its dancers but also their images.

### ***Polka in the British and French caricature***

Between 1820 and 1860 there was a genuine "media explosion" that featured a wide variety of Parisian types and catered to an enormously expanded public, ready to consume words, images and goods.<sup>599</sup> Sexuality and eroticism were common subjects of these illustrations and consumption goods. Vernier depicted it in a very clear way in his caricatures. Many of his pictures have already been presented and discussed in the previous sections. The two which I present below are very representative and reiterate to a certain extent what has been already said about relations between female sexuality and the polka. The first illustration could be described as almost vulgar. Couples jump and gaze at each other in a very naughty way. They seem to be lower middle-class and working-class men and women. In the background there is a couple on the floor, the man lays on a woman who probably fell down from the excessive polka dancing. The atmosphere is hot and full of eroticism. Interestingly, women are dressed in a very modest way, without excessive nakedness. This indicates also that all the immoral reactions and behaviours illustrated in the picture are caused principally by the polka dancing.

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<sup>598</sup> Berger, Stefan (2006): *A Companion to Nineteenth-Century Europe 1789-1914*. UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. 92.

<sup>599</sup> Steele (1988): 70.



Illustration No. 49<sup>600</sup>

<sup>600</sup> *La Polka dans un entresol de la Rue S' Denis* by Charles Vernier In: *Bibliothèque Nationale d l'Opera: Danse Ris. 27. Polka (II) Ch.*



In the second picture, the atmosphere is a bit different. The illustration shows couples from the middle and upper middle classes who enjoy polka dancing. They do it in a less exciting way than in the previous lithograph. However, erotic glances of the male partner and overall jumping can be noted. Even if the atmosphere is not as hot as in the other picture, it is quite remarkable that the overall feeling is that of flirting and coqueting.



Illustration No. 50 <sup>601</sup>

<sup>601</sup> Charles Vernier, "La Polkamanie: L'agrément des Éperons" In: Bibliothèque Nationale de l'opéra: Danse Ris. 27. Polka (II) Ch. Vernier.

With regards to London, I chose a series of very suggestive illustrations from Punch. It was a special edition called „Mister Punch’s Polkomania” and contained several illustrations related to the polka. They show an English family consisting of a woman with six children watching different Parisian couples dancing the polka in the French capital. There are eleven pictures always showing the same family together with the French Polichinelle wearing Napoleon’s hat who is showing them various couples enjoying themselves at polka dancing. The illustration could be on one side a critique of the French and Napoleon who dared to fight against the English but finally after the defeat at Waterloo they indulged in pleasures and the craze for polka dancing imported from France. On the other hand it might also be a criticism of British women who instead of enjoying themselves conformed to men’s opinion that women should mainly raise children and support their husbands.

Alternatively it could be interpreted as an invitation to this young beautiful woman to dance the polka. A common characteristic of all the illustrations presented in the small mirrors is their erotic and sexual context. Almost all of them show couples in funny, sometimes even vulgar positions, squeezing, jumping and gazing at each other. As a matter of fact, the visibility of women in nineteenth-century Paris was closely connected to ideas about their sexuality or sexual availability. Hence, Parisian women were very often presented in an erotic and passionate way. By contrast, the Victorians were always worried about something: about the poor, about the position of women, about sex, about democracy and hence, the question of sexuality in London was a more complex issue. This, however, did not prevent the British from copying Parisian fashions and novelties. As noted in the previous chapters the inhabitants of London were fascinated with French art, culture, fashion and life style. Thus, even if the polka was considered vulgar and was often executed in an indecent way, it was accepted in London and it happened to a certain degree thanks to Parisians. The British fascination with the French culture and fashion was so evident and strong that very often they took everything that came from the Paris, even if it might have been considered immoral and pretentious.

What seems to be clear from these lithographs is that people and especially Parisian women were allowed to freely perform and participate in polka dancing. Even if the polka dancing was considered to a certain degree vulgar, it was an important part of fashion. In some society circles it was considered even a necessity, an important cultural practice that needed to be exercised:



*"Not choose to dance the polka! It was absurd, it was ridiculous, It was like nobody else, it was prudish, it was censorious."*<sup>602</sup>



Illustration No. 46 <sup>603</sup>

<sup>602</sup> Yonge, Charlotte (1852): *The Castlebuilders*. In: Monthly Packet of Evening Readings for Younger Members of the English Church. Vol. IV, Nos. XIX to XXIV (July-December, 1852). London: Mozley and Parker: 424.





Illustration No. 47 <sup>604</sup>

<sup>603</sup> *Mister Punch's Polkmania*. London: William Spooner.

<sup>604</sup> *Mister Punch's Polkmania*. London: William Spooner.

### 4.2.3. A new disease = polka dancing

*“What is woman? Disease, says Hippocrates”<sup>605</sup>*

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The Dancing-Mania was not a new occurrence in the nineteenth century. This extraordinary phenomenon was already observed in medieval Europe. This was an epidemic form of mass hysteria which broke out in Germany, the Low Countries and Italy, principally during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This phenomenon has been described by Hecke, the nineteenth century German physician and professor as:

*“a wild, leaping dance performed by people screaming and foaming with fury, having all the appearance of persons “possessed”. It did not remain confined to particular localities but was propagated in epidemic fashion by the sight of the sufferers over the whole of Germany and the neighbouring countries of the North West”<sup>606</sup>*

In pre-modern and modern European society, it was believed that dance had a great influence on health in different ways. On the one side it was regarded as one of the symptoms or one of the treatments of some illnesses. For example, the authors of *Punch* claimed that *“a good remedy for chilblains is a compound of the hop and the caper. The best form of this specific is the polka.”<sup>607</sup>* On the other side, dance was classified as a physical exercise. Consequently, its effect on the general well-being of its practitioners was represented in the literature devoted to dance and medicine. Furthermore, dance represented an idealized form of expression that could be exploited to escape censorship and to tell the stories of love and desire, the body’s stories, without actually having to „tell“. Moving beyond words, dance was and continues to be a visual form. When situated in the female body, it suggests a freedom of expression that transcends sex, identity, or medium. Dance seems to have always offered the ability to say what words cannot: it is imagined as free expression, bypassing censure or repression. Thus, dance performance and dance writing offer interesting arenas for the exploration of gender as performance.

The link between dance and madness has existed for a long time and this thesis takes into consideration the production and reception of nineteenth-century dance forms in a climate in which medicine becomes a main cultural criterion through which the body’s

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<sup>605</sup> Freyer (1991): 245. In: Good, David F./ Grandner, Margarete/ Maynes, Mary Jo (1996): *Austrian Women in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. Providence, Oxford: Berghahn Books.

<sup>606</sup> Rustes (1969): 19.

<sup>607</sup> *Punch*, December 1847.



meanings are measured. Dance and medicine have a similar role in their histories of „discovering”, or creating new realities for the body, new understandings of how the body functions and what is reflected through its reactions to dancing. At the mid-century, the phenomenon of the dancing mania could be observed in all three European capitals. General impressions of the new way of dancing were described as "*massing together of a jostling crowd of mute or merely gibbering animal*".<sup>608</sup>

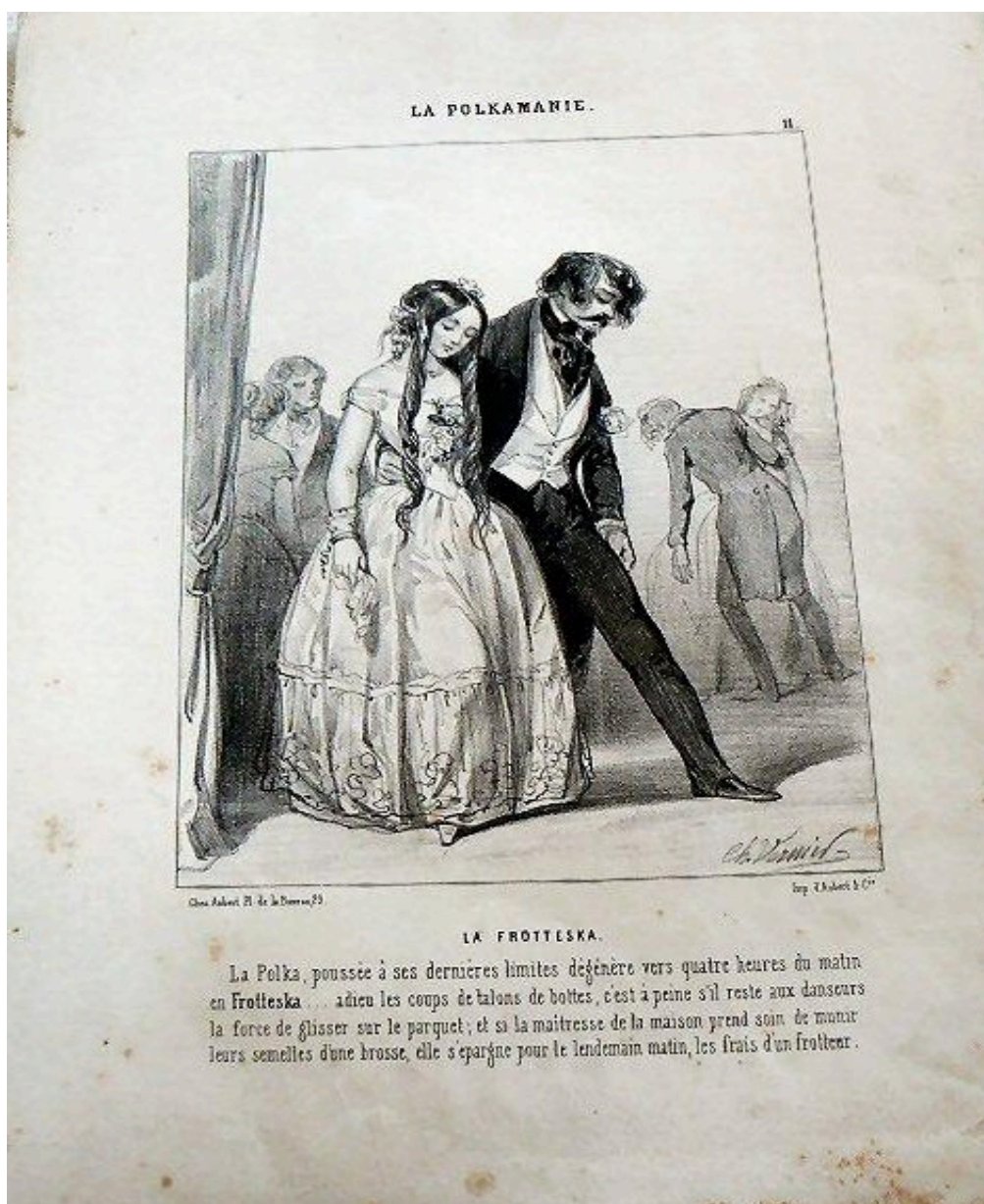


Illustration No. 51<sup>609</sup>

In Paris, Balzac commented that:

*"Paris may be a monster, but it is the most monomaniacal of monsters. It falls for a thousand fantasies. At one moment it takes to brick-laying like a lord enamoured of the trowel... Then it falls into the slough of despond, goes bankrupt, sells up and files its petition. But a few days later,*

<sup>608</sup> Wilkinson (1869).

<sup>609</sup> Charler Vernier: Frotteska from a series "*Polkamanie*".

*it puts its affairs in order, sallies forth in holiday and dancing mood...It has its day to day manias, but also its manias for the month, the season, the year...."*<sup>610</sup>

The English *Punch* described the polka as mad and insane: "*We trust, we shall hear of this madness and insanity no more.*"<sup>611</sup> It also published some humorous illustrations of people dancing the polka in a crazy way. As a matter of fact, the small, graceful hops of the Polka could easily turn into a rollicking, raucous romp – fun, yes, but unacceptable in the polite ballroom. It presented the tempting possibility to deviate from the physical control and decorum that was the hallmark of Victorian gentility. *The mania for the polka was also described in contemporary authors' novels and poems, press comments and caricatures and lithographs. For example the illustration above shows a couple that became so crazy for the polka that they danced this new dance for the entire night. After four hours of dancing the polka became „frotteska" because the dancers could not jump and kick the heels anymore; hence they polished and glided along the pavement. In fact, the result of all this excessive dancing can be seen in the enormous tiredness of the couple in front and a sort of faintness on the part of the couple in the background.*



Illustration No. 52

<sup>610</sup> Balzac, Honore: *History of the Thirteen*: 64.

<sup>611</sup> *Musical World*, 1844: 214.



Clearly, the contemporary lithographs, caricatures, paintings and press comments indicated that there was a polka mania and a mania for dancing in all three cities which are the focus of my research. The illustration above shows one of many Victorian London Fancy Balls, where the middle class is enjoying the polka. The manner in which the dancers gaze at each other, the way they jump and hold each other and also the way their garments move clearly emphasize the atmosphere of craziness, excitement and delirious enjoyment of the polka. Again, the same kind of impression is given by the caricature sketched by Leech and presented below.



#### THE DANCE

The Carrier takes Dot round the waist, and starts off with her, toe and heel; Tackleton follows suit with Mrs. Fielding; old Dot whisks off Mrs. Dot, and Caleb goes off at score with Tilly Slowboy. Hark! how the Cricket chirps, and how the kettle hums!—*Cricket, Chirp Third*

*By J. Leech*

Illustration No. 53 <sup>612</sup>

John Leech's caricature depicts working class people taken by the craze for the polka. It is quite easy to understand that they dance the polka from the way they move their feet with the use of toe and heel and from the words under the illustration that point to Jullien's Cricket Polka. The illustration gives an impression of total chaos, delirium and madness. Here, not only people but also animals dance the polka when jumping on two legs. Despite the impression of chaos, the picture also gives a feeling of vulgarity and insanity.

A similar impression is provided by the illustration published by Punch in 1847, showing a fancy ball. It is another example of people's desire to lose themselves in craze and delirious dancing. The atmosphere in the picture gives an impression of ridiculousness and madness.



Illustration No. 54 <sup>613</sup>

The polka and dance manias occurred at the same time as England suffered from the outbreak of many problematic diseases: in the course of two years the epidemics of influenza and cholera killed over 100,000 people. Anecdotes and stories circulating at that time focused

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<sup>613</sup> MR PUNCH'S FANCY BALL Reduced from the Double-page Cartoon by John Leech (1847), showing the Staff of "Punch" as Orchestra. In: Spielmann M.H. (1895): *The History of "Punch"*. London, Paris & Melbourne: Cassell and Company Ltd.: 261.



mainly on young people, especially women, who either were infected with disease or weakened in „spirit“ and eventually died as a consequence of excessive dancing. Indeed, in the previous chapters I mentioned for example the story of a woman who died of a heart attack after having danced the polka. This sort of story circulated all over London and also in Paris. In fact, Paris was affected by the polka mania in a very similar way. A series of caricatures made by Charles Vernier and presented in the chapter related to Paris shows clearly how the French capital was affected by the polkamania. People here jumped, squeezed one other and exercised a variety of strange and often vulgar movements. It does not seem that this was the case in Vienna. Here, the waltz initiated the great furore for social dancing and thus, the polka was in a certain way its variation and continuation. Also the illustration below which shows a ball in the famous Viennese dance hall, the Dianasaal, indicates that there was a great appreciation for dances and one could speak about a sort of mania for dancing. However it did not have such an excessive character as in London or Paris. It is quite unclear what is danced in the illustration below. It does not seem to be the waltz because of the high kicks of the ladies to the front of the picture. It might be the polka, for which this kind of step was very characteristic. Whatever they dance, one thing is clear, people here behaved much more elegantly and respectfully than dancers in the British and French dance halls.



Illustration No. 55 <sup>614</sup>

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<sup>614</sup> collection of posters with the Vienna's balls at the midcentury in Wien Museum.

Even if medical and social scientists studied the diseased body in depth, almost nothing was actually known about the causes of disease. For this reason, any kind of information that regarded contagion or infection was considered relevant in their research, even if these were the medieval legends describing dancing plagues or stories about spider bites causing mass hysteria. Those kinds of legends came into light as a result of archival work carried out by historians of dance and medicine. In this way, the dance and legends surrounding the dance functioned as a medium and mattered for both types of discourses, medical and cultural. Thus academic discourse circulated alongside legend at the margins of medical professionalism. Also novelists played the role of „the doctors” through the use of the dance in their writings where they often theorized and described psychological and emotional factors and phenomena that might have affected the physical and psychological health of their protagonists. In these stories, dancing in a weakened condition often caused pathological disturbances such as hysteria, consumption, heart attacks and even death. The discussion related to the pathological body was intensified by the panic caused by the explosion of epidemics in the 1840s and turned the dance into a scene of medical experimentation and investigation. In Victorian society the body was central to social communication. There was an obsession with sanitation and with avoiding body contact where possible.<sup>615</sup> Bodies staying together in a close position and in an atmosphere deliberately created to excite the minds and hearts of dancers was a constant concern to Victorians and provided a new subject for academic research.

### ***Medicine, women and dance in the nineteenth century***

*“La Polka et le médecin  
Telle est la fièvre de bon ton,  
Qu'aujourd'hui tout se polkanise;  
Du Théâtre jusqu'à l'Église,  
De l'Estaminet au Salon,  
Oui, tout vraiment se polkanise.  
Ce vieux docteur, pour qu'on le prise,  
En soignant sa Lodoïska,  
Ordonne au pharmacien Trévisé  
Des pilules à la Polka.”<sup>616</sup>*

In the above poem about polkamanie published in 1844 the polka was compared to a fever

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<sup>615</sup> Gallagher, C. /Lacqueur, T. (eds.) (1987): *The Making of the Modern Body, Sexuality and Society in the Nineteenth Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

<sup>616</sup> *La Polkamanie et les Polka*, Chez Terry, Palais-Royal 1844.

that invaded all kind of Parisian milieus. It became an entertainment that was exercised in theatres, salons and small bars as well as churches. Everybody danced the polka and the old and reknowned doctors prescribed polka as a medicine in order to attain appreciation and fame. This example shows that doctors were not indifferent to the polka and its comparison to a fever emphasizes a great connection between the contemporary questions of health and polka dancing.

Dance scenes in literature contained lay knowledge about health matters such as insanity, sanitation, contagion, air flow, and blood circulation. The partnership of dancing and disease in the public imagination actually makes sense considering that dancing involves bodies moving and mixing in hot, crowded rooms. The idea of a group dancing all night is extreme and suggests that a degree of manic behavior necessary to sustain the activity. As a matter of fact, the doctors believed that the overheated and sweating bodies of ball-visitors produced the very humid and hot atmosphere which, according to specialists, caused high fever. This was particularly pertinent during the moist summery months when the season was at its peak. There are many examples of contemporary poems, songs and writings in which the polka was presented as a sort of sickness usually affecting young female dancers. For example in the poem below, the author compares the polka to a cholera, flu and madness. He does not speak about men suffering from these illnesses mentioning only women who were so pleased with the new fashion that they did not even realize how dangerous it was for them.

*"Aussi voyez de l'or la magique influence;  
Déjà chacun renonce à cette folle danse;  
Le plaisir favori devient presque odieux,  
Et ces dames s'en vont répéter en tous lieux:  
Détestable polka, présent le plus funeste  
Que puisse faire aux rats l colère céleste."<sup>617</sup>*

Consideration of women's place and role in society has led to much discussion about the nature of women which found its place in medicine. The eighteenth century was the time of the evolution of the medical system. Many doctors continued to believe in the humoral birth of disease, attributing maladies to an abundance or absence of some bodily fluid or the wrong amount and combination of these fluids. By contrast, for other scientists, sickness developed from a sort of pathology engaging the different solid parts of the body such as muscle fibers rendered too flabby or too tense, or nerves under-stimulated or over-excited.<sup>618</sup>

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<sup>617</sup> Le Mercure des théâtres, March 21, 1844.

<sup>618</sup> Berger (2006): 369.



As far as healing the sick was concerned, the art of medicine needed time to reach maturity. In the course of the nineteenth century, doctors were still unable to effectively help patients suffering from the majority of chronic illnesses or from those caused by infectious pathogens such as cholera, scarlet fever tuberculosis, typhoid, typhus, or diphtheria. Nevertheless, the 1800s was a period of considerable development in the medical comprehension of the nature and causes of ill health.

In the early 1800s, mortality rates in European cities grew very rapidly. Sanitary supplies were almost always temporary and inadequate. In the dirty, carelessly constructed and inadequately ventilated tenement districts the new industrial proletariat developed many infectious diseases. According to Ackerknecht, diphtheria, measles, typhus, chickenpox, scarlet fever, typhoid, tuberculosis and from the 1830s, cholera, took hundreds of thousands of lives. „*Throughout the years malady became the ‘compensation’ for sin and robust health the congruent reward of the virtuous.*”<sup>619</sup> To illustrate it better, England was constantly hit by epidemics of tuberculosis, typhus, cholera, typhoid fever, scarlet fever, measles, smallpox, syphilis and at the same time Victorians were participating in the most apparent and exaggerated expression of life such as the polka. Thus the relationship between disease and dance became a cultural phenomenon that fed the imaginations of Victorians who connected the mysterious movements of the bodies with the contagious diseases. Hence, medical literature which advised against gluttony, poor personal hygiene, sexual excess, the use of opium, and the consumption of alcohol, flourished.

Interestingly, the problem regarded also the higher classes whose members were not always spared this kind of medical moralism. From the early 1800s, psychiatrists were informing of the dangers of mental and physical over-exertion. Doctors and psychiatrists constructed medical arguments which were often directed against the emergent feminist movement or used to reinforce taboos against unharnessed sexuality. There was also a clear link between disease and poverty and this served to strengthen the model of medical moralism. During the nineteenth century, the urban underclasses grew and reproduced much more quickly than their social superiors. Hence, fears concerning the nation’s health deepened. Moreover, most nineteenth-century doctors and scientists held the opinion that life events influenced one’s genetic profile, therefore, a parent who lived in insanity could pass on to their children the same kind of illness and weakness.<sup>620</sup>

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<sup>619</sup> Ackerknecht, E. H. (1967): *Medicine at the Paris Hospital, 1794-1848*. Baltimore, MD.

<sup>620</sup> Rosenberg, C. E. (1969): *The Bitter Fruit: Heredity, Disease, and Social Thought in Nineteenth-Century America* In: D. Fleming and B. Bailyn (eds.), *Perspectives in American*

In the nineteenth century, one can note the close link between dance and different forms of madness. It was noticeable mainly through imagery and the way the visual forms of dance and some forms of hysteria resembled one other. As a particularly performative form of madness, with disputed origins and multiple effects, the group of afflictions labeled „hysteria” mirrored the nineteenth-century dance. In a culture that views dancers as vaguely „sick”, hysteria’s myriad causes and symptoms seem a reasonable diagnosis. Like the dancer, the hysterical patient is almost always gendered female in the medical literature, and hysteria remains, in the cultural imaginations of the century, a feminine illness. Defined and understood in its resemblance to dance, hysteria is very clearly not only in the background, but actively in the foreground of nineteenth-century dance production and reception. Before the nineteenth century hysteria was explained with uterine theories in more or less sophisticated formulations. The new century moved away from this kind of explanation; however there was still a strong connection between the performing woman, the body (its sex) and its significations. Thus, the medieval stories of dancing manias allowed Victorians to study the symptoms of mass hysteria. Of particular interest was that the described behaviours of these manic dancers were similar to respiratory, intestinal, and pulmonary symptoms which Victorians often saw in sickrooms.

In dance forms developed in the nineteenth century the female sex got linked to dance’s silence. At the ballet, for example, the focus was on dancers’ legs and skirts. Dance performance by women implicitly addressed questions of sex, gender, anatomy, pornography, the mind’s relations to the body and other contemporary social, sexual, medical, and psychological issues concerning the body. But dance represents also this saying-while-not-saying or this saying-through-not-saying. Hence, the interpretation of body codes became one of the main scopes of new medical sciences throughout the nineteenth century, and their changing interpretations of the body parallel those in dance and the literature which was fascinated by it.<sup>621</sup> These shifts indicate close cultural connections between performance, medicine, and print, indicating that changes in thinking in these domains might be caused by the same factors: nineteenth-century concern about the body as a site of meaning and about vision as a theatre of knowledge.

In nineteenth-century Paris, a network of associations links dance performance to prostitution, to syphilis, and to hysteria, both on the level of practice and on the level of theory. The visibility of performers in the public eye, the history of prostitution at the Paris Opera,

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*History*, Vol. 3. Cambridge, MA, 1969.

<sup>621</sup> McCarren (1998): 14.

and the viewing practices of ballet amateurs all contribute to its sexualization. The sexing of dance theatre, the perception of both prostitution and hysteria as expressions of sexual deviance, and the theatricality of such „deviant” expressions of femminity are all part of the fabric of nineteenth-century dance production and reception. Dance seems to offer the writers and viewers a freedom of expression that bypasses censure. Yet at the same time, dance’s freedom of expression is projected onto it by a repressed society, making dance performance symptomatic of cultural tensions surrounding women, the body, and the body’s relations to the mind.<sup>622</sup>

What is it then that nineteenth-century European women wanted to say through the dance without words? On the one hand, it seems that it was the „femaleness” itself of the dance that was a symbolic expression of repression. When we speak about repression, we mean mainly women’s inferiority to men. It was argued for example that women’s ability to produce children, even if she did not do so, dictated her health and she was, therefore, defined by her reproductive ability. Women’s viewpoints were totally disregarded. The female body was, then, a silenced body and a space in which meaning could proliferate. The female dancing body too was and is usually silent and attracts many meanings. However, silent images can be powerful and women in new dance recognised both the potential and the need to connect their dancing to the wider social context. Dance offered the body freedom of movement and freedom to speak of repression more powerfully than words. As the possibility not to speak, dance associates itself with what Freud denominates the „symptomatic act” – the creation of meaning through the body that is part of the proces of „hysterical conversion”. It is precisely this silence and its use of body code that has contributed to dance’s pathologization by refering to symptom formation.<sup>623</sup>

### 4.3. Commercializing Polkomania = a new cultural good

*"If Europe had still lived in the era of the baroque princes, it would have been filled with spectacular masques, procession and operas distributing allegorical representations of economic triumph and industrial progress at the feet of its rulers. In fact the triumphant world of capitalism had its equivalent. The era of its global victory was initiated and punctuated by giant new rituals of self-congratulation, the Great International Exhibitions, each encased in a princely monument to wealth and technical progress – the Crystal Palace in London (1851), the Rotunda (‘larger than St Peter’s in Rome’) in Vienna, each displaying the growing number and variety of manufactures, each attracting native and foreign tourists in astronomic quantities."*

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<sup>622</sup> McCarren (1998): 13.

<sup>623</sup> McCarren (1998): 42.

<sup>624</sup> Hobsbawm, Eric (1975): *The Age of Capital 1848 – 1875*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

The analysis carried out in the previous chapters revealed that the popularity of the polka had various dimensions. One of the factors that influenced its rapid spread and becoming fashionable was the quick development of press and commercialization of European societies. Paradoxically, music attained the socio-economic status of a valuable consumer product precisely during the romantic era which saw also the rapid industrialization of Europe. The fact that the nineteenth century cherished specifically its emotional attributes is in no way incompatible with its gradual subjection to the rules of the market places. On the contrary, in an ever expanding middle-class economy emotion was quickly seized upon as a basic commodity susceptible to industrial production, distribution and sales procedures. In other words, the very medium through which a society beset with growing feelings of guilt, as well as nagging fears of its own power, sought temporary solace and escape. This therefore became itself a profitable object of economic manipulation. Hence, it is not surprising that the polka, which beside offering an escape into exotic, sometimes unknown and rapid rhythms and lands was also attractive and to a certain degree seductive, was offered to the European societies as a consumption product.

The last part of the thesis offers an insight into the relationship between the commercialization of life in the European capitals and the evolution and popularization of the polka. It is based on the study of sheet music by Jullien and Strauss and some other composers of less importance and discusses the relations between the development of the press and the polka fashion. Moreover, it applies a new approach which is the semantical analysis of the most often used words (by the press and in literary pieces) in connection to this dance form. To start with, I see few important features that were crucial for the fashioning and selling of the polka and/or of any other kind of musical consumption product at the mid-century and therefore, I present them briefly below.

In the nineteenth century, musical merchandise was not only widely advertised in trade journals, as well as periodicals for general circulation but for the first time in history it was also turned over to expert appraisers for their professional judgement. A proper sales organization thus included a literary house organ with a whole host of critics. The invention of the high-speed press, coupled with the sale of separate issues and the printing of advertisements produced a type of newspaper which, if it did not supersede the older form of journalism, at least forced it into the background. The influence of this new type of newspaper on the evolution of music still awaits coherent scholarly investigation, although it doubtless figures among the basic prerequisites of modern musical culture, which might even be

defined as music culture under the conditions of „bourgeois publicity”.<sup>625</sup>

The capitalist, industrialist or businessman was the pivot of the bourgeoisie and thus, the whole notion of class was based on the assumption that European society was changed rapidly and radically as a consequence of the growth of factory industry. The central focus of the language of class was the entrepreneur, a quintessential member of the bourgeoisie or an individual who could make his career and profit without landed wealth or aristocratic birth. He had no recognised place in society, operating in an atmosphere of laissez-faire, free from restraint by governments. The term entrepreneur was used in a variety of ways. An entrepreneur was somebody who ran his own industrial concern, financing it from within, but it was also somebody chiefly engaged in finance or commerce, or else he made money by lending to the government without having little contact with industry or commerce.<sup>626</sup>

Conductors who constitute an excellent example of new entrepreneurs began to play for the audience. One of the best examples of showmanship was Louis Jullien, who dominated the London concert scene in the 1840s and 1850s or Johann Strauss father and son who became famous in Vienna. This commercialization led to a growing bifurcation between musicians who composed and performed for a mass public and those who composed and performed for themselves. For the time being, musicians and the public could maintain some sort of contact because enough of the latter showed appreciation of the former to hold out the hope that more might follow. The *Musical World* wrote about Jullien:

*„He had arrived without a penny and without a prospect, but now a more prosperous man than Monsieur Jullien does not inhabit London. The secret of his success was simple: it was his ability to read the signs of the times and, in particular, to harness the power of the press to his cause.”*<sup>627</sup>

By the end of the 1840s he was staging concerts with an orchestra of four hundred, three separate military bands and three separate choirs. In this regard, the *Musical World* commented:

*„Jullien is the very colossus of public concerts. His conceptions are universal-his speculations gigantic. The age seems made for Jullien, and Jullien for the age. He is the very henchman of the times, and marches in the rear of occasion...This is an age of exaggeration and extravagance – a used-up age- an age that requires strong stimulants to keep excitement alive.”*<sup>628</sup>

Richard Wagner wrote about Strauss that:

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<sup>625</sup> Dalhaus (1989): 116-117.

<sup>626</sup> Pilbeam (1990): 23-24.

<sup>627</sup> The *Musical World*, February 7, 1839: 77.

<sup>628</sup> Sachs, Joel (1990): *London: the professionalisation of music*. In: *Man and Music: The Early Romantic Era between Revolutions, 1789 and 1848*, ed Alexander Inger. London: 226.

*„the passion bordering on mad fury with which the wonderful Johann Strauss conducted. This Daemon of the ancient Viennese folk-spirit trembled at the beginning of a new Waltz like a python preparing to spring, and it was more the ecstasy produced by the music than the drinks among the enchanted audience that stimulated that magical first violin to almost dangerous flights.”<sup>629</sup>*

These press comments are a great example of showing how the entrepreneurs manipulated with people's emotions and needs by using some exaggerated effects and means to attract the public, make themselves fashionable and earn money. Following this line, dance masters also celebrated the benefits of dancing in their widely circulated manuals and organized societies of dancers to raise money for retired or injured dancers. Along with their stage performances, male and female dancers were teachers and visited the homes of the middle and upper-middle classes regularly to model the newest dance steps for young people – the polka, the mazurka, the fast waltz- which were first introduced to the public on the stage. Dance professionals had studios and advertised private and group dance lessons in the daily newspapers for those who could not afford at-home instruction. During the height of the polkomania in 1844, *the Times* and other international newspapers regularly advertised dance lessons offered by „distinguished professors”. Moreover, the music teacher or dance master played the role of financially interested intermediary between publisher and purchaser. Teachers typically obtained music for their pupils at a considerable discount and then resold it to their „victims” at higher price. Under this mutually advantageous system it was often the worst music that found its way onto the family music stands.

Another curiosity was connected with the polka pattern. At its peak, different manufacturers sought to make profits on the public's polka-mania by describing a variety of products with the dance name, hence products such as polka jackets, polka hats, polka ties, polka gauze, and, of course, polka-dotted fabrics were very fashionable. Few, if any, of these goods could be associated with the dance but, like celebrity endorsements the word-association with the dance meant that everything containing the word 'polka' sold like hot cakes.

Finally, the last factor that influenced the commercialization of the polka was the railway development that revolutionized leisure and entertainment. The nineteenth century saw an explosion of tourism in Europe, especially in Paris and London. Foreigners were a commonplace in the gardens, restaurants and hotels. Between 1800 and 1850, an average of 12.000 foreigners visited Paris annually.<sup>630</sup> Many British were enchanted with Paris fashions

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<sup>629</sup> Wagner, Richard. *Mein Leben*, Vol 1. available online at Project Gutenberg.

<sup>630</sup> Gerbod, Paul (1984): *Les Touristes étrangers à Paris dans la première moitié du XIX siècle*.

and thus, they traveled to the French capital to participate in its entertainments, events and culture which later they copied in their own country. This aspect of the commercialization of life had a great importance for the diffusion of the polka between different places. In fact, thanks to traveling conductors and dancers it was so widely popularized in Europe.

#### 4.3.1. Polka semantics in print

In the previous chapters we have discussed the issue of mass consumption and mass culture and it was noted that the polka became a part of the mass consumption in most of European capitals. This was clearly represented in the public concerts and dance halls. It was the consequence of social changes and the transformation of the socio-musical functions in Europe at the end of the eighteenth century which meant that music started to serve increasingly large audiences. Furthermore, this development had an impact on the establishment of modern publishing practices in the early nineteenth century that served the purpose of publishing and selling for a wider public. Step by step, books became more affordable because of the lower printing prizes and changes in their marketing. New printing techniques allowed for the mass production of new magazines and newspapers, which were often specialized, and finally novels and short stories could be produced on a mass-scale and enjoyed great popularity.

There is an important link between the polka evolution and the development of the press and printing techniques. Just a brief overlook of all European press used in this work gives an idea of its relevance for social and cultural life in the nineteenth century as well as for the development of the polka fashion. In fact, the increase of the popular press continues to be one of the most remarkable cultural phenomena at the turn of the century. It was a period of widespread changes in journalism, including the diffusion of press publications. Primarily, newspapers usually were accessible only in the form of individual subscriptions. In the course of the first half of the century readers attended public reading rooms, in order to read the latest newspapers. In the library they had to pay a token sum to stay for an unlimited time and study the papers. Parisians used to come to read *La Presse* and *La Siècle*, two daily journals that first appeared in 1836.<sup>631</sup> In London, *The Times* and *The Punch* were most popular magazines of the time and in Vienna there was *The Wiener Zeitung*.

The need for newspapers increased with the growth of literacy and urbanization. Censorship continued to be a restriction in many countries, notably in monarchies. It seems

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In: Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire de Paris et de l'Île de France, 1983: 243.

<sup>631</sup> Berger (2006): 295.



also that the British press was much less impeded by censorship. Anyway, as the century continued, there were successful and prosperous journals in major cities on the continent. Magazines boosted their sales and appealed to a large readership through their application of photographic reproductions, illustrations, and by upgrading the quality of the newspapers by some free sheet music. *The Illustrated London News* was an example, inspiring followers in other countries.<sup>632</sup> With regards to the specificity of the information provided, the dance writings and critics were often obsessed with the physical appearance of women dancers while omitting detailed information on the quality of the performance and dancer's abilities. Pictures and prints of female dancers were sold for male pleasure and consumption. Indeed, the analysis carried out in this study showed that the polka in London and Paris press was often presented through the images of female dancers. This advertising and publishing strategy was aimed at men who constituted the major part of general press readership.

Another interesting characteristic of the rising consumer society was a growing demand for short stories and novels. Usually, they were written for ordinary people and circulated widely in inexpensively produced editions.<sup>633</sup> As for the pieces about the polka it is enough to look at the titles presented in the previous chapters. They were: In Paris- "*Polkistes et Polkés*", "*La Polkomanie, folie en un acte*", "*Polka en Province*", "*Les Polkeuses*", "*M.Gustave et la Polka*", "*Polkette et Bamboche*", "*Polka des Sabots*", "*Les Oiseaux de la nuit et les polkeuses des scènes publiques*" or "*Voyage autour de Pomaré*" and in London- „*Polkomania*“, „*La Polka, or dancing for the milion*“, „*Hood's magazine*“, „*Polkaphobia*“, „*The Polka considered as a revolutionary movement*“. All these literary pieces circulating around London and Paris are evidence that artists, writers and publishers made a practical and commercial use of the polka fashion. By contrast, it seems that Vienna was out of play in these terms and the fashion for the polka was not exploited there to such extent as in the other places.

In the course of years, the market began to exert pressure to make music available at lower costs. The decades between 1830 and 1850 were marked by dramatic innovations in music publishing. In 1834 for example, Maurice Schlesinger founded a company specifically to provide music at low prices, La Société pour la Publication à Bon Marché.<sup>634</sup> This was supposed to be very cheap, but sometimes was not at all. For example, the prices marked on their music may have been fictitious as the official price included a mark-up, and purchasing

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<sup>632</sup> Berger (2006): 295.

<sup>633</sup> Winders, James A.(2006): *European Culture in the Nineteenth-Century*. In: *A Companion to Nineteenth-Century Europe 1789-1914* ed. Stefan Berger. UK: Blackwell Publishing: 193-208.

<sup>634</sup> Lenneberg, Hans (2003): *On the Publishing and Dissemination of Music 1500-1850*. Hillsdale: Pendragon Press: 95.

directly from a publisher/dealer apparently deprived music teachers and retail shops. Some composers in France as well as in England had begun to eliminate the middle man and set up their own publishing companies. As a matter of fact Jullien was a very good example of a composer who had his own publishing company called Jullien & Company and published not only his own but also other composers' works.

At the same time, a new printing technique, lithography, was invented by accident by Aloys Senefelder in 1794 and it had a major impact on nineteenth century public life. Having no money to buy copper plates for engraving, Senefelder tried using the surface of the local stone. He was so successful that he set up his own publishing firm in Vienna - the Chemische Druckerei - in 1803. The principle of lithography, without which there would be no sheet music cover, is that grease repels water, while calcareous limestone takes both. A drawing is made upon the stone with an ink or a crayon of a greasy composition, and is washed over with water which sinks into all parts of the stone not protected by the drawing. A roller charged with ink is then passed over the stone. The drawing receives the ink, but the water-soaked stone left blank is not affected.<sup>635</sup> About 1823 copper-plate engraving was replaced by steel engraving. The effect of this change was somehow cold and hard, but it was a cheap general purpose medium and was much used by the publishers and printers of volumes of poetry, keepsakes and annuals which enjoyed a vogue.

It is important to remember that technology consistently lowered the cost of publishing in general and music publishing in particular. Furthermore, in a sense, lithography had only been an alternative to the sophisticated forms of engraving. For the first time, multi-coloured work could be produced in quantity and cheaply. From 1840 onwards, the weekly press used woodcuts extensively, and in 1842, the Illustrated London News was first published with thirty-two woodcuts. More important still than the arrival of the weekly Illustrated News periodical was the appearance of Punch. Punch provided a stamping ground for many illustrators involved in sheet music covers.

Since the techniques of printing are not the main interest of this section, I stop here and proceed with the influence of printing and press development on the commercialization and dissemination of the polka. When studying the articles, writings and novels on the polka I encountered a great number of descriptions and epithets related to this dance. Very often they had exactly the same meaning even if used in Austrian, French or British newspapers and their continuous use through the years confirms once again that the polka had some role to

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<sup>635</sup> Pearsall, Ronald (1972): *Victorian Sheet Music Covers*. Newton Abbot: David&Charles. 9.

play in European societies. The analysis of articles, advertisements and press comments in the years 1840s-1860s revealed that the polka was considered: *provocative, attractive, exciting, spicy, vivacious, tingling, whirling illness (Drehkrankheit), polka madness (Polkawahnsinn), Polk, infectious, lively, vigorous, spirited, passionate, tempestuous, turbulent, exciting, melodic, infantile, ridiculous, effective, delicate, tempting, piquant, happy, fancy and gracefull rhythms*<sup>636</sup>, *plump, dainty*<sup>637</sup>, *sinful, disreputable*<sup>638</sup>, *barbarian, unmeaning, stupid, sensual, insane, crazy, sexual, exotic, empty, ridiculous, absurd*<sup>639</sup>, *frivolous and trumpery*<sup>640</sup> etc.

Most of these words had rather a negative or ironic undertone. In short, it might seem that the polka was a rather silly and simple dance which evoked some kind of sinful and sexual sensations. Also in poems, cover music titles, novels and stories the polka was very often seen as something suggestive and exciting which at this time was not necessarily appropriate. Nevertheless, this wordplay doubled the attractiveness of the new fashion. Thus, the entrepreneurs and press publishers made use of words which were associated with eroticism and sensuality to better commercialize the polka and to make money from it. Most probably, it did not really matter to them if what they described was exactly what they experienced or witnessed. As a matter of fact, it was mentioned before that exaggeration was a way to fashion cultural products and sell them on a wide scale in the nineteenth century. In this era people longed for something new and thus, dances with fresh and exotic rhythms, and catchy and exciting new melodies were a great material for entrepreneurs, publishers, journalists and book writers. They not only promoted themselves and their works through the polka, but sold many copies of their publications and magazines making profits by using, in this case, the popularity of the polka. Below, I present an excerpt from *Punch* that shows perfectly how the polka was sold through the use of exaggeration. The text is packed with words such as delirium, madness, mania, plague. They all relate to some health problems; nevertheless their connection with the polka makes the Bohemian dance more exotic and exciting, especially for those bored with the daily life and searching for adventures:

*“its chief symptoms were extraordinary convulsions and wild gesticulations of the limbs, with frequent stampings on the floor, and rotary movements of the body, such as accompany lesions of the cerebellum. That part is said by GALL to be the organ of amativeness; and the Polka **delirium**, in several instances, has terminated in **love-madness**. This form of **mania**, in the female subjects, displays itself, partly, in a passion for fantastic finery; as fur trimmings, red,*

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<sup>636</sup> for ex.: Blätter fuer Musik, Theater, und Kunst, January 1, 1858: 11

<sup>637</sup> Fremdenblatt 1874/ 8.4.

<sup>638</sup> for ex. *Punch*, August 28, 1858: 91.

<sup>639</sup> for ex. *Punch*, 1849, Vol. XVII: 234.

<sup>640</sup> for ex. *Punch*, 1855.

green, and yellow boots, and other strange bedizenments. Articles of dress, indeed, seem capable of propagating the contagion; for there are Polka Pelisses and Polka Tunics; nay, it was but the other day that we met with some Polka Wafers, so that the **Polkomania** seems communicable by all sorts of things that put it into people's heads. In this respect it obviously resembles the **Plague**; but not in this respect only; for, go where you will, you are sure to be plagued with it. After committing the greatest ravages in London itself, it attacked the suburbs, whence it quickly spread to remote districts, and there is now not a hamlet in Great Britain which it does not infest more or less. Its chief victims are the young and giddy; but as yet it has not been known to prove fatal, although many, ourselves inclusive, have complained of having been bored to death by it. No cure has as yet been proposed for Polkomania; but perhaps an antidote, corresponding to vaccination, in the shape of some new jig or other variety of the caper, may prove effectual; yet, after all, it may be doubted if the remedy would not be worse than the disease.<sup>641</sup>

In Paris, the polka descriptions resembled those in London. Here, the polkomania reached its rage at the midcentury and was not only described by the use of many of the words mentioned above, but was also presented in the illustrations made by Vernier and other French caricaturists. There was a sort of similarity in the process of fashioning and using the fashion of the polka in both capitals. Most probably it was a result of what I already mentioned. Paris dictated new fashions and trends in culture, instead London often copied what was going on in Paris. For example, Punch and Charivari published series of illustrations called „Polkomania” that depicted beautiful women dancing this dance often in a very erotic and sensual way. They were usually surrounded by male onlookers and performed movements and figures that resembled some kind of acrobatic exercises. Even the title of these series of illustrations was exactly the same: „Polkomania”.

In Vienna, descriptions related more to the rhythm than to the exotic and erotic side of the polka. For example, Ludwig Speidel wrote that "*rhythmically as well as melodically, Strauss unveiled all stimulus of the dance music. His polkas and quadrilles were light and coquettish.*" Furthermore they were also "*comfortable, sociable, spicy and witty*" However, when the polka was compared with the waltz it was often described as 'provocative' whereas the waltz was 'delightful'. Thus, the polka was certainly less exotic in Vienna. However it was used there by the publishers and sheet music producers as intensively as in London and Paris. In fact, Strauss composed one of the largest collections of polkas ever published.

Summarizing, the polka at the mid-century became an important and attractive consumption product which was advertised, published and depicted in most of the popular press and writings of the time. It was made popular through the use of caricatures and illustrations with pictures of women, catchy words, spicy epithets and colourful descriptions. At the same time, all these means served also as commercial tools which not only made the

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<sup>641</sup> Punch 1845: 86.

polka attractive but sold its attractiveness to a wide spectrum of the public.

#### 4.3.2. Sheet music of the polka

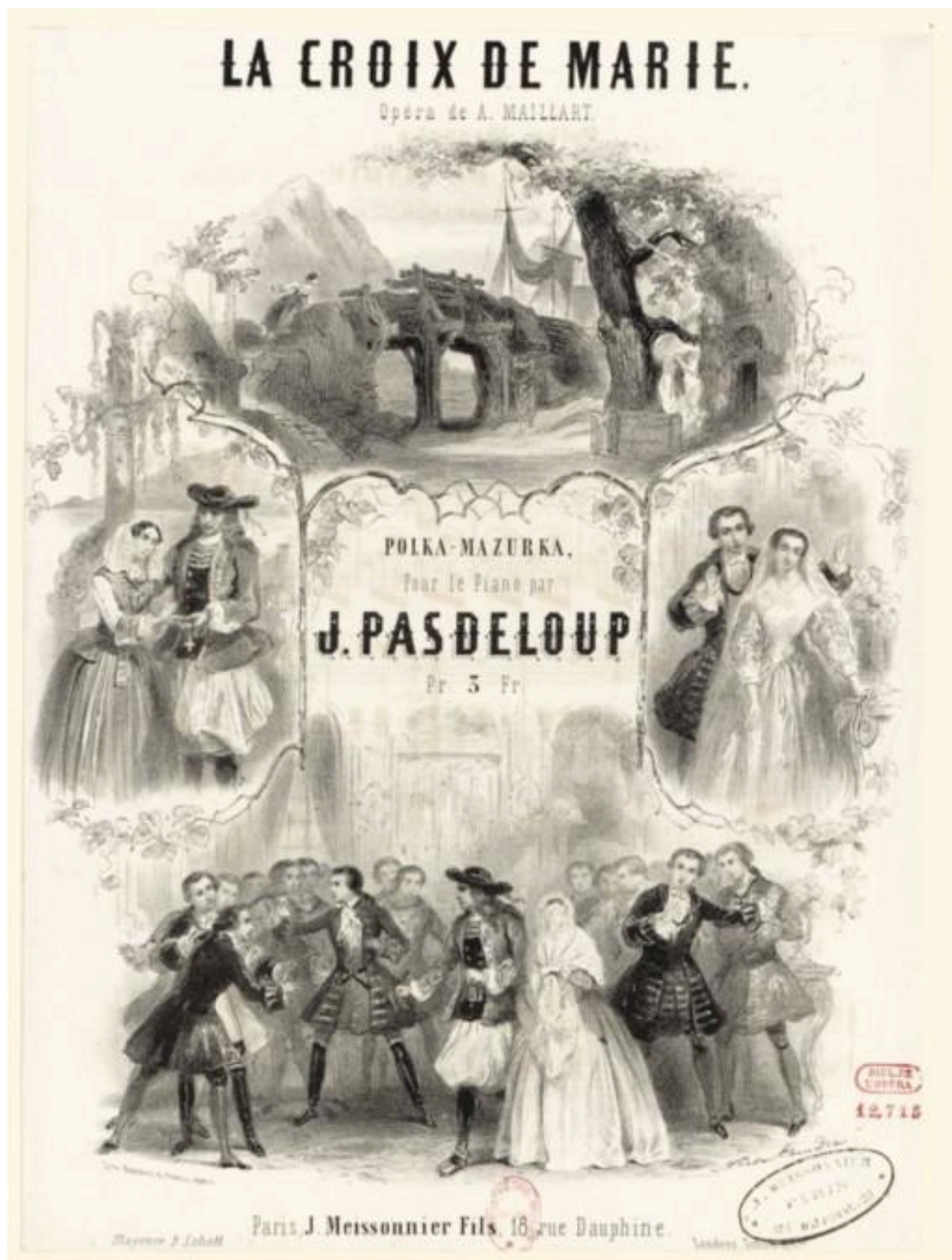
Not only the publishers but also the composers understood how to build a wide and manipulable audience. For example the legendary popularity of the virtuosi of the early nineteenth century arose from their purposeful exploitation of the demand for sheet music. The same applies to composers such as Jullien or Strauss who used not only the popularity of their promenade concerts to make their music fashionable but they published lots of sheet music with fanciful covers that attracted the public. Clearly, not only Jullien and Strauss had the idea to publish their music with some fancy covers. There were far more composers in England, Paris and Vienna who were taking advantage of cheaper facilities to print, publish and circulate original sheet covers. The number of covers designed for the polka pieces written by Jullien and Strauss is such that I decided to focus my analysis principally on Vienna and London. As for Paris, during my research on dancers, I noticed a great many polka covers published there by the following composers: Wolff, Labitzky, Musard, Chledowsky, Fessy, Carpentier, Gungl, Waldteufel, Rosellen, Wallerstein, Padeloup, Alkan, Arban, Fahrbach, Herz, Halevy, Auber, Burgmueller, Thys, Hall, Meyerbeer or Rossini. When looking at the sheet covers, my focus was directed mainly at three characteristics: quantity of the covers, their subject or what they depicted; and finally their titles.

Intelligent merchandising was tightly connected with the fast expansion of the printing and publishing industry. Editors employed various techniques which reflected directly the tastes of the average player and suited his performing skills. Almost everything was announced as „brilliant but not difficult”.<sup>642</sup> Publishers invented enticing titles such as *Polka Favorites of the Princes*, *Polka La Grande Duchesse* or *The Emperor Polka*. These helped bourgeois families to fantasize that they were dancing with the elite or that they were dancing the same dances that were fashionable in the royal family. At the same time there were many covers that depicted women, love and life enjoyments. This last characteristic was a common feature for all three cities and here one could hear and dance the following polkas: *Elvira*, *Isabelle*, *Maria*, *Irma*, *Yvonne*, *Bachus-*, *Pleasure-*, *Drollerie-*, *Liebe und Ehe-*, *Flirt-* or *Les Amoureux Polka*. Furthermore, some of the pieces were addressed at national minorities or attracted people interested in various political and social issues, for example: *Chechen-*, *Patrioten-*, *La Fille du Regiment-*, *Bohemian-*, *The Great Eastern Polka*. Below, I present some

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<sup>642</sup> Weber (1977): 11.

examples of the polka covers relating to the themes mentioned above.



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Illustration No. 56



LA FANCHONNETTE

Opéra de L. CLAPISSON.

POLKA.

à M<sup>lle</sup> Flora ASCHER



Arrangée pour Piano,

par  
**BERNHOF**

N<sup>o</sup> 1 à 2 mains  
Prix 4<sup>l</sup>

N<sup>o</sup> 2 à 4 mains  
Prix 5<sup>l</sup>

Paris, chez M. Henry Lemoine, Éditeur de Musique, Rue St Honoré N<sup>o</sup> 256.  
1850





Illustration No. 58



Illustration No. 59



# FIDELLEN-POLKA



FÜR DAS PIANOFORTE  
VON  
**JOHANN STRAUSS SOHN.**  
Op. 26.

**WIEN BEI H.F. MÜLLER.**

Kunst- u. Musikalienhändler Kohlmarkt N° 117.



# THE MOONLIGHT POLKA.

*Composed & Dedicated by Permission to*



SIR WATKIN WILLIAMS WYNN BART. M.P.  
by  
WILLIAM HENRY COOKE.  
*Author of the Moonlight Quadrilles.*

*Ent. Sta. Hall.*

LONDON, PUBLISHED BY H. WHITE, 337, OXFORD STREET.

*Pl. 2.*

Scores and sheet music covers are of vital interest in the history of conducting and the social history of music. They reflect the times far more precisely than many other historical sources becoming a sort of mirror of an age. Little research has been done on this topic and until the early nineteenth century, pictorial music covers are uncommon. Most probably the first scores were published by Pleyel in 1802.<sup>643</sup> The first scores and covers were invariably engraved, and although most of them are of little interest some were beautifully hand-coloured and would command high prices were they were to turn up in the open market. As a matter of fact, London was a leader in the quality of the sheet covers. They were made there in a very precise and diligent way.

Why did people buy the sheet music and what sort of people bought it? The sheet music was advertised widely in important journals such as *Illustrated London News*, *Wiener Musikzeitung* or *Revue et Gazette Musicale*. Very often, free scores were added as a gift to a newspaper. In this way not only the magazine but also the musical pieces were advertised and fashioned. On the other hand, to encourage sales the publishers sometimes put out their music at an inflated price, and immediately advertised it at half-price. A good cover sheet was its own advertisement, commanding attention in the music shop window, thus it is not to be wondered at that music publishers were willing to employ first-rate artists to complete the covers at very high prices.

The greatest names in the execution of pictorial sheet music covers in England were Alfred Concanen, John Brandard, Walter Roert Mallyon, Henry Maguire and Robert Jacob Hamerton. They were the only specialists in this field to be systematically collected, and it is from their surviving work that one can get an idea of the quantity of sheet music that was published.<sup>644</sup> Artists linked to the sheet music cover business can be divided roughly into two classes: artists and illustrators. The distinction between artists and illustrators is that the latter group kept their text and their commission in mind, aware that they were supplementary. Many artists turned to executing sheet music covers for purely commercial reasons. John Brandard, who created many polka covers was particularly prone to this. He was an extraordinarily prolific artist, working in a variety of styles and media. His covers include humorous line engravings for the clubs and saloon songs, as well as superbly executed lithographic landscapes for drawing-room ballads and picturesque pieces.

An important landmark for the development of lithography was when Jullien began to issue a series of polkas and quadrilles lithographed by John Brandard in colour. Jullien broke

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<sup>643</sup> Lenneberg (2003): 98.

<sup>644</sup> Pearsall (1972): 78.

down the barriers and let in the crowd. He promoted the pictorial sheet music cover as no one else could have. The covers were beautifully executed and printed and very often dedicated to princesses, royal personalities and aristocratic families as we already have noted. It seems that Jullien was a man born ahead of his time, knowing the commercial value of self-dramatisation and clever promotional methods. The same could be said about Johann Strauss younger. He composed and then published lots of his dance music pieces and no one else in Vienna managed to do that better at the mid-century. The printing industry and the developing music business must be considered responsible for the lowering of musical values. The production of sheet music not only increased the music audience and facilitated the manipulation of taste. It also created the distinction between connoisseurs and the general public. Values for learning and entertainment no longer proved compatible for defining musical undertakings.

Another factor that contributed to the success of Jullien's and Strauss' sheet music was the popularity of the piano. The first half of the nineteenth century was above all the age of the pianoforte. In the 1840s the piano recital was introduced. It is commonly assumed that the amateur pianists of the Victorian period were either from the middle or artisan classes. It was quite popular in all three capitals to send young girls to study the piano. This was done to increase their value among good society and they often had to entertain the guests with some pleasant dance pieces during the private parties organized at home. Hence, piano playing became a status symbol. Being able to play the piano was a distinct asset in genteel courtship, for not only could the executant exhibit hidden talents but also indulge in some saucy flirting, when playing with a partner of the opposite sex. Thus, piano sheet music covers for daily use at home circulated and their amount was extraordinarily high. As a matter of fact, there would be enough material for a separate work on the polka based only on the analysis of the polka sheet music covers that circulated in Europe at the mid-century.



## **CONCLUSIONS: Polka – the spectre haunting Europe**

Concluding, what was so interesting about the Bohemian polka that it became a fashion in European capitals? Did it cause a revolution in Paris, London and Vienna? Who danced it and how and where was it danced? Was it received in the same way in all these places?

At the beginning of this journey we posed precisely all these questions and after a long travel through Paris, Vienna and London of the mid-nineteenth century we can try to give answers. The research literature about the polka is quite scarce and it has been identified that the topic of the polka has been omitted and neglected in the academic field. Where the scientists focused on the polka it was usually in terms of its mysterious origins and within the context of the social dancing culture. The same dance has never been properly studied as a separate genre and as a theme it was rather under-emphasized in academic research. Thus, there were a few objectives for this analysis. Firstly, by applying a transnational approach to follow the transfer and development of the polka fashion in London, Paris and Vienna. Secondly, through the use of *histoire croisée* to understand what the main factors were that influenced this popularity, how intercrossings of different receptions influenced the popularization of the polka in different European cultural circles and finally to analyze who the main recipients of the new cultural trend were. In this way, this PhD was designed to expand the current body of knowledge on this scarcely studied topic, rather than establish a whole new field of academic endeavour. It is, thus, a contribution to the body of knowledge with regards to European cultures and fashions as well as European history of music and dance of the nineteenth century.

Many issues need to be considered when enhancing links between the popularity of the polka in different European cities and their social, political and economic situation. These issues can be divided along the organizational levels and hence, I presented them in four different chapters. Consequently, the empirical studies carried out in this thesis were focused on the history of the development of the polka fashion in three European cities: Vienna, Paris and London and served to delineate the general model and tendencies of the evolution of the polka vogue in Europe. Three first chapters are related to the study of the polka wave and its popularization in each of the above mentioned capitals. They present the history of the polka in Vienna, Paris and London and this analysis is done through the use of the approach of cultural transfer and *histoire croisée*. Through the use of the transfer approach I showed how the polka moved between different places and spaces and who the main agents of this circulation were. Nevertheless, taking into consideration the contemporaneity of all these

transfers the focus was on the intercrossings taking place between the agents of the polka transfer, different European receptions of the new fashion and variety of ways and modes of its appropriation. This kind of approach was possible through the use of the *histoire croisée* which deals with the intercrossings and interrelations between the objects of study. Thus, the main research aim of this part of the thesis was to understand and identify the features of the polka and social and political conditions that had an impact on its becoming a fashion in three European capitals. Furthermore, the public and receivers of this new cultural product were deeply analysed and the reasons for its popularization were discussed.

The final chapter applies the third methodological tool which is a comparison of the factors and at the same time results of the individual studies of each city that influenced the popularity of the polka. It is a sort of a summary that identifies different patterns and characteristics in all these cities and it serves to understand how the dynamics and factors that influenced the popularization of the polka in different places varied or resembled each other.

With regards to the historical sources used in this thesis, different types of research materials such as contemporary press, lithographs, sheet music covers, novels, diaries, poems, concert programs and posters, dance manuals etc. were analyzed. Furthermore, I focused my attention on certain agents such as conductors (Johann Strauss and Louis Jullien) and dancers (Eugene Coralli and Henry Cellarius) to follow the transfer of the polka and consequent evolution of the fashion in different European places.

The result of the study enabled firstly the confirmation of my hypothesis that the factual fashion for the polka was born in Paris and not in Vienna where the polka was first transferred from Prague. Vienna was the first stage of the dissemination of the polka in Europe, but its real popularity and process of fashioning started in Paris which at the time was the capital of fashion and dictated tastes in different cultural areas. Straightaway from Paris the polka vogue came to London to be finally fully adopted and accepted in Vienna. All these events took place contemporaneously between 1844-1850, intermingled and influenced each other in a direct and indirect way. My study made possible the classification of different factors that influenced the popularity of the polka in Europe into three different categories:

1. relationship between the polka and the rise of bourgeoisie and development of public sphere
2. relationship of the polka and the women question, hence discourses on the immoral aspect of polka dancing



### 3. relationship of the polka and commercialization making the polkamania a new consumption product

Relating to the first category, the study showed clearly that the polka became very popular in the time when the power of bourgeoisie increased significantly and as a matter of fact its popularity was inextricably connected to, if not dependent upon, this issue. The bourgeoisie was a new social class that dictated tastes and acted as entrepreneurs in the new era of commercialization and industrialization. Most of all, this social class gained great power while the aristocracy no longer had financial possibilities to maintain private orchestras and commission new works. Thus, the bourgeoisie gained more and more influence over musical life of all three cities. Furthermore, the commercialization of culture and music weakened the importance of musical patronage and established a new function of the so called entrepreneur. This meant that the artists decided who they composed and performed for, and hence they created for those who could pay for their performances regardless of their status and social connections. That was also the case of the polka, that even if it became very fashionable among all European social classes it was particularly popular among the middle class in all European capitals discussed in this study.

The second characteristic that influenced the evolution of the polka in all three cities was its character which was considered immoral and erotic and thus dangerous for women. Finally, women could participate in dancing freely and to a certain degree without limitations. At least social dancing required both female and male to participate in the dance. This freedom, however, was not the same in all three capitals. Paris provided women with most liberty in cultural life. Here, in fact it could be noted that many female dancers performed or used the polka to seduce men and show their power over them. As a matter of fact, the polka here was much more exotic, frivolous, erotic and sensual than in the other capitals and my research demonstrated that clearly. London audiences were fascinated with the Parisian craze for the polka. However, here the dance was more reserved and organized which was also the result of the rigid politics of the time. Finally, the polka in Vienna exhibited less triviality than in other places. Firstly, it was due to the rigid Habsburg politics and secondly, the polka there was a sort of the continuation of the waltz dancing fashion, hence it was not as new and fresh as in the other European places.

Last but not least it was shown that the polka became a popular consumption product of the time. The new dance could be widely diffused due to the development of new printing technics and new forms of communication. Thus, it was widely advertised in different national journals across countries and popularized in contemporary novels, plays, posters and

lithographs. It became an important commercial good in the form of sheet music for domestic use and was used by the dancing masters in the form of polka lessons. Among the most famous masters were Cellarius, Coralli, Raab and Laborde. The same dancing masters as well as conductors traveled between the countries and passed information on novelties in the musical and cultural life. As a matter of fact, it was observed that the names of famous polka composers were to be found contemporaneously on the pages of the journals in Paris, Vienna and London. Thanks to the evolution of different means of communication they could travel easily and the information about their fame spread with the speed of light.

The main research question, mentioned at the beginning of this study was; how was it possible that a Bohemian rural dance managed to cross European borders and become popular among so many different peoples and nations. The explanation lies in the close relationship between the nature of European societies at the mid-century and the nature of social dance. The polka, which was a social dance originating from Bohemia was at the time fresh, exotic, happy and sensual and all these qualities had a great impact on its popularity in different places and among different kinds of people. In Vienna, it was the similarity and familiarity of the polka with their own culture and life that gained Viennese hearts. The city was inhabited in great part by minorities from Hungary, Poland, Bohemia and other places; thus the rhythms of the polka resembled what they left at home in their own countries. On the other hand, the Austrian capital had its great star Johann Strauss II who managed to use the fresh and energetic character of the Bohemian dance to attract thousands of people regardless of social background. Finally, in a city of music such as Vienna all kinds of novelties were always very welcome. As for Paris, first and foremost it was the erotic and sensual character of the polka that allowed and led to its becoming a fashion here. People were crazy for dances that left space for freedom, flirtatiousness and excitement. This feature seems to have played a great role in the polka becoming fashionable in the French capital. Secondly, the diffusion of the polka in Paris depended strongly on the birth of the new class of bourgeoisie that dictated tastes at the time and found in the polka an expression of their desires and needs. As for London, it was to a certain degree the Parisian craze for the polka in itself that had a great impact on its popularity in the English capital. The British loved to copy Parisian fashions and always observed with attention what was going on in the French capital. Secondly, all the consequences of the industrial developments such as communication improvements, increase in the quantity and quality of the newspapers, evolution of the printing technics and production of musical instruments, influenced immensely the popularization of the polka through advertisement and commercialization.

According to Cellarius, the contemporary author of the dancing manual "*Drawing Room Dances*", the polka revolutionized ballroom dancing, though it had initially been criticized on its first appearance, and it was soon adopted by all social classes. This study showed that the polka did not cause a revolution, however its impact on various European societies was significant and could be compared to the effects of revolution. National journals often used ironic, satirical or exaggerated tones to give this new social event more significance and even a revolutionary air. As it was shown in the study, exaggeration became a very important tool that enabled the commercialization of the consumption product of the time. With regards to the polka, it was applied mainly through the use of particular, often excessive words, funny, satirical lithographs, ironical poems and short stories bordering on absurdity and extremity. All in all, however, it cannot be omitted that the polka together with the waltz started and enabled the continuation of a new era of social dancing without limits, dancing that expressed freedom, eroticism, sexuality and joy of life. It was adopted in all three capitals with a great enthusiasm and had its particularities in each of them.

As afore-mentioned, the fashion for the polka was a European phenomenon observed and studied due to the period when it was particularly noticed and fashioned. I focused my attention on three main European capitals to be able to draw a general picture of the fashion of the polka in Europe. Further step of this research would be enlargement of the scope of the analysis to few further aspects. Firstly, one could work on the relationship between massive migration to the new continent and popularity of the polka in America in the last century. It seems that the polka was and in some parts of the America still is a very important part of national culture of European immigrants of the twentieth century. Furthermore, back to the nineteenth century, it seems that at the same time when there was the polka craze in Vienna, Paris and London, the polka was also very popular in America and other European cities. In my analysis, I put the emphasis on three European capitals, knowing however that at the same time when there was the polkomania taking place in Europe, the same was happening contemporaneously in New York and other American cities. It would be interesting to continue the research started in this work and analyze the evolution of the polka fashion in America and then compare developments on both continents to see if they proceeded in the same way. A further study could be undertaken with the aim of verifying if the same factors influenced the popularity of the polka in other European countries and outside of the cultural centres that have been researched here. It could be done both through the study of the agents used in this research as well as other famous dancers such as Coulon, Grissi, Perrot, Cerrito, Rae, Saint-Leon or Laborde etc. who travelled widely and danced the polka all over the world.

In this sense any of them could, in fact, be chosen to broaden the analysis of the diffusion of the polka. Among them, Carlotta Grissi and Jules Perrot seem to be the couple who gained extraordinary popularity among the public of different countries.

At the beginning of this work I mentioned also that there is an ongoing discussion concerning the roots of the polka which have never been properly studied. There are many hypotheses that support the contrary ideas about the origins of that dance, connecting it with Bohemia, France, Germany, Hungary, Poland and other European countries. A recommendation for a future academic research on the polka would be the analysis of the roots of the polka starting with Bohemia, the first place where the polka was probably encountered. Furthermore, research such as this offers the potential to adopt a wide variety of approaches. The polka could be investigated only and entirely in relation to gender interaction or with regard to the commercialization of contemporary life, since there is little doubt now that there is a close connection between the development of different fashions and commercialisation. Thus, more attention could be devoted to the study of European cultural goods as commercialized goods.

Clearly, while the structure proposed may be applied to all kinds of academic papers, there are still many unanswered questions relating to the polka. The content presented here confirms that the Bohemian dance must be seen as a significant part of the total European cultural pattern of the mid-nineteenth century. Furthermore, the conclusions drawn in this thesis are applicable mostly to academics who teach history and musicology. However, here examples from different disciplines such as medicine, psychology or political sciences were explored. This, does not mean that the conclusions of this thesis can be transferred directly to other disciplines without further consideration.

Summarizing, regardless of the time, political situation, social control and notwithstanding all those who tried and try to control and exclude passion, men and women always sought to enjoy life, have fun together and be free. Thus, passion and love appeared in different historical periods like the carsic river and took different forms. The eighteenth century was a period of the French revolution and Napoleonic Wars followed by the Restoration. In 1815 the Congress of Vienna tried to return to the political norms of pre-revolutionary times. During this event everybody danced the waltz. The years that followed was the time of conservatism, order and morality. Again, the 1840s saw a new political rebellion. With this came the polka - another "*spectre haunting Europe*"<sup>645</sup>. In the 1900s there

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<sup>645</sup> Marx Karl / Engels Friedrich (1848): *The Communist Manifesto*. Teddington: The Echo

was the rise of dictatorships, communism, nazism, fascism and also two terrible world wars. Mid-twentieth century culture was soaked by false morality and strict ethics and behaviours. In the 1950s a new rebellion against this broke out. It was the time of rock and roll. Dancers hugged one other while girls twirled and spun in the air showing all they had to hide. Finally, in 2014 a look at a modern disco: shows hundreds of young men and women squeezing each other, sweating in dance and flirting. Would all this have been possible without the polka?

## APPENDIX

The thesis I presented is an intercultural work on the polka fashion in Europe facing many topics of European dimension. In this work I focused on three capital cities to investigate the development of the fashion of the polka in Europe. I did it through the use of cultural transfer, crossed history and comparison. Through the choice of agents such as conductors and dancers I explored step by step what where the main factors that made the polka fashioning possible, who were its main audiences and where was it danced. The following chapter is a sort of a synthesis and addendum to what has already been said and it focuses on few issues: historiographical aspects, methodological explanations, relation between the urbanization and the polka fashion and finally the issue of ethnicity related to the polka as part of round dancing culture.

### **Methodological approach in the study of the polka**

In this section I would like to refer to the methodological concepts which might be applied in the study of the polka and make some clarification on the way my study was conducted. Since years there has been a debate and a sort of polemical quarrel on transnational history between followers of the traditional historical comparison method and the supporters of the model of transfer history. This discussion began in the mid-1990s, after around twenty five years of comparative history, during which numerous comparative works were published. Four concepts were developed and became the nucleus of the polemics: the concept of 'transfers'; the concept of 'entangled history'; later the theory of 'histoire croisée'; and last but not least, the idea of a combination of comparative and 'relations history'.<sup>646</sup> The development of these concepts influenced each other and now contests historical doctrine.

Traditionally, comparison is one of the approaches used by practitioners of the so called transnational history. Since the late eighteenth century, it was also considered a sign of modernity within the academic discourse of the West. At the turn of the eighteenth century, in a period when a reorganization of the social sciences was underway, the key role was ascribed to the comparative mode. According to Haupt and Kocka, "*a comparative mode of reflection was held to bring about new ways of conceptualization, accompanied by a number of methodologically fruitful operations, such as drawing analogies, locating and defining*

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<sup>646</sup>Kaelble, Hartmut (2005): *Die Debatte über Vergleich und Transfer und was jetzt?* In: *Geschichte.transnational* (Forum), 8 February 2005, <http://geschichte.transnational.clio-online.net/forum/2005-02-002.pdf>.



*relationships, and drawing parallels while identifying difference.*"<sup>647</sup> A century later the focus was on the state or nation states, or subjects associated in one way or the other with nation building. The return of comparative history method during the last twenty years, especially in Germany, initially continued with many of its older assumptions still intact, though in recent years these have been increasingly subject to critical scrutiny as part of the effort to respond to the challenges of globalization.<sup>648</sup>

Cultural history can benefit from comparison as much as economic, social, or institutional history, as well as other variety of studies that cut across these distinctions. The most mature comparative history of Europe concentrates on similarities and differences in connection to convergence and divergence between national societies, identities and cultures. This kind of approach has its positive sides that are related to the great importance of national cultures, borders, identities and politics in shaping both the life of the past and the present images of history. But, unquestionably, local and regional identities were always important and continue to play a role, both in structuring past realities as well as historical understanding today. Furthermore, in recent years the Europeanization as well as the globalization of political and economic life, and culture and communication have created and intensified connections, entanglements, relations and constellations that go far beyond the borders between nation states, regions, and civilizations. Consequently, historical studies have kept on placing their questions and responses within local and regional frameworks. Nonetheless, transnational approaches have lately gained much ground.

The French historian Michael Espagne understood a **transfer** "*as the processes without which the norms, images and representations of one culture appear in another by the transmission of concepts.*"<sup>649</sup> Such transmissions arise from migration, as well as from meetings and the getting to know texts from another culture. Espagne criticized the comparatists for placing together artificially isolated national cases and neglecting the mutual contacts between cultures.<sup>650</sup> He commented upon that comparisons are static and focus too much on institutions and structures and largely exclude experiences and history. According to him, classical comparison fails to effectively address the historian's central object - time,

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<sup>647</sup> Haupt, Heinz-Gerhard / Kocka Jürgen (2012): *Comparative and Transnational History: Central European Approaches and New Perspectives*. New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books.

<sup>648</sup> Osterhammel, Jürgen (2003): "*Transferanalyse und Vergleich im Fernverhältnis.*" In: Kaelble and Schriewere (2003): "*Vergleich und Transfer*", 439-65, ref. to 440. New York, Frankfurt a.M.

<sup>649</sup> Espagne (1999)

<sup>650</sup> Espagne, Michael (1999): *Les transferts culturels franco-allemands*. Paris: Presses Univ. De France.

because it compares societies from the same time period. On the contrary, time is an essential component of transfer studies, since this methodology is always analysing change. He argued that every nation is created not only by its own traditions, but also to a great degree by transfers from other nations and that experiences stand at the core of transfer studies. As a matter of fact, numerous social and cultural historical studies have shown that contacts and exchange between cultures, societies, and states deeply can influence their development. This is particularly visible when taking into consideration the transfer of the polka between Paris and London. The fashion of the polka in London was strongly influenced by the reception in Paris. Thus, interconnections and entanglements played a crucial role in its adoption in London. It was slightly different in the case of Vienna where, surprisingly, the polka became fashionable few years later than in the other capital cities. Here, it was influenced by the previous popularity of the waltz and developed in a very close relation to the entire social dancing culture.

Instead, Osterhammel's primary interest are transfers between Europe and Asia, as well as other non-European societies rather than transfers among European countries. For him transfers are a combination of cultural, political, social and economic developments.<sup>651</sup> Social scientist, Shalini Randeria, and the historian and specialist of Japan, Sebastian Conrad, raise a critique of classical comparison similar to that of Espagne but continue Osterhammel's line of thought in two respects and develop the definition of '**entangled history**' or '**shared history**'. According to this idea, transfers connect and integrate not only neighbouring countries, nor only members of similar cultures such as France and Germany, but also countries spatially separated from one another, such as Japan and Germany. Entangled history supports the idea that direct and indirect transfers happen everywhere and interconnect together different civilizations all over the world. Moreover, it emphasizes that colonizers and colonized societies are strongly bound to one another through transfers and not only through the much-researched transfers from the mother country into the colonies, but also, though less frequently studied transfers from the colonies to the mother countries. The concept of entangled history therefore highlights a shift in emphasis away from Europe.<sup>652</sup>

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<sup>651</sup> Osterhammel, Jürgen (2003): "*Transferanalyse und Vergleich im Fernverhältnis.*" In: Kaelble and Schriewere (2003); "*Vergleich und Transfer*", 439-65, ref. to 440. New York, Frankfurt a.M.

<sup>652</sup> Conrad Sebastian/Randeria Shalini (2002): *Geteilte Geschichte: Europa in einer postkolonialer Welt.* In: C. S. Conrad and S. Randeria: *Jenseits des Eurozentrismus: Postkoloniale Perspektiven in den Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften.* Frankfurt a. M.: 9-49.

In reaction to this argument French historian and German specialist, Michael Werner, and French political scientist, Benedicte Zimmermann, constructed the concept of **histoire croisée**. Three fundamental thoughts have contributed to the comparative history discussion: *histoire croisée* is more or less rooted in a scepticism concerning the stand-alone existence of transnational spaces, languages, values, movements, or institutions, and then nation is perceived as a central point of orientation. Consequently, this concept requires that any type of transnational analysis takes into account the essential differences in the perspectives of the societies being compared and therefore constantly switches perspectives and becomes increasingly reflexive. Moreover, *histoire croisée* necessitates going beyond the predominantly binational orientation of comparative and transnational research to take into account multilateral approaches and research. At last, this concept reconsiders the clear opposition between either the drawbacks of classical comparison or the benefits of transfer studies. It is also argued that comparison and transfer share similar strengths and weaknesses.<sup>653</sup>

The last concept is **the combination of comparative and transfer studies**. It developed from the idea that transfer studies consist of the same weaknesses as classical comparison. It affirms that transfer studies must also construct their objects in order to define what makes a change through circulation one and other culture. In addition, not only transfer studies but also comparisons are tightly connected with the concept of time since they not only address similarities and differences, but also divergence and convergence. In brief, transfer studies and comparisons rely upon and compliment one another.

What these different approaches share is *“a common interest in the crossing of borders between nations, regions, continents or other spaces in all kinds of encounters, perceptions, movements, relations and interactions between them, and in the way they perceived, influenced, stamped, and constituted one another.”*<sup>654</sup> One of the roots of such methods has been interest in the cultural relationships between two national states, specifically Germany and France. It is important to add that the logic of comparison and the logic of entanglement history or *histoire croisée* evidently differ. The greatest difference refers to the units of comparison. While the comparative method separates them, entanglement-oriented approaches put emphasis on the connections, the belonging-together, the continuity, the hybridity of observable spaces or analytical units and reject differentiating them clearly.

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<sup>653</sup> Werner Michael/Zimmermann Bénédicte (2006): *Beyond Comparison. Histoire Croisée and the Challenge of Reflexivity*. *History and Theory* 45 (2006): 30-50.

<sup>654</sup> Haupt / Kocka (2012).

It is thus clear, with the current development of transnational and transregional approaches, the issue of comparison gains a new timeliness. Comparative history analyses similarities and differences between historical units such as national states, regions, cultures and economies. By contrast, entangled history deals with interconnection, transfer, and mutual connections and influences across boundaries. It can be another mode of moving beyond the limits of national history. There is much tension, but there is also productive and innovative collaboration between comparative history and entangled history. Hence, there is a great choice of methods that allows the study of the development of the polka fashion in various European cities and the combining of three approaches such as comparison, transfer studies and *histoire croisée* has its logic and seems to me the most convenient. Below I discuss the reasons of my choices.

The starting point for my research is the observation that there are almost no academic works dedicated entirely to the polka, thus choosing the capital cities, where different political, social and economic changes were taking place, as comparison units seems to me the most appropriate way to start a research on this scarcely researched topic. I chose Paris, Vienna and London as my comparison units. In my opinion, it is important to have, to a certain degree, few static units of comparison to be able to draw a general picture of the appropriation of the new dancing fashion in Europe. Thus, only a solid comparative perspective on the evolution of the polka fashion in Europe gives a possibility of a further research into details of this rather unknown theme which can be done by the adoption of other methods discussed earlier.

As a matter of fact, being aware of debates on lacks and shortages of comparative method in a transnational discourse I decided to combine the comparative approach with other two concepts: cultural transfer and *histoire croisée*. In regard to transfers, I followed the transfer of the polka in its chronological order taking into consideration when it first became fashionable and hence, I firstly studied the fashion of the polka in Paris then in Vienna and finally in London. I did it through the research of the activity and movements of the main agents of the polka such as dancers and composers. Even if it is truth that I focused on the activity of those agents in the related city, I took into account their movements, travels and touring all over Europe and outside of it.

The sometimes sharp polemics between the supporters of historical comparison and proponents of cultural transfers have concealed the issue that both concepts are highly constructivist, since they both link the study of units that have to be distinguished from their context and that are put into a connection by the researcher. Both methods have focused for a

long time on national units of study. Whereas with regard to comparative history, the main objects of analysis have been nation states and societies, transfer history dealt mostly with national cultures, especially cultures of France and Germany. The French historian Michael Werner has summarized that both approaches belong to a “family of relational approaches”. As mentioned before, he introduced into the academic discussion the term *histoire croisée*, which can be translated literally as “crossed history”. Like Espagne, Werner stated that German and French histories are tightly connected. This goes together with concepts such as entangled history. Some proponents of *histoire croisée* have rejected comparative history as too analytical, in the sense of drawing distinctions where they exist. They have emphasized the opposition of comparison and *histoire croisée*. These stands are not convincing and have largely been abandoned. Nevertheless, there continue to be many examples of *histoire croisée* and entanglement history that are satisfied with reconstructing relations and influences without adopting a clear-cut comparison. This is questionable, because it is almost impossible for transfer and entanglement historians to achieve their goals if they shy away from precise comparison. Without a clear comparison, there is a danger that historical studies of transfers and of entanglements become airy ad thin. This regards new and little researched topics such as for example the polka.

On the other hand, comparative studies are not damaged, but improved and adapted by considering relations between the units of comparison whenever and wherever they exist. In spite of those interesting studies that compare societies very far remote from one another and unconnected, comparative research can and must consider connections between the compared cases. These can be mutual transfers and travels, perceptions and influences, relations of imitation and avoidance, migrations and trade, interaction, shared dependence from one and the same constellation or common origin. They all may contribute to interpret and account for similarities and differences, convergences and divergences between the cases that are compared. The rise of entangled history has reconfirmed this methodological necessity. It is the task of the future scholars to better combine comparative and entanglement history. Historical comparison is changing as it is becoming more subtle and more reflective and hence, it will continue to adjust to new needs and tasks.

Returning back to the polka, the use of the concept of crossed history allowed me focusing on crossing different national receptions and following the intercrossings of agents of the polka transfer such as composers, dance manuals or dancers. In my case the best example of this crossing could be observed on the example of the diffusion and use of Cellarius’ dancing manual that was translated into different languages and used in different

countries at the same time. The same regards the dancing teachers who often travelled to Paris to learn the proper way of the polka dancing and then taught it in their own country. Here, dancing master Coulon is the best example. He used to go to Paris to observe the lessons by the great dancing masters and then taught and danced the polka in London. Further examples are composers themselves. The career of the Viennese composer Johann Strauss who was invited to Russia, England, France and other countries is exemplary of these transnational connections. His intercrossings with the foreign cultures resulted in new pieces inspired by national melodies and rhythms of the visited places. Also Louis Jullien, the polka agent in London used to do same. He got his musical inspirations when travelling to America, France or even simply to the British provinces. Thus, there was a constant intercrossing of ideas and experiences through travels.

As a matter of fact, in the nineteenth century, entire opera companies, stage sets, and orchestra travelled throughout Europe. Invitations for composers and star singers and players became a part of the daily routine of all of the bigger theatres. The audiences were connected through daily newspapers and cultural periodicals. Theatre and music journals already had built up a network of correspondents by the first half of the nineteenth century. These networks covered every large city of Europe. The readership went far beyond a specialized audience and was informed about all important premiers, scandals, trends, and fashions. These journals and their readers increasingly developed a common understanding of European civilization and culture. The travelling artists, the art critics, and their audiences formed a core of a European public. The character of these networks of music and music audiences changed, however. In the first half of the nineteenth century, Paris still was considered a cultural capital of Europe. However, Vienna, London as the capital of commerce, and a few other European cities went closely behind.

Moreover, metropolises especially fulfilled a role of centres of communication for several cultural spaces and as nodes and hubs of cultural exchange. This can be shown using the example of Vienna, which was obviously a capital for Central Europe. It also played an important role for German culture and politics and because of its status in music and opera production and at times as a political capital, Vienna was also a part of Italian or southern European cultural history. At the same time, Paris became a sort of a starting point of an axis of cultural transfers that comprised an intense exchange of conductors, composers, singers, costumes, music scores, and actors on my route. All in all, Europe itself could be seen as a cultural space interconnected by communication and interaction. The amount and intensity of

cultural contacts increased greatly in the second half of the nineteenth century. Europe expanded in terms of space and its cultural map was full of many new cultural metropolises.

According to Kaelble the most significant challenges in the current status of the debate about the development of historical comparison and relations history are three. Firstly, while the methodological works about classical historical comparison emerged at the end of a long practice of comparative history by historians, the discussion regarding the other concepts developed somewhat in reverse. Neither for 'entangled history', nor for *histoire croisée*, nor for the combination of historical comparison and relations history, are there a great number of empirical studies – and there are no internationally known, heavily cited and frequently translated model studies for future studies to engage. Secondly, it is still little researched, how 'transfer history', 'integration history' and 'relations history' transnationally relate to one another. Finally, this debate should be communicated to neighbouring disciplines. It should move beyond its Franco-German exclusivity and open up into the anglo-Saxon, Spanish-speaking and East Asian space.<sup>655</sup>

Summarizing, the aim of this thesis was to study the polka through the transfer, *histoire croisée* and comparison. It was fulfilled to a certain degree. I chose the capital cities as the units of comparison to be able to draw the general picture of the development of the polka fashion in Europe. The lack of previous research on this topic, however, inevitably led me to the comparison that became the mostly used methodology in my research. I realize though, that entanglement does rearrange the perception of a culture's past, but it does not completely remove that past and its workings. "*Neither country was invented from nothingness through encounter.*"<sup>656</sup> If the entanglement is to develop into a valuable analytical method, one which goes beyond the vague idea that everything is related and connected to everything else, the first action would be to differentiate as to its extent. Only comparison can depict the different modes in which entanglement worked.

Moreover, we should not presume that anything and everything were connected and "entangled" to the same degree, in the same way, and simultaneously. Different matters of social life can be better comprehended within regional, national, international or transnational limits; the level of global integration varies. Hence, the choice of comparison in the study of the polka fashion is on the one hand rational but on the other hand also rewarding as it enables to draw a general picture of the development of the polka fashion in Europe. This does not change the fact that, from an entangled-history point of view,

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<sup>655</sup> Kaelble (2005)

<sup>656</sup> Haupt / Kocka (2012)



comparison seems to be a bit too mechanistic and analytical in the sense that it separates reality into different pieces in order to analyze, that is, to compare the pieces as units of comparison, whereas it would be essential to view them *“as one, as one web of entanglements, one “Zusammenhang” of “Verflechtungen” and relations.”*<sup>657</sup>

Therefore, I incorporated elements of the “entangled histories” approach into the comparative design of my research. Certainly, the act of comparison presupposes the analytical separation of the cases to be compared. But that does not mean ignoring or neglecting the interrelations between these cases. In my work, such interrelations became part of the comparative framework and I analyzed them as factors that have led to similarities or differences between the cases I compared. I took the polka as a process happening in different places at the same time and compared its appropriation and diffusion in three European cities. I gave much weight to the interrelations between these cities, for example by analyzing the ideas as well as the processes of perception, imitation, copying, transfer and rejection among the audiences of these cities. I showed also that some of these interrelations contributed to more similarity while others led to important differences between national patterns of adopting the polka in Europe. Through the investigation of the concert programmes, dance manuals diffusion, transfers between the places of the conductors, musicians and dancing masters I showed not only the differences and similarities of the development of the polka fashion in Europe but also showed how they perceived and influenced one another. The results of this thesis show that it is possible to treat historical phenomena as units of comparison and, at the same time, as components of a larger whole.

### **The cultural history of the polka: the press as a major source**

The press is an important historical resource for research on nineteenth-century culture and constitutes an inseparable part of this culture in its own right. Periodicals and newspapers of that time dealt with every imaginable theme. Contributions might be leading articles, installments of serial fiction, an engraving, pieces of gossip, poetry, brief market reports, a report from a news agency, a piece of gossips and trivia copied from another publication, a concert program or an advertisement. The value and importance of newspapers and periodicals lies in more than what was their content. With regard to culture, these complex objects had emotional, physical and symbolic meaning and presence in the lives of their

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<sup>657</sup> Haupt / Kocka (2012)

readers and thus became agents of nineteenth-century culture.<sup>658</sup> They circulate in the society, moving from press to bookseller and later to reader and, most probably, also to other readers. They also disseminated images, ideas and representations, providing the source through which readers could imagine and get to know better the world and bring this into line with their own lived experience.

Newspapers, journals and periodicals took part in nineteenth-century culture as both media and objects, giving a possibility to ideas, images, texts and representations to diffuse. At the same time they circulated among society and were used in a variety of different modes. The press helped for example the book business by publishing advertisements and reviews, on the other hand book publication contributed to establishing the authority and hence, reputation of a contributor to a journal or periodical. Most readers consumed this new material thanks to the press, as the high price of books throughout the period meant that not everybody could afford to buy them. A novel, for example, might initially be introduced to the readers as a series in a magazine, later advertised when it was published as an expensive three-volume novel, promoted through regular articles and reviews on a particular subjects, then noted and advertised as it was republished in cheaper editions for the market beyond the libraries.

Newspapers and periodicals were almost always a result of a work of many authors. Thus, they were multi-authored but rarely revealed the names of all of their contributors. It is not out of significance in a scholar research as this makes it very difficult to use authorship as a methodological framework through which to determine and delimit the archive. In fact, the libraries have usually on disposal sets of volumes instead of author's collected works and numbers of titles instead of author's names. Those volumes are composed of a great deal of print but their complex and wide-ranging contents and attunement to the period when they were produced demand a high degree of historical knowledge and critical flexibility. Each issue of a newspaper was elaborated by a complex network of contributors whose goal was to produce an object that would be widely bought and read. Nowadays, information on those collaborators is very scarce and we do not know too much not only about many of these contributors but also about who actually read the nineteenth-century press, or indeed how was it read by the readers or what else they did with newspapers and journals. Newspapers might appear with different frequency - daily or once, twice or three times a week, as well as could be published during the different parts of the day. Some weeklies aligned themselves

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<sup>658</sup> Mussell, James (2012): *Nineteenth-Century Press in the Digital Age*. UK: Palgrave MacMillan.

with the monthlies sometimes as reviews evaluating the importance of events, or as magazines providing diverting reading, disapproving at the same time the association with the news. The monthlies themselves decided about a greater pause between issues, giving thus time for their readers to reflect upon their contents and its relationship to the wider world. Just as the periodicity of weeklies allowed them to react to passing events more quickly than the monthlies and so trade in timely information such as news and gossip. Readers were subject to a great variety of texts, from the publications they read to the critics, advertisements and comments that overflowed the pages of the nineteenth-century press.

The industrialization of print in the nineteenth century created what Scott Bennett called a “journalizing society” in which the press was the “*chief means of carrying forward the discourse by which a society comes to know itself*”<sup>659</sup>. Nevertheless, the conditions that gave newspapers and periodicals a possibility to play such a role – their abundance, diversity seriality, ephemerality, heterogeneity – posed problems for those readers who wanted to access their contents. As Bennett noted, “*there was no way to know what was in them*” and this “*inability to get to much of the seminal writing of the period marks a radical failure on the age’s communication with itself.*”<sup>660</sup> There was no single view position from which nineteenth-century readers could study the varied products of the press as they appeared at different intervals from locations around the country. Instead, contact with writing was casual and resulted from combination of rumour, quotation, advertisement and review. Moreover, periodicals and newspapers were often commercial, superficial, attention-grabbing, ephemeral, distracting, and to a certain degree became simply a commodity. According to Mussell, “*what was at stake was not just seminal writings, but the opportunity of accessing the diversity of print in its broadest sense: images and words, the full range of genres, on every conceivable subject, oriented towards different configurations of readers.*”<sup>661</sup> There was no position from which to recognize and appreciate the absolute diversity of sources that constituted nineteenth-century print culture.

In the 1840s new types of publications emerged that used images to associate themselves with the passing moment. In England, there were two different types of publication, Punch and the Illustrated London News. They were both weeklies that exploited the evolutions in printing technology to target that part of the burgeoning middle-class

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<sup>659</sup> Bennett, Scott (1978): *The Bibliographic Control of Victorian Periodicals*. In: *Victorian Periodicals: A Guide to Research*, ed. J. Don Vann and Rosemary T. Van Arsdel. New York: Modern Language Association. 21.

<sup>660</sup> Bennett (1978): 21

<sup>661</sup> Mussell (2012)

market that was interested in illustrated journalism. Both titles proved successful and this ensured that they were widely copied by other publications. Richard Altick claims that “*Punch operated as an illustrated comic supplement to the Times and aimed at masculine, metropolitan and middle-class audience.*”<sup>662</sup> Furthermore, “*Punch mediated between an older tradition of indecent and sometimes slanderous satirical prints and caricatures and the more genteel, middle-class market for journalism that would be exploited in the following years by the ILN.*”<sup>663</sup> By the 1850s *Punch* became known as a humorous but respectable middle-class family paper, where politics were situated alongside domestic affairs in the cultural life of the nation. The standard techniques of graphic satire, which Noakes has described as “*exaggeration, reversal and incongruous juxtaposition*”, depended upon recognition for their effect and so *Punch*’s contributors built up a repertoire of stock types and representations through which to poke fun.<sup>664</sup>

A similar compromise between the novel and the familiar depicted the illustrations in the Illustrated London News. It defined itself as illustrated newspaper and the events it chose to show tended to concentrate on respectable public figures and events. “*The ILN, at a relatively expensive sixpence specialized in documenting social progress, although tempered with more dramatic representations of disasters, warfare and exploration.*”<sup>665</sup>

The growth of print journalism had a great influence on the relationship between literature, music, fashion, theatre, art and public, and in fact several newspapers were devoted to the matters of the stage, musical and literary world and those who attracted attention in all these affairs. As a consequence, new, specialized newspapers developed and focused on particular cultural aspects. For our purposes, la presse musicale not only consisted of specialized music reviews, but also of feuilletons in daily newspapers, relevant articles in theatrical journals, in literary periodicals, in magazines de mode, in satirical reviews and, as well as of engravings and lithographs in the illustrated press. Among such journals there were: *Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris*, *Le Ménestrel*, *L’Art musical*, *La France Musicale*, *The Musical World*, *Blätter für Musik, Theater, und Kunst*, *Le Mercure des Thèâtres*, *Wiener Theaterzeitung* etc. These journals had an important position in the society. For example, it

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<sup>662</sup> Altick, Richard (1957): *The English Common Reader: Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800-1900*. University of Chicago Press. p. xix

<sup>663</sup> Noakes, Richard (2004): *Punch and Mid-Victorian Comic Journalism*. In: Cantor G./Dawson G./ Gooday G./ Noakes R./ Shuttleworth S./Topham R.J.: *Science in the Nineteenth-Century Periodical: Reading the Magazine of Nature*. Cambridge University Press. 97.

<sup>664</sup> Noakes (2004): 114

<sup>665</sup> King, Andrew / Plunkett, John (2004): *Popular Print Media 1820-1910*. London: Routledge.

was said that the Wiener Theaterzeitung was “the most widely circulated of all Austrian newspapers and everyone knew it and it was read throughout Germany.”<sup>666</sup>

### *Caricature*

*“Cartoon is not to be considered merely as a comic or satirical comment on the main occurrence or situation of the week, but as contemporary history for the use of information of future generations cast into amusing form for the entertainment of the present.”*<sup>667</sup>

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The musical caricature enables exploring, from most probably a unique point of view, nineteenth-century cultural and musical life as it was seen by interested contemporaries. The extent of this sort of documentation is enormous and from the beginning of 1830s and continuing throughout the century, some of the most skilled artists of the period created numerous drawings for the many known satirical journals. In 1834 an English commentator, Henry Bulwer-Lytton estimated that *La Caricature* and *Le Charivari* “were a more potent political force in France than the legislative chambers combined”<sup>668</sup> In mid-nineteenth-century France extravagant affirmations were often made about the power of caricature as a political weapon. Conviction about the efficacy and strength of caricature was encouraged by the widespread belief that the French were both particularly talented satirists and peculiarly sensitive to ridicule, as well as by the fact that it was considered to be a distinctly democratic institution. Champfleury considered that “*caricature acted, along with the press, as interpreter for the masses.*”<sup>669</sup> By contrast the authorities of 1830s were worried about the effect which caricature had upon the uneducated and vulnerable crowd and regarded them as a means of manipulating people. The political caricatures by la Maison Aubert were published in two forms, either printed independently on single sheets of paper or appearing in “*La Caricature*” or “*Le Charivari*”. According to Kerr the average issue for a political caricature produced by La Maison Aubert was presumably well under 1000.<sup>670</sup> Nevertheless, the vast majority of Philippon’s<sup>671</sup> political caricatures appeared in his newspapers and were thus diffused much

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<sup>666</sup> Crittenden, Camille (2006): *Johann Strauss and Vienna: Operetta and the Politics of Popular Culture*. UK: Cambridge University Press. 27.

<sup>667</sup> *Cartoons from Punch*. With a preface by M.H. Spielmann, Vol. 1. Elibron Classics (2009).

<sup>668</sup> Bulwer-Lytton, Henry (1834): *France: Social, Literary, Political*. 2 vols.: 71-72

<sup>669</sup> Champfleury (1865): *Histoire de la caricature moderne*. p. vii.

<sup>670</sup> Kerr, David S. (2000): *Caricature and French Political Culture 1830-1848. Charles Philippon and the Illustrated Press*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

<sup>671</sup> A French lithographer, caricaturist and journalist. He was the editor of the *La Caricature* and *Le Charivari*, satirical political journals.

more widely. To understand better the impact of the caricature on contemporary society it is important to investigate its public.

Newspapers were normally sold by the issue and were expensive commodities in the 1830s. As the regular price for an annual subscription to a Parisian daily newspaper was 80 francs it was a luxury to have a personal subscription and only good prospering few middle-class families could afford it. Back to satirical press, *Le Charivari* was the cheapest daily newspaper in Paris (60 francs a year) and *La Caricature* cost 52 francs a year.<sup>672</sup> Both journals were remarkably good quality for the connoisseur of fine prints nevertheless, even if their prices were relatively modest they are unlikely to have appealed to a wider shifts of society than their non-illustrated rivals. Being satirical newspapers, they took as a base their reader's knowledge of the personalities, issues and events they parodied, knowledge best picked up by reading the serious press. It is improbable that middle-class families just prosperous enough to subscribe to one newspaper would have chosen a satirical journal. Almost certainly, those who received *Le Charivari* or *La Caricature*, subscribed simultaneously to one or more other newspapers as well.

Buying a newspaper was a choice and option reserved for more prosperous members of the wealthy elite. It would be wrong, however, to conclude from a rather miniscule circulation figures that the press in general, and Philipon's newspapers in particular with the caricatures they contained, only reached the highest strata of French society. It seems also that official circulation figures did not mirror newspaper's actual readership. As a matter of fact, a single copy could have any number of readers, and as for Kerr most regular readers of the press in the 1830s will never have purchase a newspaper. Firstly, newspapers tended to circulate and once read by the subscriber, they were hand out to friends and family or diffused within Parisian apartment buildings. It was typical for people to share the cost of a subscription, either informally or by subscribing to cercles or literary societies. The most important place for the circulation of the press however, were cafés and cabinets de lecture in Paris and larger provincial towns. They were cultural phenomena of great importance and the most significant institutions for the distribution and circulation of the written word. The tariffs were reasonable and affordable for many readers and customers could read in the cabinet itself or take the newspapers or books home. Thus, even an extremely small number of copies distributed in a town could still reach a numerous audience when they were sent to such public establishments.

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<sup>672</sup> Kerr (2000): 123

In Paris, *Le Charivari* was available in five cercles, 131 cafés, and fifty-one cabinets de lecture.<sup>673</sup> Two important characteristics emerge when studying the geographical scattering of these establishments. The first is the number of cafés and cabinets de lecture in the Latin Quarter which subscribed to Philipon's newspaper. According to Mussell, *Le Charivari* was to be found in fourteen cafés and six cabinets de lecture in the Quartier de l'École de Médecine. In the Quartier de la Sorbone, seven cafés and two cabinets de lecture subscribed. This concentration of outlets for *Le Charivari* indicates that it had a significant readership among the relatively poor but highly politicized student population. The second phenomenon is the increase of subscribing cafés and cabinets de lecture around the Palais-Royal and along the boulevards where Philipon's caricatures were widely available. It was very important for their distribution as these were culturally significant places, with theatres, promenades, and restaurants visited by numerous clients and potential readers. These spaces were usually frequented by the rich, but not exclusively.<sup>674</sup>

In the early 1830 remarkably was also a rapid growth in the number of newspapers and publishing enterprises whose target were the working classes. These were also the first tentative attempts by workers to find and express their own voice. To achieve more visibility, caricatures published by Aubert were initially placed in the shop's windows; even caricatures assigned for *La Caricature* were first exhibited there. *La Maison Aubert* became a place of visits for enthusiasts of a caricature. In Paris, Philipon's caricatures were available to everybody who participated in the city's cultural and political life by frequenting politically dynamic areas such as the quais, the boulevards, and the Palais-Royal. This politically active population was no longer the wealthy elite and but it included also the lower middle classes, as well as the more educated artisans and workers. All in all, a deeper look into caricatures themselves reveals that the political authorities were excessively afraid of the impact that they had on the masses, even in Paris. Certainly, one cannot deny the impact visual images have upon people's imagination, however many of their readers and fans were unable to understand their meanings. Thus, in stylistic terms, the caricatures of the 1830s were mainly commodities of the elite culture.

The relationship between the government and people of France changes after the revolution of 1830. As for Marrinan, "*the press and theatre were particularly fertile ground for public-opinion prospectors, but any occasion which brought together crowds of people was potentially a political demonstration for politicians and publicists eager to read political*

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<sup>673</sup> Mussell, James (2012): *Nineteenth-Century Press in the Digital Age*. UK: Palgrave McMillan.

<sup>674</sup> Mussell (2012)



*significance into every gathering.*<sup>675</sup> Parades, funerals, government events, king's important events celebrations, carnival revelries and court festivities were examined closely and were analysed for the political power which be eliminated from them. At the time even dress and dance could become political issues. Thus, cultural phenomena such as the polka fashion had been politicized and pages of contemporary journals were one of the best places where to talk about them and where to use them to talk about political and social issues.<sup>676</sup>

Victorian cartoons have been the matter of much academic attention over the years and remain a relevant and valuable source for any research of this period. As for Punch its weekly circulation was 50-60000 copies in the mid-Victorian period.<sup>677</sup> The readership would be much greater, perhaps by a multiple of four or five.<sup>678</sup> Between 1840s and 1870s Punch enjoyed a sort of a monopoly on the style, shape and format of cartoons. This was a result of the changes in printing technics and media, principally the emergence of wood engraving and periodical formats. With regard to its graphic artists, their autonomy was reduced, but in exchange many of them benefited from an improved standard of living and enhanced social status and artistic prestige.

Between the 1820s and the 1840s, engraving became the major pictorial medium. It was a result of the development and diffusion of lithography, steel and wood engraving which influenced deeply the relationship between visual culture and the print media. Among all of them, steel engraving was too slow and expensive but lithography and wood engraving were more promising. Therefore, the cartoons were increasingly produced as wood engravings in periodicals and there was a analogous decline of the single-sheet print, even if it remained important for fine art reproductions.<sup>679</sup> Punch managed to survive and prosper not only because of its skilled artists and writers, but because of the enterprising publishing of the

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<sup>675</sup> Marrinan, Michael (1988): *Painting Politics for Louis-Philippe: Art and Ideology in Orleanist France, 1830-1848*. New Haven or Fulcher, Jane (1987): *the Nation's Image: French Grand Opera as Politics and Politicized Art*. Cambridge.

<sup>676</sup> Marrinan (1988)

<sup>677</sup> Based on figures in Bradbury and evans *Print and Paper Ledgers, 1853-63*, fos. 194, 218-19, *ibid.*, 1858-65, fos. 127-31, 273-74, *Punch Archives*, British Library Additional Manuscripts (uncatalogued) In: Miller, Henry J.: *John Leech and the Shaping of the Victorian Cartoon: The Context of Respectability*. *Victorian Periodicals Review*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (FALL 2009), pp. 267-291.

<sup>678</sup> Altick, Richard D. (1997): *Punch: The Lively Youth of a British Institution, 1841-1851*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press: 37-39.

<sup>679</sup> Pound, Richard John (2002): *Serial Journalism and the Transformation of English Graphic Satire, 1830-36*. 2 vols, PhD diss., University of London, 2002). In: Miller, Henry J.: *John Leech and the Shaping of the Victorian Cartoon: The Context of Respectability*. *Victorian Periodicals Review*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (FALL 2009), pp. 267-291.

owners. Moreover, they reused and reissued material from Punch in a variety of forms, gaining benefits from the same content. The process of working at designing and commissioning of cartoons relied upon a collaboration and sharing knowledge of various specialists, creating hence a sort of an editorial buffer between the artist and his audience. In the case of Punch, the theme and design was a collective decision involving the writing and artistic staff, who met at the famous weekly dinners to discuss the next issue.

The authors of periodicals such as Punch saw no contradiction between avoiding personality and caricature for elite politicians and subjecting minorities or marginal groups such as the Catholics, Irish, or Jews to unpleasant and cruel treatment.<sup>680</sup> During the early years the nature of the cartoon was usually political and it was a direct outcome of the intense collaboration of various opinion-making bodies, hence there was also more tendency to attack individuals directly in the cartoons. The Punch artists benefited on the one hand from greater financial stability and security than their predecessors, on the other hand the price of this was their limited independence. Nevertheless, *“the position of Victorian cartoonist was also much more favourable than that of their continental contemporaries who faced prepublication censorship, fines, jail, and the suppression of the periodicals they worked for.”*<sup>681</sup> Much like the French periodicals, one of the most important problems of Victorian periodical literature is the issue of anonymity of its reviewers. In the case of essays on controversial subjects, an intelligent interpretation often depends on knowing the author’s position or his other works. Secondly, there is a great difficulty in using the Victorian press as it is a huge amount of a very fascinating material and not enough research on Victorian Periodicals has been done yet.

All in all, nineteenth-century newspapers and periodicals give us a possibility of approaching and understanding the past in a particular way. Their sheer abundance and diversity, both as discrete publications and in relation with their contents, multiplies the cast of narratives, actors and events through which we can interpret the period. Thus, the attempts to take advantage of the use of this material to comprehend the past must always be affirmative, interpretive, predicated on an incomplete corpus and a necessarily partial understanding of its context. To understand properly the nineteenth century a scholar must be a critical reader of the nineteenth-century press. The problem of using the nineteenth-century press as source is on the one hand its abundance and diversity, on the other hand its silence in the meaning the lack of the details of those who produced and contributed to the

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<sup>680</sup> Miller (2009): 267-291.

<sup>681</sup> Goldstein, Robert Justin (2003): *The Persecution and Jailing of Political Caricaturists in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. Media History, 9 (2003), 19-45.

press. Moreover, the most scholarship continue to adopt similar methodological principles, selecting either a key writer, subject or publication as a way of focusing on the scope of its research. *“This brings a risk in this type of work that the press becomes once more subordinate to more familiar subjects.”*<sup>682</sup> The scale and amount of the archive means that there is an almost limitless scope for work on the content of the nineteenth-century press to be examined. What seems to be clear from the research on the press is that newspapers and periodicals were both collaborative and interconnected, borrowing, copying and exchanging content, and relying on the same personnel. Publications united groups by offering the same reading to people located in space at similar intervals of time. *“Their periodicity created moments, allowing readers to feel as if they occupied the same space and time while providing the mechanisms through which it could be remembered in similar ways by all.”*<sup>683</sup> In this way, complex, varied and fragmented, newspapers and periodicals constituted a public sphere.

Thus, as we can see there are few problems with periodicals as sources and they are connected with their abundance, anonymity, commerciality, ephemerality and superficiality. Nevertheless, what newspapers and periodicals say is important: after all, people bought them to read and they treated the current topics. Nineteenth-century journals offer a detailed and almost daily account of musical activities in various European cities and a variety of opinions about almost every thinkable cultural and musical subject. Those opinions do not always rise from an intense reflection, they are, however, frequently the considerations of skilled writers and well-trained musicians.<sup>684</sup>

In my study I focused on nineteenth-century press choosing few journals for each city which enabled to draw a general picture of the polka fashion in those places. In fact, taking into consideration the comparative perspective of the thesis and its geographical span, my aim was not a very detailed analysis of the audiences of the polka through the use of the press but rather a general insight into the types of audiences, reactions and comments on the new fashion as depicted in the nineteenth-century newspapers of London, Paris and Vienna. To achieve this goal, I focused on few general, versatile and respectable, but also to a certain degree varied journals such as *The Times*, *The Illustrated London News*, *Fremdenblatt*, *Wiener Zeitung*; few specialized periodicals such as *Le Ménestrel*, *La France Musicale*, *Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris*, *Wiener Theaterzeitung* and *The Musical World* and finally on

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<sup>682</sup> Mussell (2012)

<sup>683</sup> Mussell (2012): 49

<sup>684</sup> Cohen, H. Robert (1983): *The Nineteenth-Century French Press and the Music Historian: Archival Sources and Bibliographical Resources*. In: *19th-Century Music*, Vol. 7, No. 2, Special Issue: French Archives (Autumn, 1983), pp. 136-142.

two most important satirical journals The Punch and Le Charivari. I analysed the articles, advertisements, posters, concert programs and reviews and everything what was related to the polka fashion in the issues between 1844 and 1860 and I studied the caricatures that were published in Punch, Charivari and on the sheet music covers in those years.

Bearing in mind that the press is a very difficult type of source I complemented my analysis with the use of other sources such as dance manuals, sheet music covers, literary works, novels, theatrical writings and ballroom programs. The study of all those sources together allowed a more objective analysis of audiences and social effects of the polka on them. However, this sort of approach has its drawbacks which is a puriness of sociological aspects and the press is a kind of source that does not help to define precisely enough who are the different types of polka consumers. Using the media is a bias and lead me more to a cultural history than a social history of the polka in three cities which to a certain degree was also my scope. Considering the scarce academic research on this topic I focused on giving a general picture of the development of the polka fashion in Europe. Obviously, I was interested in the social milieu of the polka, however cultural history connected with the places and spaces where it was performed and executed was also of a great importance in this study and the use of press enabled it greatly. Clearly, there is much more to do with regard to the use of the press and there were other journals such as for example La Presse, Le Constitutionnel, Le Journal des Débats, Le Corsaire, Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung etc. The thorough study of them could nothing but enrich the research on the polka and its social milieu, thus contributing more extensively to the academic research on social history of the polka and other social dance forms popular in the nineteenth century. The following thesis is a sort of starting point to study the polka in more depth in relation to both; the cities discussed here and other European cities and any of the topics treated on the pages of this work could be developed into a singular study through the thorough analysis of the nineteenth-century press in singular cities.

### **European Urbanization and its cultural and social consequences on the polka**

The question of urbanization has been frequently discussed by the academics and is still a very complex and wide topic of discussion. I have made no attempt in this thesis to be comprehensive in terms of precise relationship between urbanisation of the cities and various types of audiences in various parts of capital cities. I spent much time on either understanding if there was a polka fashion at all or analysing where it was danced and who were its major

audiences. I did not concentrate on the scale of complexity of cities' spatial and social structures and their relevance for cultural and social life since this paper is concerned more with a general picture of the polka audiences in three European cities. This choice of focusing on general public of the polka was dictated by the lack of space for a more detailed research on the urbanization and its effect on the polka development in all three cities. I am conscious, however, that this kind of study has left numerous questions unanswered, hence few words are added on the topic of urbanization and social classes in the European cities of the mid-nineteenth century to give an input to an elaborate research on the relationship between both phenomena.

Between 1750 and 1850, Western Europe faced a rapid industrialization process so by 1850, its industrial map was complex. It was composed of villages and brick towns distinguished by new factories and tall chimneys. Employment in crafts, trade, and transportation increased too, men being the primary beneficiaries. Industrialization had also spread to multiple older towns of different sizes. There, printing presses, sugar refineries, diverse factories and mills of various sorts could be found powering steam engines. By mid-century, signs of economic development and industrial growth had moved east through the Ruhr Valley to parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and to Berlin.<sup>685</sup> A normal part of life cycle for Europeans, women as well as men, was migration. Young people were pushed away from their birth families and communities and looked for viable place where to earn money, learn and make a family. These movements increased highly between 1750 and 1850, when economic prospects in rural areas worsened.<sup>686</sup>

According to Hobsbawm, the beginning of the greatest migration of peoples in history is characteristic for the mid-nineteenth century. It is complicated to measure its exact details, for the official statistics of the time fail to register all the movements of men and women inside of countries and beyond. Population movements and industrialization are connected. Firstly, the substantial shifts of people was a condition for the modern economic development of the world. Secondly, this mobility was easier and cheaper by means of new and improved communications, and hence, enabled the world to maintain a much larger population. Most migrants, who went to the cities, were rural and it was a typical feature of Europeans at the time. Migration and urbanization went together, and in the second half of the nineteenth century the countries chiefly associated with it had a rate of urban concentration unsurpassed

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<sup>685</sup> Lees Andrew / Lees Lynn Hollen (2007): *Cities and Making of Modern Europe, 1750-1914*. UK: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>686</sup> Lees / Lees (2007).

anywhere except in Britain and the industrial parts of Germany.<sup>687</sup> Due to their relative sizes and the strength of their manufacturing and construction industries, most attractive cities for the newcomers were Paris and London.<sup>688</sup> Long-distance movement produced ethnic diversity and hence, for instance in the entire Vienna could be heard the multiple languages of the Habsburg territories - German, Czech, Hungarian, Slovakian, Serbo-Croatian, and others. Although few skilled trades were open to women, nonetheless large number of young women changed their family towns into cities. Usually, the high demand for servants, textile workers, seamstresses, and prostitutes gave them a range of work opportunities, even if most were paid poorly and were insecure.<sup>689</sup>

Demographic change in Europe during the years after 1750, resulted in urbanization, which was particularly intensive in the second half of the nineteenth century. No other age had experienced such a spatial densification of social existence. The increase in the urban population was much faster in comparison with earlier centuries. For the first time, the life of inhabitants of the city became economically and culturally dominant in a number of large countries, even if in 1848 the population of the world, and also of Europe, still consisted principally of peasants.<sup>690</sup> Initially, urbanization used to be explained in a narrow sense as the rapid growth of cities in connection with the diffusion of mechanized factory production. Thus, urbanization and industrialization arose as two sides of the same coin. However, the common definition that is used today explains urbanization as *“a process of social acceleration, compression, and reorganization, which may occur under a range of very different circumstances.”*<sup>691</sup> The most relevant consequence of this process was the creation of spaces of increased human interaction. In those spaces, information was exchanged and used rapidly, and new knowledge could be created under advantageous institutional conditions.

*“The big city acted as the powerhouse of economic circulation and the multiplier of social mobility and interaction.”*<sup>692</sup> Technology increased the attractiveness of the bigger cities, which offered prospects of new jobs and allured with novelty. Inventions encouraged industrial expansion and new construction and consequently structural change. As an outcome workers were attracted by places where changes were launched. In the nineteenth century, the new

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<sup>687</sup> Hobsbawm (1975): 196.

<sup>688</sup> Lees / Less (2007): 51.

<sup>689</sup> Lees / Less (2007): 51.

<sup>690</sup> Less / Less (2007).

<sup>691</sup> Osterhammel, Jürgen (2014): *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press. 249.

<sup>692</sup> Osterhammel (2014): 245.

technology influenced in particularly the upper levels of the urban system. Value increased not only through production but also through the sheer force of human interaction. "Circulation was considered the essence of the modern big city: that is the ever faster movement of people, animals, vehicles, and goods within the city, as well as its exchanges with surrounding areas both near and distant."<sup>693</sup> The European metropolis of the late nineteenth century was socially more differentiated than the early modern city. The simple threefold division into a patrician elite that made the political decisions, an intermediate stratum of artisans and tradespeople, and a mass of urban poor had become obsolete. Even the elite consensus on taste had lost much of its strength.

During the nineteenth century the number of bigger cities has greatly increased. In England and Wales, the amount of the inhabitants of the cities larger than 10000 had risen from 21 percent in 1801 to 62 percent in 1891. Furthermore, those living in cities of 100000 or more increased from fewer than 10 percent to almost a third. On the eve of the Industrial Revolution, London had grown into a metropolis in which more than a tenth of the population of England lived and as a matter of fact Victorian Britain became the world's first urbanized society.<sup>694</sup> In a more rural France, where only a tenth of the population lived in cities of 10000 or more in 1801, and fewer than 3 percent lived in Paris and other cities exceeding 100000, the proportions increased to 26 percent and 12 percent by 1891.<sup>695</sup> The French population classed as urban, starting from 24.4 per cent in 1846 and reaching 37.4 per cent in 1891. This is a growth of 50 per cent, which is almost the same as England's increase in the same period.<sup>696</sup> In Paris the number of inhabitants went from 1 million at the midcentury to 2,9 millions at around 1910. In Austria the increase in urban population initiated during the earlier half of the century, but was constantly increasing and in the period 1846-57 reached its maximum. The inhabitants of Vienna increased from 330000 in 1835 to 615000 in 1870 and finally reached 2,031 millions in 1910.<sup>697</sup> According to Blumin, the suburbs of Vienna and

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<sup>693</sup> Osterhammel (2014).

<sup>694</sup> Dyos, Harold James / Wolff Michael (1973): *The Victorian City: Images and Realities*. Volume I. London: Routledge Kegan and Paul Ltd. 4.

<sup>695</sup> Blumin M. Stuart (2006): *Driven to the City: Urbanization and Industrialization in the Nineteenth Century*. In: OAH Magazine of History, Vol. 20, No. 3, The U.S. and the Middle East (May, 2006). 47-52.

<sup>696</sup> Weber, Adna Ferrin (1899): *The growth of cities in the Nineteenth Century: A Study in Statistics*. Ithaca.

<sup>697</sup> Chaloupek Günter / Eigner Peter / Wagner Michael (1991): *Wien. Wirtschaftsgechichte. 1740-1938*. Vienna: Jugend und Volk Verlagsgesellschaft m.b.H.



Prague have had the most rapid growth in the nineteenth century.<sup>698</sup> This result, however, was a sum of different events and processes taking place during the nineteenth century. First of all, many people lost their lives in the great famine of 1847 and 1848 and in the Hungarian revolt of 1848. By contrast, the years 1850-57 had also a maximum rate for Greater Vienna and 17 of the principal cities which was followed again by a noticeable decrease of agglomeration in 1857-69 which must be explained by a visitation of the cholera and the war with Prussia in 1856. Nearly all the cities of Bohemia, where the war was fought, show an unusually low rate of increase in 1857-69.

However, in general terms, a city's importance depended on much more than just its size. It depended largely on the city's position in networks of other cities, which in turn influenced possibilities for urban growth. Single cities gained and lost its influence to the extent that they were part of wider urban networks. Scholars proposed various definitions of the city. The differences between these definitions are connected with the political, social, economic and religious characteristics of the urban world. In Europe, in the early modern age, fewer than 10 percent of the population lived in urban centers with more than 10000 inhabitants. At the end of the twentieth century, this had increased to about 70 percent.<sup>699</sup> The typical industrial town of the nineteenth century was still a medium-sized city, even by contemporary standards, though as it happened in central and eastern Europe some capital cities also became major centres of manufacturing – e.g. Berlin, Vienna and St. Petersburg. The great city was clearly industrial, nevertheless it was its importance as a centre of commerce, administration, transport and the multiplicity of services with a large concentration of people that attracted and augmented the number of its inhabitants. Among them there were workers, of one kind or another, including a multitude of domestic servants – almost one on every five Londoners (1851) through surprisingly a considerably smaller proportion in Paris. Still their very size guaranteed that they also contained a very large number and substantial proportion of the middle and lower middle classes – say between 20 and 23 per cent in both London and Paris.<sup>700</sup> The presence of the city's poor was not welcomed enthusiastically, however the majority of its populations recognized their regrettable necessity. Their dwellings were built by small speculative builders, often little more than artisans, or by the constructors of tenement blocks. Instead, the third quarter of the nineteenth century was the first world-wide

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<sup>698</sup> Blumin (2006): 96.

<sup>699</sup> Broadberry Stephen / O'Rourke, H. Kevin (2010): *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Europe*. UK: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>700</sup> Hobsbawm (1975): 211.

period of urban real-estate and constructional boom for the bourgeoisie. Houses on expensive sites were to be noticed and rose constantly higher, consequently the birth of the 'elevator', and in the 1880s the construction of the first skyscrapers in the United States gave the city's even more modern aspect.

As cities developed they became more socially and demographically differentiated. The need for more space moved industrial space into peripheral areas where land was cheaper and more easily purchasable. In this way, older city centers remained untouched. Home and workplaces became differentiated for more and more citizens, producing suburbs for middle-income families and slums for the poor, whether located in the older districts or in newer industrial areas. As for Lees and Less, these spatial changes evolved greatly in British cities during the first half of the nineteenth century, and they continued thereafter, becoming increasingly noticeable in the large towns of Germany, France, Sweden, Austria, and northern Italy. Interestingly, urban spaces specialized as cities grew, however, they were not formally zoned for specific activities. At the same time neighborhoods gained positive or negative reputations such as respectable or rough, fashionable or dirty and poor. Industrial urbanization tore apart older neighborhoods where people of varied incomes and occupations had lived nearby or on different floors of the same building, producing much more economically and socially segregated areas. This process increased the gap between the rich and the poor, deepening social distances and a sense of mutual suspicion.<sup>701</sup> For instance, the scale and character of residential segregation in London was one consequence of its size. Where, in provincial cities, there might be groups of streets, or neighbourhoods, associated with one social or ethnic group, in London- especially in suburban London - there could be whole boroughs in which one class predominated.<sup>702</sup>

The changes in the distribution of population which have been considered in the present paper have necessarily effected changes in states and national politics, national power and what is mainly interesting to us in national cultures, leisures and habits. Hence, few words are devoted to the division of social classes and leisure practices related to the European urbanization process.

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<sup>701</sup> Lees / Less (2007): 66-67.

<sup>702</sup> Dennis, Richard: *Modern London*. In: Dauntton Martin: *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*. Cambridge University Press.

## The Polka audiences and the pursuit of leisure

In general terms, one can indicate cities as central sites for the birth of what the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas successfully identified as “the public sphere.” In his view, this process started in the eighteenth century and came together with accelerated growth of the urban society that was characterised among its leading elements by leisure, prosperity, and the spread of opinion and information. Concentrations of wealth in densely populated areas, according to Habermas, went hand in hand with a wide variety of institutions in which “*sociability fostered the free exchange of ideas through open discussion.*”<sup>703</sup> Thus, taverns, coffee-houses, and debating clubs flourished during the eighteenth century in Britain as well as on the continent. They enabled not only contact with friends and acquaintances but also mixing with people from diverse strata and the cultivation of knowledge. Those places encouraged and cultivated critical thinking about the political and social events. In an environment of increasing literacy and diminishing censorship, newspapers and magazines served as the essential sources and channels of communication within the public sphere.<sup>704</sup> We can interpret new spaces such as hotels, department and chain stores, new streets, new railways, office blocks and factories, music halls and cinemas, public parks, gardens and cemeteries, as products of rational planning and scientific management, but also as spaces for the development of new kinds of everyday life, and as potential spaces of resistance or subversion.

As for Markian Prokopovych modernity brought great transformation to the urban context during the nineteenth century and thus, the music which has traditionally been part of the urban spectacle, reflected those changes in the new ways it was practised. First of all, public space became more and more differentiated. Whereas earlier music was performed almost always for highly restricted audiences in a variety of improvised and informal venues such as royal theatres and aristocratic palaces, the arrival of modernity produced highly specialized venues, open to larger public. Those new types of concerts were usually played by professional musicians and there was a fee for the entrance to such venues. Later on, further calls were voiced for more specialization into theatres, opera houses, dance halls, music halls, variety theatres and cabarets, which further stratified the public depending on class, social status and wealth.<sup>705</sup>

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<sup>703</sup> Habermas (1989).

<sup>704</sup> Lees/Less (2007).

<sup>705</sup> Prokopovych, Markian (2013): *Introduction: music, the city and the modern experience*. In:

Thus, urban scenes served as highly stimulating spectacles, where artistic activity flourished and evolved much more freely and intensely than in less densely populated areas. Cultural life comprised many phenomena and activities. In this period, concert halls, museums, and theatres opened their doors to wider publics, a multitude of schools, libraries, churches, chapels, and other institutions also contributed to promoting both enlightenment and relaxation beyond the ranks of social elites. In this respect, we need to take into consideration the growth of a mass leisure industry that drew its audience from all social groups. Mass leisure venues such as music halls and cabarets, dance halls and cafés, department stores, and athletic events offered city dwellers at many levels of the social hierarchy opportunities for self-expression and enjoyment. As a matter of fact, even if most of the people who went to live in the cities did so firstly in order to find employment, nonetheless a rich assortment of cultural attractions helped to keep them there. The swell of urban capitalism gave birth to a multitude of businesses that developed opportunities for amusement and relaxation during leisure hours. Prokopovych argues that public space became more and more nationalized at the end of the century and the participation of wide audience in public attractions showed from the one hand a general need for entertainment and on the other hand the existence of multilayered identities among participants.<sup>706</sup> Thus, we need to distinguish between elite culture and mass culture, paying close attention to differences with regard to the social class of intended audiences. Those variations among classes and types of entertainments were accompanied by important differences within social classes too.

Nobilities have existed almost everywhere in the world and often consolidated themselves into aristocracies. The nineteenth century was the ultimate in which the nobility, one of the oldest social groups, played a significant role. It still had no social competitor in eighteenth-century Europe however by 1920 it was no longer the case. Where the revolutions abolished monarchies, the nobility was deprived of its imperial or royal protector. The fall of the age-old European institution of the nobility took place in the relatively short space of time between 1789 and 1920.<sup>707</sup>

In France, the nobility was deprived of all its privileges and titles during the revolution. In later years, its special rights were generally not restored and thus what remained behind were the empty titles. Although the importance of landownership should not be

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Urban History, 40, 4 (2013). UK: Cambridge University Press. 3.

<sup>706</sup> Prokopovych, Markian (2008): *Habsburg Lemberg: Architecture, Public Space and Politics in the Galician Capital. 1772-1914*. West Lafayette: Purdue University Press.

<sup>707</sup> Osterhammel (2014)

underestimated, the French nobility played only a secondary role in a society that was exceptionally “bourgeois”. Under Napoleon a new nobility emerged in addition to those who had survived from the ancien régime. They often were regarded by the old aristocracy with a mixture of disparagement and admiration. After 1830 in France there was no strong central institution, like the House of Lords in Britain or the royal court in most other countries, around which the nobility could gather and gain power. Neither the “bourgeois monarch” Louis Philippe nor the imperial dictator Napoleon III built up extensive court structures or supported the splendour of their rule on a strong upper nobility. Hence, during the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century, the French nobility existed and it was identified with a sort of a less self-conscious class than its counterparts in other parts of Europe. In fact, an impoverished nobleman as a type of this sort of social class was to be encountered far more often in France than elsewhere. Wealthy property owners of various roots became the opinion leaders who set the tone for the wider society. As for Charle, in no other major European country did the nobility have such a small superiority in power and landownership at the decisive local level.<sup>708</sup>

The English nobility was the richest class of its kind in Europe and enjoyed comparatively few legal privileges but participated actively in the decision concerning political and social life. The right of primogeniture was very important to keep large assets in one piece, so that younger sons and their families drifted to the periphery of noble society. The ideal of the gentleman cultivated by the English nobility had an extraordinary negative force, generating a lifestyle and culture at home and in the Empire that often lacked the razor-sharp distinctions of continental European elites. The English aristocrat was not dependent on the Crown. The nobility assigned themselves leadership tasks and expected gratitude and deference in return.

As for Austria, here society was traditionally highly stratified, with well-defined social distinctions. In the early 1800s, the three major classes were nobility, middle class (Buerkertum) and peasants. In Vienna as the capital city of the Habsburg Empire the aristocratic elites came from different parts of the Empire and were much stronger and more powerful than in London and Paris. To a certain degree it resulted from the privileges they obtained from the Emperors of Austria. Some of the noble families had the right to be seated in the House of Lords or Imperial Council and till 1918 individuals continued to be elevated to nobility by the Habsburg rulers. It was the strongest and more powerful class throughout the

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<sup>708</sup> Charle, Christophe (1991): *Histoire sociale de la France au XIX siècle.*, pp. 229ff. Éditions du Seuil.

entire century and only in the first half of the twentieth century the changes in the class structure started to be more visible and significant for the political and social life. The Austrian middle class started to get formed at the end of the eighteenth century and distinguished itself with its own life forms, ways of behaviour, virtues and norms. It was not a homogenous group and was shaped by entrepreneurs, advocates, journalists, ingenieurs, economists, professors, teachers and clerks. Its real evolution and importance started however, in the second half of the nineteenth century. With regard to the working class, there were two types: those leaving in the household of their employers and those leaving independently. From 1840s their number increased greatly with the migration from the countryside and many agrarian small towns became industrial and factory centres. From the beginning of 1840s working class living conditions got worse and became miserable. This was one of the developments that lead to the revolutions of 1848.

The nobility's amusements concentrated around classical music, opera, theater, and museums. "*Participation not only required literacy, money and fine clothing but it also signaled the acceptance of conservative cultural values and membership in an exclusive club, all of whose members could be seen as possessing 'good taste'.*"<sup>709</sup> Such places as city halls, art museums, opera houses had been designed and established with an aim to attracting an upper- and middle-class clientele. Other institutions of high culture enabled members of the upper classes to gaze not at objects but at performances and also at one another. Performative culture was most fashionable in three sorts of sites: concert halls, opera houses, and theatres. Opera was of a central importance for urban elites. It provided highly prized possibilities to see and observe elegance and to display it. In theory, these places were open to the public, but practically they were unavailable for manual workers and their families as they were accessible only to those who had financial resources to purchase tickets that cost much more than most people could afford to pay, at least on a regular basis. Moreover, also lack of what was seen as an appropriate clothing tended to keep the mass of the urban population outside the institutions of high culture until late in the century. Thereafter as well, most of their leisure life took place elsewhere.

If the European nobility went downhill, it was not for want of trying out survival strategies such as opening to business, social fusion with the upper bourgeoisie etc. It was its lost in leading cultural position by the turn of the century. A market-oriented cultural industry had appeared in place of the aristocratic patronage that had still sustained the European fine

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<sup>709</sup> Lees/Lees (2007): 208.

arts and music in the age of Haydn and Mozart. Musicians obtained funding from performances in the opera house and the concert hall, painters from public exhibits and the nascent art trade. Composers of popular music wrote for a contemporary audience, hoping for artistic and commercial success. As the population of the capital cities grew, entrepreneurial conductors set up new orchestral concerts that expanded the size of the classical music public beyond social and intellectual elites. The availability of classical programs to a larger public thus paralleled the extension of political rights to the middle classes. The new concert series tended to have larger venues than the elite ones.

The nineteenth century was the century of the bourgeoisie, at least in Europe. “*A social space marked by its distinctive values and lifestyles opened up in the cities – between a declining nobility that made offers of class compromise among the prosperous layers of society, on the one side, and a class of wage laborers that, by the last third of the nineteenth century, had evolved from a plebs into a proletariat and achieved a degree of political self-organization and cultural independence, on the other.*”<sup>710</sup> It is not easy to define who was bourgeois and what it meant to be only by the adoption of objective criteria such as family origin, income level, and profession.<sup>711</sup> People were bourgeois if they thought about themselves as bourgeois and showed this practically in the way they led their life. It was easier to define a bourgeois negatively: he was neither a feudal lord acquiring his idea of himself from landownership plus origins, and not a manual worker in dependent employment. Thus, “*one reason why the concept of a bourgeoisie is so misleading is that it breaks up so quickly into individual life paths.*”<sup>712</sup> The bourgeois attempt was to rise in society and what scared him was exactly the opposite: a fall into ranks of the poor and despised. “*A ruined aristocrat is still an aristocrat; a ruined bourgeois no more than a déclassé.*”<sup>713</sup> According to Daumard, the successful bourgeois owed his position to self reliance and achievement; nothing inborn seemed to him dependable. Society in his eyes was a ladder: he was somewhere in the middle, constantly under pressure to move upward. The bourgeois wanted to shape and organize things; he had a lofty

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<sup>710</sup> Osterhammel (2014)

<sup>711</sup> Europe-wide studies of the middle class kept many German historians busy in the 1980s and 1990s. Summaries of their work are Lundgreen, *Sozial- und Kulturgeschichte*; Kocka and Frevert, *Bürgertum*; Gall, *Stadt und Bürgertum*; a critical comparison of the various schools is Sperber, *Bürger*. In dealing with the urban middle class since the midnineteenth century the chapter has to cope with the conflicting views of historians, many of whom have tended during the last twenty-five years to emphasise division and weakness rather than coherence and strength.

<sup>712</sup> Osterhammel (2014)

<sup>713</sup> Goblot, Edmond (1925): *La barrière et le niveau. Etude sociologique sur la bourgeoisie française moderne*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France. 7.



conception of his responsibility and, by making his own life, wished to play a role in giving a direction to society.<sup>714</sup>

How large was the bourgeoisie? The terminological proximity between the bourgeoisie proper and the petite bourgeoisie of storekeepers and independent artisans still causes confusion. What did a steel magnate and a chimney sweeper have in common? The differences were much more obvious. The social characteristics of “large” and “small” bourgeois were at first sight easy to distinguish: the two groups evolved along different tracks. Thus, in many European countries in the second half of the nineteenth century, the mentality and politics of the educated property-owning bourgeoisie differed considerably from those of a petite bourgeoisie anxious to distance itself from industrial workers. France actually became a nation of petit bourgeois. The term “middle class”, preferred in Britain and the United States, does not satisfy everyone as a solution to the problem, since its unity and homogeneity are not easy to demonstrate. Theorists have made a more persistent effort to identify the social membrane between lower middle class and upper middle class, and they have rarely been able to avoid drawing internal dividing lines: in the English case, for example, between a capitalist middle class and a noncapitalist or professional middle class. “Middle class” is poorer in cultural content than “bourgeoisie”, and so it can be used in a larger number of contexts and is better suited for a global social history. Not every member of a middle stratum carried around a complete bourgeois value system. Under the term “petit bourgeois”, laid many of “*local artisans with their own ethos and the pride that came from selfconfident mastery of a trade.*”<sup>715</sup> Such cultures, sometimes involving a caste-like exclusiveness, existed all around the world and often enjoyed higher esteem than the sphere of commerce: fixed and stable spheres of the social middle, supported by monopolies of know-how that no upper class could contest or replace. Traditional knowledge was and still is more able than property or legal privilege to escape devaluation through political revolution: there was always a need for artisans and basic service providers. Thus, the petit bourgeois does not always looked up obedient to the higher ranks of the social hierarchy. Petit bourgeois were certainly capable of collective political action and if they controlled major channels of social communication, they might exercise greater power.

The true bourgeoisie, corresponding to the ‘upper middle class’, consisted of people who had a wider mental horizon than the petite bourgeoisie, operating with capital and

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<sup>714</sup> Daumard, Adeline (1991): *Les bourgeois et le bourgeoisie en France depuis 1815*. Flammarion. 261.

<sup>715</sup> Farr, James R. (2000): *Artisans in Europe 1300-1914*. UK: Cambridge University Press. 10ff

managing not to get their hands dirty. The typical bourgeois was preoccupied with respectability. Individual bourgeois sought to appear respectable above all in the eyes of other bourgeois, but also in those of the upper classes and in those of people lower down the social ladder. A respectable bourgeois obeyed the law and observed moral prohibitions. A high member of bourgeois society was in a position to employ domestic servants of his own. In the “bourgeois age”, the educated property-owning bourgeoisie comprised a tiny minority of the world population.<sup>716</sup>

In the nineteenth century we can observe a phenomenon of democratization of pleasure. As a result, more and more city dwellers were able to derive enjoyment as well as material sustenance from urban life. Cultural change was a highly dynamic force, but by enhancing cities’ attractiveness it also contributed to urban stability. In the nineteenth-century cities, leisure pursuit also evolved into a massive economic sector. All these activities generated urban employment and animated interurban ties. Ordinary citizens often preferred amusements that differed markedly from those recommended by opinion making bodies. It entailed pursuits of pleasure in an assortment of venues where ordinary city dwellers came together not in order to be instructed but in order to be entertained and experience recreation. It did not, however, concerned only the middle and lower middle classes. Some of it was shared with members of the middle and upper classes, who certainly did not spend all of their recreational time in public in the pursuit of high culture. Mass culture thus served in many respects to integrate rather than to divide urban society. Among the spectacles that city dwellers gravitated toward indoors, several sorts of venues stood out: big department stores, new kinds of theatres, cafés-concerts, music-halls, pubs, taverns, movie theatres and amateur concerts.<sup>717</sup>

In the musical field the term “mass culture” can be defined in a relatively concrete manner. *“It should be conceived as performance or dissemination of music which does not rest upon personal relationships between musicians and the public for which obtaining a wide public is a primary goal.”*<sup>718</sup> What has characterized musical mass culture primarily has been rather the impersonality of relationships between listeners and performers and the active exploitation of a broad public by the music business. Musical mass culture first appeared in the publishing industry. The key to these changes was the opening up of a vast new market of

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<sup>716</sup> Kocka, Jürgen (1988): *Bürgertum und bürgerliche Gesellschaft im 19. Jahrhundert: europäische Entwicklungen und deutsche Eigenarten*, In: Kocka and Frevert: *Bürgertum in 19. Jahrhundert.*, vol. I, 11-76.

<sup>717</sup> Kocka, Jürgen: *The Middle Classes in Europe*. In: Kaelble: *European Way*. 15-43.

<sup>718</sup> Weber (2008)

music played by amateurs at home. Between 1780 and 1850 technological breakthroughs and a forthright new brand of entrepreneurship made both publishing and retailing of music a burgeoning consumer business. Publishers seized upon lithography immediately after its invention at the turn of the century to print sheet music for home use with flashy, colorful illustrations which proved easily saleable. Improvements in engraving techniques provided the sharp detail needed for the complicated virtuosic and orchestral scores at large-scale concerts. There are, of course, some serious objections to the argument that early sheet music was mass culture. One is that products sold just within the still small middle classes should not be considered on this basis. A second argument is that a mass culture audience must be entirely passive, consuming audience and therefore cannot be compared with a public playing music as did the people who bought early nineteenth-century sheet music.

The second area in which the early dynamics of mass culture emerged were public concerts. Tradition and change mingled in a curious way in one area of concerts, for those by virtuosi developed the least into large-scale events. Individual performers stayed within the conventional form of the benefit concert and the network of personal relationships which was its base. Since the virtuosi were operating on a hectic international schedule, they were not able to build permanent institutions with large publics. During the last quarter of the century the new profession of concert managers then turned recitals into internationally managed, large-scale events. They were large-scale institutions from the very start. Crowds of a thousand were normal and those of two or three thousand not unusual. Thanks to unusually cheap ticket prices they drew people from the whole of the middle class and also young, unmarried apprentices from the more prosperous artisanry. The crowds were for the most part from the lower-middle class. Throughout the concerts of 1850's one could feel a longing for identification with the mass of the population, a desire to celebrate the emerging urban-industrial civilization with a grand thronging together in public places. Orchestras provided the fullest and most permanent basis for mass concerts. The earliest form, found during the 1830s in many European cities, was informal events held in dance halls during the winter and parks during the summer. "Promenades", the name used for these concerts in London, is the best generic term for them.

Mass entertainments frequently brought people together in public spaces across class lines and for many reasons, the growth of urban recreations went hand in hand with the growth of urban stability. The history of dance contributes a curious and important fact to the thousand details of politico-cultural history. In this thesis I showed that dancing was a common practice in the midnineteenth century and everybody could do it. There were

theatres, dance halls and other dancing venues were different social classes enjoyed this type of entertainment. Anyway, the social divisions were still highly visible in the way the dancing and concerts venues were organized. For example everybody could visit the Paris Opéra, however, those sitting in the cheaper seats were not even allowed to enter through the grand entrance but were obliged to use side doors and were kept at a safe distance from their superiors. There were also venues where it was not fitting the visiting by certain social classes. On the other hand, the middle classes were not always invited for the events organized by the upper classes. There were elite spaces, occupied according to the routine of the 'London Season'. These were semi-private gatherings, but the public could view them at a distance. Other indoor, and therefore more private, elite spaces reflected the increasing commodification of leisure – in restaurants, gentleman's clubs or concert halls. Thus, the commercialization of dancing did little to break down the social barriers. It is true that everybody could dance, however the social spaces were divided and organized separately for each class, hence it was possible to see people divided on different levels of assembly rooms or dance halls. This division is also visible with regards to the types of theatres and their public.

Furthermore, the essence of leisure was time free from obligation and last but not least the ability to participate in most recreations also required financial resources, thus those who were excluded from the labour market because of unemployment or family responsibilities were severely restricted in their leisure. The rhythm of popular recreation was determined by developing labour discipline. Public houses constituted the chief nineteenth-century leisure venue. They were centres of sport, news, games, entertainment, debate and culture etc. in working-class neighbourhoods and smaller towns. Nevertheless, London, with a population of nearly 2 million in 1831 undoubtedly took the palm for the concentration and variety of its cultural and entertainment attractions. By the mid-1860s London had thirty large halls with an average seating capacity of 1500, along with 200-300 smaller halls.<sup>719</sup> It was not just working class that liked a good tune. Among the hundreds of thousands who flocked to the music halls at the end of the nineteenth century were plenty from the middle classes and also a good number of upper-class "slummers". They occupied the more expensive seats in the stalls and dress circle, which was another sign of social division. Nevertheless, in London, where the price could go as low as two pence, the music hall was within reach of anyone who had a job.

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<sup>719</sup> Cyril, Ehrlich (1985): *The Music Profession in Britain since the Eighteenth Century. A Social History*. Oxford. Clarendon Press. 57-58

The growth in balls in Paris of the first half of the nineteenth century was also particularly astonishing. Johnson commented that in 1836, the Paris police counted some 180 public balls and more than 850 private balls on Mardi Gras.<sup>720</sup> In Paris of the mid-century, masked balls their height of popularity and represented changes that transformed social hierarchies. According to Johnson, they were particularly turbulent during the July monarchy (1830-48), when rich and poor gathered in the same theatres for entertainment. During the heyday of masked balls, the rich dressed as rag-pickers and thieves, and laundry girls came as the aristocrats. “*The wealthy attended for the thrill of rubbing shoulders with supposed outlaws.*”<sup>721</sup> However, due to the urban division the city was characterized by big differences between the districts where the poor and there the rich lived. Thus, the balls were not only a space where they could encounter but also the place where they could express their hostility. The proliferation of balls in the nineteenth century tracked the growth of Parisian theatres and while not all these theatres sponsored balls, every major ball of the city was here. The boulevard theatres perceived balls as a natural addition to their programme offer, and they provided masquerades appealing from elites to the popular classes.<sup>722</sup> Also McCormick sustains that boulevard theatres attracted a broad range of classes among spectators during the first half of the nineteenth-century. The popularity of masked balls among Parisians faded in the second half of the nineteenth century and the riotous scenes that accompanied them slowly diminished. Moreover, audiences of different venues across Paris became more segregated by class, as also the public spaces were.<sup>723</sup> After around 20-year period of mixing and mingling of classes, political protests and social confusion, the balls became more socially segregated and organized.

With regard to Vienna, from 1780 to 1810, the number of Viennese dance halls increased rapidly from 15 to 50 and this can be considered as a turning point in Viennese urban music culture. The Viennese elite, the nobility and the higher bourgeoisie did not mix with the lower bourgeoisie and thus, the first ones danced in the inner-city ballrooms whereas workers, servants and craftsmen enjoyed themselves in cheaper suburban dance venues. In the early nineteenth century the situation started to change and the new suburban ballrooms were created and aimed at both the bourgeoisie and the nobility, nevertheless distinctions on the dance floor still occurred. By the end of the second decade of the century,

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<sup>720</sup> Johnson, James H. (2013): *Urban development and the culture of masked balls in nineteenth-century Paris*. In: *Urban History*, 40, 4 (2013). UK: Cambridge University Press

<sup>721</sup> Johnson (2013): 647

<sup>722</sup> Johnson (2013): 647

<sup>723</sup> McCormick, John (: *Popular Theatres of Nineteenth-Century France*. 21-4.

the nobility started to participate in balls in Redoute Hall and organized their own private balls. Social mixing started to be more visible with the development of promenade concerts which became more fashionable at the mid-century.<sup>724</sup>

What was also contrasting in this period was the intermingling of tastes. On the one hand there were entrepreneurs and virtuosi who created a fire-storm of popular demand for music that piqued the ear but made no demand upon the mind. On the other hand there were the musicians and supporters of newly founded symphony orchestras who attempted to maintain the tradition of learned music-making and became fanatic devotees of the German classical school. Opera house, operetta theatre, music hall and dance hall became modern urban institutions that contributed to the change in musical taste among the city's population.<sup>725</sup> The development of sheet music not only widened the music public and made possible the manipulation of taste; it also established as a basic fact of life the difference between connoisseurs and the general public. This was another reason for deepening gap between different public of different types of venues and leisure practices in the nineteenth century. All these changes are routinely attributed to the cultural embourgeoisement of society and hence the arrival of modernity.<sup>726</sup>

Summarizing, distilling the essence of the polka fashion in Europe, one cannot help but be selective. I focused on three capital cities and interrelated aspects of their history such as social and cultural changes, commercial and industrial developments and changes in the women's position in society. I admit that I haven't been done enough with regard to social and urban developments because the literature on three cities is huge and appropriation of three cities is very complicated and hence, I am convinced there should be done more with regard to this part of the studies on the polka. The city is in many respects a great business corporation; it calls for a careful, systematic, business-like administration. Socially, the influence of the cities is similarly exerted in favor of liberal and progressive thought. The variety of occupation, interests and opinions in the city produces an intellectual friction, which leads to a broader and freer judgement and a great inclination to and appreciation of new thought, manners, and ideals. As the seat of political power, as the nursery of the arts and sciences, as the center of industry and commerce, the city represent the highest achievements of political, intellectual and industrial life. Consumption of music became increasingly

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<sup>724</sup> Korhonen, Joonas Jussi Sakari (2013): *Urban social space and the development of public dance hall culture in Vienna, 1780-1814*. In: *Urban History*, 40, 4 (2013). UK: Cambridge University Press

<sup>725</sup> Johnson: *Listening in Paris*

<sup>726</sup> Prokopovych (2013): 4

commercialized and the power of new music venues attracted and mobilized the local public that increased greatly. They turned into local sites in which music acquired additional, or entirely new connotations.<sup>727</sup> Thus, in reference to the polka, this very complex composition of urban societies in the nineteenth-century requires a deeper analysis. An enquiry to the transformation of urban social hierarchies as it happened at a local level could not only enrich the research on the urban practice of the polka but also provide new insights into how diverse nineteenth-century urban cultural practices actually were. By studying dance in particular localities and parts of urban spaces, this kind of research would greatly contribute and enrich the area of urban and social studies connected with all three capital cities and round dancing culture.

### **The Polka as part of social dancing fashion**

It was mentioned in the chapters devoted to single cities that the polka was not a separate phenomenon but constituted a part of a larger wave of social dancing fashion and its place in it differed from city to city. The present section focuses primarily on dance-types that constituted part of the so called social dancing culture. Hence, a more detailed description of similarities and differences between the polka and other fashionable social dance forms of the time is given. Furthermore, it takes stand with regard to the ethnicization and exoticness of the polka in three capital cities discussed in the thesis. The ethnicization of dances is not central in my phd but it is, nevertheless, a very important point to consider when studying the polka fashion across the Europe. Finally, a look at the relation between the polka and ballet is given to understand if the golden years of the development of the ballet influenced also the evolution of the polka fashion. Let me start with the ballet.

The ballet is perhaps the nearest approach to perfection which dancing as an art ever reached. The only detracting circumstance being that the dancing in the ballet was of mechanical rather than an inspired nature. The ballet has a long and ancient history of its own, extending right away from Roman times, through medieval Italy and France, eighteenth and nineteenth century England, up to the present day. It was at its zenith by the late Georgian and early Victorian times.<sup>728</sup> Without going deeply into details on the history of the ballet we arrive at a period that stands out by itself as the golden age of the ballet in this country, namely, the first half of the nineteenth century. The names of Taglioni, Fanny Elssler, Cerito,

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<sup>727</sup> Prokopovych (2013): 4

<sup>728</sup> Johnston, Reginald St. (1906): *A History of Dancing*. Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Company.



once celebrated people, are merely names to most of contemporary readers. In London, those were the days when the Haymarket, Her Majesty's, or Covent Garden, were most important venues for the ballets that were staged there and performances by Taglioni and Elssler were making furore. With their retirement, the ballet lost its two most brilliant stars and began to fade into insignificance from 1845 on.

As for Vienna, the style of ballet there differed from the classic style of Paris by making the Viennese Waltz an integrated part of the dance. The Czechs managed to make a greater contribution to ballet than the Austrians, and it is characteristic that a whole galaxy of Czech names can be found among the Viennese ballet composers of the period around 1800. Ballet in Russia developed fairly much along the lines of the desires of the Reigning House and was greatly influenced by the members of the court. Russia and France contributed jointly to the creation of modern ballet: Russia through the creative power of her choreographers and the dynamism of her composers, and France through her ballet tradition and her particular musical development. It was in France that the stage was inseparably linked with dance from the beginning.

It may be said that the influence of ballet on development of music in the nineteenth century was on the whole slight. In spite of the immense popularity of the ballet which almost overshadowed the opera, it held little attraction for the prominent composers of the day. The majority of the hundred of ballets of the period were composed by musically inferior routine composers. The ballet was a shallow form of entertainment for a class saturated with money and pleasure. More attractive and popular, however, were the dancers and people adored the movements of their limbs and their sex appeal. Some composers wrote dances such as waltzes or polkas on purpose to make them dance by famous ballet dancers. In a certain way those dancers, mainly French and Italian, such as Coulon, Coralli, Perrot, Saint-Léon, Taglioni, Grisi and Cerrito fashioned new dances and attracted the enthusiastic public to see their polka performances. Thus, there is no direct connection between the development of the ballet and the polka fashion but rather an important tie between the ballet dancers and the polka in the company of other nineteenth-century social dance forms. The names of all these dancers were very often to be associated with and to be seen on the programs and playbills of theatres and dance halls across different European cities. Moreover, they were often represented on the sheet music covers showing the proper figures and movements of single dances.

With regard to types of dances, most social dances were the group dances until the early nineteenth century. Only at the end of the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth century partner dances emerged. The transformation of society had to bring along

a revolution of the dance. New spirit and new movements were necessary. No longer could the formal artificial minuets and gavottes, the dances of a now rejected, courtly and aristocratic civilization prevail. This trend to a more free and less hampered emotional expression of bodily movements had shown itself only in the intimate closed entertainments of aristocratic societies. With the rise of the bourgeoisie natural and spontaneous dancing became a fashion. In ballrooms, although country dances remained popular, polonaise, cotillions, polkas, mazurkas, schottische, galop, waltzes and quadrilles mirrored a growing sense of nationalism and the will for changes in Europe.

In the nineteenth century we can observe a process of a sort of ethnicization of some dancing practices through the media. An entirely new sense was found in the music of the new Eastern nations. There were melodies and rhythms of new unknown, anonymous masses. Often, these dances were labeled as Slavic dances by the media to influence their exoticness and popularity. Moreover, Western Europe looked with sympathy at the inhabitants of Slavic countries who were striving for their independence. Around 1791 it became fashionable to cultivate the Hungarian style. Turkish and Hungarian elements characterized most late eighteenth and early nineteenth century examples of exoticism.<sup>729</sup> In the early nineteenth century verbunk and csárdás music were gaining wide popularity in Vienna. The Hungarian musicologists designated the style of Hungarian music around 1800, after the Hungarian recruiting dance referring to the practice used in enlisting the Hungarian peasant boys for the national militia. This style was spread throughout Europe by the gypsy orchestra, who stressed and over-emphasized its peculiar characteristics such as: rubato character, primitive basses, tremolos accompanying a leading voice, dynamic richness, rhythmical varieties, syncopations and frequent changes of rhythm etc.<sup>730</sup>

In his book *"Johann Strauss. A century of light music"*, Jacob speaks about Viennese admiration for Hungary. He mentions that the Viennese loved this country for its wine, horses, plains, aristocracy. Hungary was strangely hot and wild, like its red pepper-pods, almost much more mysterious than Italy. Among all the Habsburg states Hungary had been the first to raise its voice and demand national administration and autonomy. When Europe looked at Hungary it was not solely interested in its politics. For fifty years it had been listening to a great volume of music rising up here. The gypsy music was older than that of the Europeans and its

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<sup>729</sup> Ringer, Alexander L. (1965): *On the Question of Exoticism in 19th Century Music*. Studia Musicologica T. 7, Fasc. 1/4. 115-123.

<sup>730</sup> Jacob, Heinrich Eduard (1940): *Johann Strauss. A century of light music*. London: Hutchinson&Co Ltd.

unregulated proximity to Nature bewitched the listeners. Gipsies used particular intervals such as augmented fourths, diminished sixths and greater sevenths, change the tempo in a rapid way and improvised in a minor key. Jacob wrote that there was the so called “bacillus hungarius” in Austria, however, Johann Strauss II started to work on his “Zigeunerbaron” when this Magyar Mania was of its force. As for Jacob *“that suited Strauss, who could hardly have considered writing a purely Magyar opera. His whole being was Austrian and therefore inclined to compromise. All he wanted to compose was the reconciliation between the two halves of the Empire”*<sup>731</sup> Furthermore, as for Jacobs, many of Johann Strauss’ waltzes expressed nothing but radiant joy. They have no particular subject-matter and their titles are little but signs by which they are known. There is nothing programmatic about their content.

The same concerns the polka. I showed that in a general European context the polka was very exotic and one of the factors that influenced its popularity in Europe was exactly this quality. Nevertheless, the extensive analysis of different sources in London and Paris showed that in both cities it was perceived and described as much more exotic than in Vienna. It looks like, even if there was a sort of Magyar mania in Vienna and Jacob wrote about Strauss’ building his capital and career upon it, it was not the most important reason for the growing popularity of the polka there. The people in Vienna craved for amusements and their love for dancing was known much before they discovered the polka. O’Kelly wrote in his memories *“In my time (1786) the people in Vienna had the dance mania. When carnival time drew near, merriment broke out everywhere; with the advent of the festival period proper its manifestations exceeded all bounds...The passion for dancing and masquerades was so pronounced among Viennese ladies that nothing could make them curtail their favourite amusement.”*<sup>732</sup> Most probably, in Vienna, very multicultural city at the time, people were used to the Slavic dance rhythms and melodies and nothing point at the polka being there particularly exotic. It was much more about its rhythms and freshness that made it popular in the Austrian capital. Hence, a brief look on different social dances popular in the nineteenth century and their relation to the polka is given below.

The word “waltz” did not exist before 1780. The verb walzen, however, existed and occurred in the German language in the Middle Ages. The verb walzen come from the Latin *volvere*.<sup>733</sup> In 1804 the German writer and traveller E. M. Arndt wrote *“This love for the waltz*

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<sup>731</sup> Jacob, Heinrich Eduard (1940): *Johann Strauss. A century of light music*. London: Hutchinson&Co Ltd: 280

<sup>732</sup> Jacob (1940): 30

<sup>733</sup> Jacob (1940)

*and this adoption of the German dance is quite new, it has become one of the vulgar fashions since the war, like smoking*". In fact, the court circles held out against the waltz. In Berlin it was first dared to dance in 1794 at a court ball, later it was introduced at the Russian court after 1798. In England, the land of strict moral adhering to its "contre", it took even longer and straight after its introduction at a ball given by the Prince Regent on July 13th, 1816 it was given a sanction and was condemned by *The Times*. In spite of this the waltz ran its triumphant course. At the congress of Vienna 1814-1815, it was danced again and again. It was native there, and had been danced for a long time as "Laendler", "German" and "Langaus". The old dance forms had been danced on unpolished floor with hob-nailed shoes beating the ground: here, in society, the dance took up the gliding, sliding step. In essential character, however, it remained what the Laendler was: a ternary dance with a strongly accented first beat, to which the couples, in close embrace, turn on their own axis, at the same time circling around the room. The shaping of the waltz took some time.<sup>734</sup>

Although, the waltz was unquestionably the most important dance of the nineteenth century, it was not the only dance performed at balls, and definitely had a number of important though minor rivals. Usually the balls of Society were introduced by a polonaise followed by waltzes, polkas, mazurkas and quadrilles (square dances). The final number was a galop.

In regards to the **polonaise**, polish dance melodies were known already in the sixteenth century. It is said that originally the polonaise was a triumphal procession of old warriors and that women were not allowed to dance it until a later period. At any rate it was a stately, ceremonial round dance, strictly regulated as to the order of the dancers according to age and rank. Solemnly the gentlemen, with sword at their side, and the ladies, holding their long trains, marched to the sound of the polonaise. The polonaise was one of the most popular dances of a long period, from the sixteenth to the twentieth century. This graceful dance was of a conversational character, full of gaiety and elegance, perfectly ad libitum, as to movement. It can hardly be called a dance, since the only variation was a change of hands. A gentleman placed at the head of the line, clapped his hands and became the partner of the first lady, displacing the whole line. It was a great favorite with the fashionable of Northern Europe.

**Galop** was the easiest dance to learn, being as the name implies, simply a galop, though rapid in its movements. It is said to have sprung from the Hungarians, swept into ballroom of Paris being introduced there by the Duchess of Berry during the carnival of 1829 and finally

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<sup>734</sup> informations taken from different contemporary dance manuals (Cellarius, Ferrero, Durang), The Oxford Companion of Music and general history dance books

made its way to England. It became famous as the termination of the mask ball at the French opera. The Germans bound off into the galop with the greatest exuberance of spirit. It can be made very pleasing and entertaining by the dancers, in couples, forming a column. The whole party then follow the leaders, or head couple, through a variety of serpentine courses, now winding themselves in circles, and unwinding to create new ones. It is a dance in a very quick time, but beyond the fact that it was usually danced as a finish to some other dance, it was of a rather little interest.

**Redowa** is a Czech dance, which some have considered a derivation from the old "Ridevanz". It seems, however, much more likely that the name is connected with the Czech word "rej", which means a round dance. It is also related to the Czech words which mean a place in which to turn about, to frolic. Nettl sustains that like the polka this dance overran the European ball rooms, and created a furore not only in Paris, but even as distant as in New York.<sup>735</sup> We find both redowas and polkas in early American publications. It is one of the most difficult dances to execute correctly, hence though many made the attempt, few succeeded because of its rapidity in its movements and time that it requires to be executed properly.<sup>736</sup>

Among other forms of social dances of the nineteenth century there were also **Écossaise** or **Schottische**, one of the favourite dances of the declining eighteenth century, and the beginning of the nineteenth century. According to the Oxford Companion to Music it was a round dance similar to, but slower than, the polka. It was sometimes coupled with Écossaise (a quick dance in 2/4 time, popular in France and England in the early nineteenth century), but in spite of the similarity of name it bore no resemblance to that dance beyond the fact that both were in duple time. The Schottische was called the "German polka" when it first appeared in England in the midnineteenth century. A version as the Schottische bohème or polka tremblante was introduced in Paris in the 1840s.<sup>737</sup> This was a sort of contra dance with a number of figures performed by the single couples and then by all of them together. We should not forget the dance forms arising in Paris such as for example **Cancan** (chacut), which was popular after the accession of Louis Philippe in 1830, and was in fact an imitation of the "Fandango". It was a lively dance, developed from the quadrille, usually performed by a troupe of women in flouncy dresses, its acrobatic steps, high kicks, and splits, revealing the upper thigh. It became very popular in the music halls of midnineteenth-century Paris and was given a degree of respectability by the French operetta composers, notably Offenbach.

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<sup>735</sup> Nettl (1947)

<sup>736</sup> Latham, Alison (2011): *The Oxford Companion to Music*. UK: Oxford University Press.

<sup>737</sup> Latham (2011)

The word 'can-can' originally meant tittle-tattle of a scandalous nature. **Chachucha** is another dance of the first half of the nineteenth century. It was related to the bolero, in 3/8 time and was to be performed by a solo female dancer. It was first danced by Fanny Elsler who popularized this dance in Europe. Anyway, it was not particularly fashionable and popular across Europe.<sup>738</sup>

**Mazurka** was a traditional Polish folk dance, named after the Mazurs, who lived in the plains known as Mazovia around Warsaw. The name embraces several types of folk dance, including the kujawiak and the oberek, all of which share the typical mazurka characteristics of a triple metre, dotted rhythms, and a tendency to accentuate the weak beat. In the mideighteenth century the mazurka spread to Germany, where it developed into a social couple dance for the ballroom. In this form it reached Paris, Britain by 1830, and the USA soon after, becoming immensely popular throughout Europe during 1830s and 40s.<sup>739</sup> It was generally danced by couples in multiples of four, performing variations on a few basic steps and positions, often with much improvisation. In the nineteenth century the male dancers were expected to click their spurs together, stamp their heels, and clap their hands. It has become very popular in the polished circles of Paris and London, since judicious modification, with great good taste, have engrafted the light and graceful movement of the French ballet on its coarser features, without impairing any of its national characteristics. There are but three steps strictly pertaining to its entire execution. The time is 3/4 and 3/8 but slower than the Waltz.<sup>740</sup> Cellarius wrote that there is none that has a character more marked with vigour and originality than the mazurka which after its introduction to France found almost straight away its public among the elite.<sup>741</sup> Moreover, Cellarius admitted that from its debut in France, the mazurka has been admitted into the most distinguished ball-rooms. By contrast, according to Durang, it was introduced to England around 1845 by the Duke of Devonshire, but never really attained the success such as other social dances. Most probably, together with the waltz, the polka and the quadrille, the mazurka was one of the most interesting social dance forms in the nineteenth century and hence, more detailed research is to be done on the diffusion of this interesting dance in Europe.

The real drawing-room dance of the French of the thirties up to the middle of the

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<sup>738</sup> Latham (2011)

<sup>739</sup> Latham (2011).

<sup>740</sup> Durang, Charles (1850): *The Ball-Room Bijou, and art of dancing containing the figures of the Polkas, Mazurkas, and other popular new dances with rules for polite behaviour*. Philadelphia, Baltimore, New York, Boston: Fisher&Brother.

<sup>741</sup> Cellarius (1847).

century was the **Quadrille**, the less rigid bourgeois successor to the minuet. With its main figures it had a rhetorical, a dialectic effect. It is one of the oldest dances that retained its position in the ballroom or among the lovers and patrons of the art. It appeared first in the ballet but moved into the ballroom during the reign of Napoleon I in France and arrived in England about 1815. It consists of a group of five country dances of different rhythms and tempos, originally using folk tunes. Over the years it has been materially and essentially altered, that those who practiced it even many years ago, would be compelled to learn it anew. The quadrille of former times was adopted as a medium for the display of agility, and the indulgence of violent exercise; as however, the art of dancing, considered with reference to the execution of difficult steps, vaults and pirouettes, required a long and tedious pupillage, combined with perfect gracefulness of bearing, if not symmetry of form, and could be attained only by years of devoted study and unwearied zeal; it was but natural that few succeeded in not making themselves ridiculous, and that it needed revision and alteration to render it acceptable.<sup>742</sup> The nineteenth-century quadrille performs walk or slide gracefully through the dance, may be executed without any special knowledge of the art of dancing, a familiarity with the figures being all that is essential. The Quadrille is of a great taste in the presentation of the hands and is graceful in walk. It is a sort of happy relief from the more fatiguing polka, redowa and similar dances. It gives a possibility of pleasant conversation and the interchange of civilities, which could not perhaps be otherwise obtained. The Strauss family were prolific providers of sets of quadrille, but the vogue soon waned owing to the difficulty of the steps and the dance was in part replaced by the lancers. In fact, among less important dance forms of the time there was also the **Lancer**, a simplified version of the quadrille, that was introduced to France by M. Laborde in 1836, and in 1850 it made its first appearance in England.<sup>743</sup>

It is thus, clear that the polka constituted part of a larger wave of constantly changing dancing fashions. All the above mentioned dances appeared on the musical scene during the first half of the nineteenth century or even before and were to be seen on the playbills together with the polka. The programs of the balls and parties were usually organized in the way to give the dancers the time and possibility to rest between the moments of the entire indulgence in the pleasures of dancing. In Vienna, the polka was a sort of prolongation of the waltz dancing mania and it became very popular a bit later than in other capital cities. By

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<sup>742</sup> Ferrero (1859): 6.

<sup>743</sup> St. Johnston, Reginald (1906): *A History of Dancing*. London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co.



contrast, in London and Paris it became fashionable almost straight away and was danced together with other dances, mostly waltzes, quadrilles and mazurkas.

This symbiosis of all those social dance forms led to another interesting phenomenon that occurred at the midcentury with the multiple appropriations of the polka in different cities. The polka transformed into polka-mazurka, polka-schnell, polka-francaise, polka-redowa or polka-quadrille. It was mainly the case for Vienna, where during the 1850s several distinct types of polka came into being, including the schnell-Polka, a particularly fast and lively variety similar to the galop; the polka française, a slower and more graceful version; and the polka-mazurka, in 3/4 time. In London, the most popular combination was the polka-quadrille composed often by Jullien and to a certain degree also the polka-mazurka and in Paris one could notice again many forms of polka-quadrille and polka-francaise. Given the polka's multiple appropriations in different cities and even within one city that transformed it in such profound ways, can we still think of it as one dance?

When analyzing different rhythmical patterns of different types of the polka, one typical scheme is immediately to be noticed, mainly the constant quaver pattern in the bass part. There are usually four quavers, thus two quavers on the beat. Also the structures of different types of the polka remained more or less the same with exception to changes concerning additional steps borrowed from the other dances. Moreover, the melody and typical characteristics of the polka were maintained, hence from the rhythmical and musical point of view it was still the same dance. The polka-mazurka is the only polka variation that differed a little bit more from the original polka structure. It is in a triple time with a rhythm that resembles a little bit the waltz or the mazurka, however according to the contemporary dancing masters such as Cellarius or Ferrero, it was danced more like the polka than mazurka. In a certain way, all these polka variations could be compared with another musical forms such as sonata or concert, where the basic structure is maintained and then individual composers add some characteristic components and features according to their taste, fashion and musical standards of the particular historical period. Below I present few examples of the polka sheet music to show how these patterns resemble each other.

The first dance is a simple **polka**. It was written by Johann Strauss in a 2/4 time. The bass part presents a repetitive rhythm of 4 quavers per bar with big jumps of the intervals. The melodic line presents a pause on the second half of the first beat which is here for the typical 'hop' when dancing the polka. The staccato rhythm suggests that this polka should be danced with short and rapid steps in a quite fast tempo.

**BÜRGER-BALL POLKA**  
 von  
**Johann Strauss.**  
 143<sup>tes</sup> Werk.

Polka.

Trio.

(11,657.)

Eigentum und Verlage der k.k. Hof-Kunst- und Musikalienhandlung Carl Haslinger, quondam Tschia- in Wien.

**Polka Mazurka** is a combination of the polka and mazurka steps. It differs from the polka in its triple rhythm and from the mazurka in having an accent often on the third beat. Even if musically similar more to the mazurka it has a similar structure to the polka and is danced much like the polka. This type of the polka was seen as cross-cultural. It starts with the right foot. The Mazurka part is executed forward without turning, then turn half round with the Polka Redowa step; then the repetition, and then the whole round again. It was commented that it was not in high request in fashionable society, the dance being rather slow, and the dancers of the day, favored the “age of progress”, which was certainly fast.

# LA VIENNOISE.

## POLKA-MAZURKA

von  
Johann Strauss.

144<sup>tes</sup> Werk.

Polka-Mazurka.

The musical score is written for piano and consists of four systems of music. The first system begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic marking. The second system features a forte (*f*) dynamic marking and a first ending bracket labeled "1<sup>ma</sup>". The third system includes a forte (*f*) dynamic marking and a trill (*tr*) marking. The fourth system contains a piano (*p*) dynamic marking and two ending brackets labeled "1<sup>ma</sup>" and "2<sup>da</sup>".

(11,654)

Eigenthum und Verlag der k.k. Hof-, Kunst- und Musikalienhandlung Carl Haslinger, quondam Tobias in Wien.

**Polka Schnell** was a combination of the polka and galop and was typical for the Strauss family. It was not particularly known outside of Vienna. It was a faster variation of the polka. At the first glance it does not differ particularly from the first example of the polka shown previously. It is written in a 2/4 time with 4 quavers a bar in the bass and soprano line. The only indication that it should be played and danced a little bit faster than the original polka are the progressive quavers in the melodic line which are written without the pauses in between. This suggest a rather rapid tempo.

# TIK-TAK

POLKA (SCHNELL.)

nach Motiven der Operette:

Die Fledermaus.

VON

JOHANN STRAUSS.

Op. 395.

Polka.

Druck von A. Eckel in Wien.

F.S. 23529.

Stich von F. Halas in Wien.

According to Ferrero the **Polka Redowa** was composed of precisely the same step as the polka, but with a different accentuation.<sup>744</sup> The exception was that the dancer had to slide the first step instead of springing, and omit the pause. The other difference was the tempo. It was to be danced and played a little bit slower than the typical polka. In fact the more complex rhythmical pattern in the melodic part of the score below indicates that this type of the polka was to be played slower, otherwise it would not be possible to play all the notes written.

<sup>744</sup> Ferrero (1859)

## POLKA REDOWA

PAR

FERD: BEYER.

Burlesco . . .

PIANO.

The musical score for 'Polka Redowa' by Ferdinand Beyer is presented in five systems. Each system contains a treble and bass clef staff. The piece is in the key of D major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. The tempo and character are indicated as 'Burlesco' and 'PIANO'. The score includes various dynamics such as *f*, *ff*, and *mf*. The music features a mix of chords and melodic lines, with some passages marked 'Burlesco'. The piece concludes with a final cadence.

10250 .

**Polka Francaise** was a slower and more graceful polka version. It was danced with slower steps requiring more time and was more graceful and elegant. The following excerpt from the polka francaise written by Strauss shows again the use of rhythmic pattern of quavers in the bass, instead the introduction of the new rhythm with semiquavers in the melodic part indicates on the more 'cantabile' character of this piece. Nevertheless, also here the rhythmic and melodic structure of the original polka is maintained.

# „BITTE SCHÖN!“

POLKA FRANÇAISE  
nach Motiven der Operette:

Cagliostro in Wien.

von  
JOHANN STRAUSS.

Op. 372.

3

**Piano.**

Eingang. Polka.

Druck von A. Eckel in Wien.

F. S. 33857.

Stich von F. Hahn in Wien.

**Polka Quadrille** was mainly popular in Paris and London. In Paris it was composed by Musard and his contemporaries. In Vienna, this form of the polka was not particularly known and as a matter of fact it is almost inexistent in Strauss' repertoire. It is also a slower version of the polka with some additional quadrille figures. The rhythmical pattern in the bass part remains unchanged and also the main melodic part of the polka is similar to the standard polka.

## POLKA,

QUADRILLE par MUSARD.

N<sup>o</sup> 1.  
PANTALON

7698.

What is also characteristic of all these examples is that there are no indications of the tempo. It means that most probably the dance was played and executed in the tempo adapted for the particular place and audience and could be also played either faster or a bit slower. Moreover, despite the dance manuals containing the rules how these dances were to be danced in the nineteenth century, there are no other records how people really danced them in the dance halls and ballroom. Thus the real difference between various polka versions can be traced from the comparison of different scores, however they don't depict how people danced different polka variants and if it really mattered to them if it was polka, polka-mazurka or other variation of this dance. In my opinion it was mainly the rhythm of the polka that mattered to them, thus on hearing of the lively notes of the polka they started to dance it. Nevertheless, to deepen the analysis on differences between different types of the polka, it would be useful to analyse all the contemporary dance manuals with the focus on the description of the steps of each polka variant to find out how far did they resemble or differ in the execution. As for the question of the polka popularity in Paris, London and Vienna, the diversity of its forms indicates that there was a great interest in this dance form.

Another interesting aspect of the polka is that its popularity started around 1844, just few years before the revolutions of 1848. It was also shown that the fashion for the polka



continued after these events. It was explained in the previous chapters that the polka did not cause the revolution but its effects were comparably to those of revolution. I mentioned that social dances were popular and mirrored a growing sense of nationalism and the will for changes in nineteenth-century Europe. In a certain way, a dance became a means to talk about the political issues. The polka came in the right moment when people needed something new and fresh to defuse the tension connected with political and social situation. For sure the popularity of the polka was also one of many signs of coming revolutions. So what made the polka still popular even if the political situation was stabilized after 1848? Why was it still fashionable? Why did it continue to be popular in all three cities and what made that its popularity increased even more in Vienna where finally it came out of the shadow of the waltz.

As a matter of fact, a new order also emerged after 1848 in the musical world: a fragmentation into separate cultural spheres and a redefinition of authority and taste. The growth in the size of the musical public, and the variety of tastes and institutions involved, pushed different types of concerts apart from one another. Musical tastes and institutions became ordered in hierarchical terms, at least in the minds of musical idealists. Concerts based on classics became the high culture of musical life. The wide-ranging impact of the revolutionary experience affected musical life deeply. During the 1850s European musical culture entered a new era in the organization of institutions, social values, tastes, and authority. As a result, musical culture became increasingly politicized, both in musical and ideological terms. Although Britain experienced no revolutionary upheaval in 1848, labor unrest and the Chartist movement has unsteadied the political order, and musical life underwent a set of changes similar to those in Paris or Vienna. Though classical music programs tended to be more mixed in genre in London than in Vienna or Paris, classical music was viewed in just as strict terms ideologically. By 1860 commentators in all the major cities were astonished to see how fundamentally musical culture had changed. The most important evidence of a new order was the exclusion of lesser genres from serious concert program. Opera selections and opera fantasies were considered thoughtless, frivolous and coquettish and thus were disappearing from concert programs. In 1860 a Parisian critic claimed that a process was finally underway for *“classifying genres after their intrinsic merit – music of invention and inspiration, music of craft and study, music of the conservatoire, music of the salon,*

*and so on, that would be the start of a new science, and that is the direction in which we need to go*<sup>745</sup>

Coming back to the polka, it is true that even slowly faded away after 1860s and 1870s, it was still very popular straight after the revolutions. The matter that in 1848 and 1849 the forces of popular radicalism were once again defeated on the continent and in England does not detract from their significance in the history of urban leisure and cultural development in Europe. On the one hand, these events had contributed greatly to the images of people's discontent and stimulated efforts by urban reformers, who sought to eliminate conditions that gave rise to revolutionary discontent. On the other hand, they showed the hopefulness in changes for a better future. Moreover, by the mid-1840s major arenas of musical activity began to separate, and after the upheaval of 1848-1849 a new musical order came and it was based on the relative independence of different kinds of music.<sup>746</sup> Most probably the fashion and people's tastes have their own rights and revolution like the one of 1848 could not stop them. Thus, even if defeated people continued to dance the polka and enjoy its fresh rhythms. Most probably the popularity of the polka was seized by the revolution and not the contrary. The freshness and happiness of the new rhythm was per se "revolutionary" and people did not give up to dance it after the revolutions because their will for dancing such as their will for liberty and freedom did not burn out.

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<sup>745</sup> FM, 8 April 1860, 175

<sup>746</sup> Weber William (2006): *Redefining the status of Opera: London and Leipzig 1800-1848*. Journal of Interdisciplinary History 46.

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### **The Polka in the Twentieth Century**

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## ABSTRACT

In March 1844, The British journal The Times commented thus on the new fashion for dancing the polka: „*Politics are for the moment suspended in public regard by the new and all-absorbing pursuit- the polka- a dance recently imported from Bohemia...*“.<sup>747</sup> Any historian would ask him or herself: why would the most important British political journal have given, at that time, such importance to a rural dance? Why and how did this Bohemian cultural product, the polka, find its way to the main European cultural centres of the nineteenth century such as London, Vienna or Paris and why did it become a part of the international cultural circulation?

Indeed, the mid-nineteenth-century European sphere of social customs, habits and behaviour was to a certain degree turned upside down by the explosion of the new „revolution“ - polkomania. In the course of 1844 the polka became a very popular form of social dancing in Europe and America and its emergence was noted by most important international journals.

My thesis argues that several factors contributed to what we might call „the polka fashion“ in Europe. The first one was the excitement of the dance itself. Thus, thanks to the polka, along with coming on the heels of political revolutions and struggles for women's liberation, males and females could finally dance together touching, squeezing, hugging and rotating each other in a way that strongly suggested the erotic pleasure of love-making. Secondly, the growing commercialization of life created a sort of polka market, thus shaping a new cultural and consumption good. Finally, changes in the structure and power relations of European urban societies connected with the rise of the bourgeoisie strongly influenced the popularity of the polka.

In order to look at these developments my research follows a geographical approach. I've chosen to examine each of the three main cultural centres where the polka was made fashionable. Thus, it consists of three chapters focused on Paris, Vienna and London and a final chapter that aims at comparing the developments in all these cities. Furthermore, the study takes as its basis the movements of four agents: in chapter one - Cellarius and Coralli in Paris; in chapter two - Strauss in Vienna; and in chapter three - Jullien in London. All these parts focus on effects and changes brought by these agents through the polka into the cultural, social and political life of those capitals. By tracing how and where they performed and what

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<sup>747</sup> The Times, March 14, 1844 / also quoted from The Times in The Illustrated London News, March 23, 1844: 184

kind of reactions they evoked, a more precise picture emerges about the development of the polka fashion.

Normally it is believed that the polka originated as a fashion in Prague and Vienna to be later spread into other European cities. I hope to show, that it was in fact in Paris that it was first made fashionable, then later it was adopted in Vienna and finally the new fashion was copied in London. My study is carried on by analysis of the nineteenth-century European press, memoirs, novels, images, sheet music covers, caricatures and poetics.