

FAVART, Mme Charles-Nicolas-Justin, née Marie-Geneviève Bellot

Paris c.1756–1833

Marie-Geneviève Bellot (as her name appears in her marriage contract) or Maurice-Geneviève Bellot (among the variants that appear, perhaps by confusion with the engraver Maurice Blot, 1753–1818), was the daughter of Etienne Bellot, bourgeois de Paris, and his wife, née Marguerite Dupoix (they were married by contract 29.VII.1741, AN MC II/485). As she was no doubt the Mlle Belot noted at the Place Dauphine in 1772, she was probably born close to 1756 (Marandet's estimate; she was still a minor in 1776). We learn from the 1800 Salon livret that she was pupil of Bachelier, a pastel of whom, incorrectly attributed to Vigée Le Brun, has an inscription on the back by the (unnamed) artist's son; her name is given as the artist in an older sale record. It may well date to the mid-1770s, and is evidently earlier than the other surviving works.

She was living with her parents in the rue de Bondy, paroisse Saint-Laurent in 1776 when she married Charles-Nicolas-Justin Favart (1749–1806), the son of the playwright Charles-Simon Favart and his wife, the famous actress, Justine du Ronceray (her brother was an artist who used pastels by Vernezobre in 1760). At the time of the marriage, her husband was secrétaire de l'intendance de Paris. Soon afterwards he turned to a career as a dramatist and became a member of the Comédie-Italienne, but he left the theatre by 1796, when he became bibliothécaire du Tribunal (he is not to be confused with the avocat Favart de Langlade who was a *tribun*) and subsequently, until his death, of the Sénat. He also became maire de Belleville, the village where his father had a country house. The marriage contract is of considerable length, but more revealing perhaps is a letter from Favart père to his son, written just six weeks before the wedding:

J'ai trouvé une lettre de Mlle Bellot qui se plaint douloureusement de ce que vous ne lui écrivez pas, et remarque sur le papier la trace de ses larmes. Vous faites donc le petit cruel. Vous vous laissez aimer sans daigner répondre aux tendres sentiments que vous inspirez; ce procédé n'est pas d'un galant homme.

The family she married into already had an important iconography, including pastels of her late mother-in-law by Boucher, La Tour, Legendre and Liotard, while the family collection including the La Tour portrait of Maurice de Saxe (Geneviève's mother-in-law was his mistress up to the time of her husband's birth).

Mme Favart's son Antoine-Pierre-Charles Favart (1780–1867) was also an artist and playwright, and later a diplomat – in 1815 he was appointed secretary to the duc de Caraman in Vienna, and he was the French consul in Russia in 1852. He edited his grandfather's *Mémoires*, and added annotations to many of the surviving family documents (including we believe the Bachelier portrait).

Mme Favart, who also worked in miniature, exhibited pastels at the Salons of 1800 (rue du Lycée, no. 1086, au Palais du Tribunat, as the Palais-Royal was then known) and 1808 (rue du Lycée, no. 1), and was listed in the *Almanach du commerce de Paris* in 1805 (rue des Saints-Pères, 123). She was widowed in 1806, and was still living in 1833, when she was recorded as drawing a pension of 300 livres on the civil list (awarded for her husband's rather than her own work). Her inventaire après décès was conducted 28.VI.1833 (AN MC/RE/CXI/15) at 21, rue Coquenard.

In 1788 her portrait of the linguist and educationalist Valentin Haüy (now known only from an engraving) received an unusual acknowledgement, as related by Cousin Jacques (*Courrier des planètes*, 36, 4.IX.1788, p. 18f):

Madame Favart a fait dernièrement le portrait de M. Haüy, Interprète du Roi, instituteur de l'éducation des aveugles, rue Notre-Dame-des-Victoires. Ces enfants ont fait présent à leur maître de ce portrait, peint au pastel comme Madame Favart sait peindre, c'est-à-dire dans la plus grande perfection. Les aveugles, pour témoigner leur reconnaissance à Madame Favart, ont soutenu dimanche 3 août un exercice public, où j'ai assisté, avec une très-brillante société. Ils ont joué à la fin une petite pièce en l'honneur de la charmante artiste, qu'ils voulaient remercier; MM. Favart père et fils, assistaient à cette pièce; lorsqu'ils ont vu leur nom fêté par la sensibilité, & d'une manière si touchante et si naïve, ils n'ont pu s'empêcher de verser des larmes, & toute l'assemblée en versait de même. Les trois Favart, si aimés du public, étaient présents; le nom de la célèbre Mme Favart n'a pas été oublié non plus; & le motif des acteurs, leur situation, le zèle dont ils étaient animés, tout concourait à rendre le spectacle un des plus intéressants qui aient jamais parlé à mes sens.

Ratouis de Limay knew only the portrait of her father-in-law, "œuvre révélant de solides qualités de dessin et de coloris." It is of higher quality than the other pastels we have added to her œuvre, and was at one time attributed to Labille-Guiard (the description in the 1800 salon livret is however conclusive). The Maradan engraving, here associated with the pastel, cites no source, but since Mme Favart's pastel is posthumous, it may have predated and guided her work. The pastel (previously catalogued as by Favier, a non-existent pastellist) of Mme Gois, the wife of the sculptor whom Labille-Guiard portrayed, reinforces this association; it also, in its style and the outdoor setting, reveals the influence of Claude Hoin (*q.v.*), who was also closely linked to the Gois family. A pastel of "Cousin, avocat au parlement de Paris" is probably in fact of one of the avocats au parlement de Rouen, perhaps Goldoni's correspondent Cousin-Despréaux or a relative.

Bibliography

Bellier de La Chavignerie & Auvray; Bénézit; Philippe Dally, *Belleville, histoire d'une localité parisienne pendant la Révolution*, Paris, 1912; Andrea Fabiano, "Alcune riflessioni sui rapporti tra la famiglia Favart e Carlo Goldoni in occasione del ritrovamento dei versi composti dal commediografo veneziano per Maurice-Geneviève Favart-Bellot", in *Tra libro e scena – Carlo Goldoni*, ed. Carmelo Alberti & Ginette Herry, Venice, 1996, p. 49–60; Jal 1872; Lemoine-Bouchard 2008; *Lettre de la miniature*, 12, v.2012, pp. 3f; Amédée Marandet, "Manuscrits de la famille Favart", *Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire du théâtre*, 1922; Ratouis de Limay 1946; Sanchez 2004, *s.v.* Belot; Saur; Schidlof 1964

GENEALOGIES Favart

Pastels

J.309.101 Jean-Jacques BACHELIER (1724–1806), pstl (M. F...; Paris, Drouot, Mareschal, 26–27.XII.1863, s.n. n.r.)

J.309.102 =?pstl, 38x31, inscr. *verso* "Portrait peint par ma mère sous les conseils de M. Bachelier qui fut son premier maître" (Paris, Drouot, Ader Tajan, 31.III.1993, Lot 235 repr., as by Vigée Le Brun, est. f20,000, f23,000; M. X; vente p.m., Paris, Drouot, PIASA, 7.XII.2011, Lot 50 repr., as by Vigée Le Brun, est. €5500–6500, €14,000 [=€17,851]). Lit.: Bachelier 2000, no. 3 repr., c.1780; Jeffares 2006, p. 578A_i, anon. [new attr.] ⚭⚭



J.309.103 DELAMARE, pstl, 54x43, inscr. *verso* "Monsieur Delamare / rue de Choiseul /chez (?) Madame Favart 1806" (Saint-Cloud, Le Floc'h, 8.X.2017, Lot 20 repr., as éc. fr. c.1790, est. €400–600) ⚭⚭



J.309.104 COUSIN, avocat au parlement de Paris, pstl, 32x24 ov., sd ← 1788 (Châlons-en-Champagne, musée Garinet, inv. 921.3.2) ⚭



Photo courtesy musée Garinet

J.309.108 Le feu citoyen FAVART père [Charles-Simon Favart (1710–1792)] composant sa comédie *L'Anglais à Bordeaux* (1763), pstl, 92x73, Salon de 1800, no. 141 (Bézières, mBA, inv. 82-4-1, no. 5321. A.-P.-C. Favart, consul de France; Mlle Marie Favart. Henry Pannier, Paris, 1907–46. Paris, Drouot, 22.VI.1939, f4500. Acqu. 1982). Exh.: Paris 1908a, no. 26, pl. 19, as by Labille-Guiard; Paris 1927a, no. 17, pl. IXXXIX-130. Lit.: Lemoine 1907, repr., as by Labille-Guiard; Ratouis de Limay 1946, pl. LVIII/88 ⚭

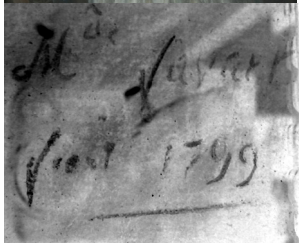


LARGER IMAGE

~grav. François Maradan (Versailles, inv. grav 2857, as of Nicolas Favart) [new association]

J.309.111 ~?version, pstl (Paris 1908c, no. 555 n.r., attr. Mme Favart

J.309.112 [?]Mme Edmé-Étienne-François GOIS, pstl, 74.5x55.5, sd \ "M^{de} favart/fecit 1799" (Versailles, Martin Chausselat, 20.XI.2005, repr., as inconnue, sd Favier 1799, est. €2500–3500. La Tour Camoufle, Paris, 2009). Lit.: Jeffares 2006, p. 179A1, as inconnue, by Favier Φ



J.309.115 Valentin HAÛY (1745–1822), l'inventeur des caractères typographiques pour les aveugles, instructeur, pstl, 1788

~grav. Sergent



J.309.118 [La marquise] de MONTALEMBERT [née Marie-Joséphine de Comarieu (1750–1832), salonnière, veuve de Marc-René, marquis de

Montalembert] posant deux vers sur le buste de son mari, Salon de 1800, no. 142

J.309.119 Le citoyen N... en pied, pstl, 90x71, sd "Mme Favart/fecit 1800", Salon de 1800, no. 143 (Paris, Sotheby's, 27.VI.2002, Lot 131 repr., est. €30–40,000) Φσ

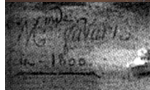
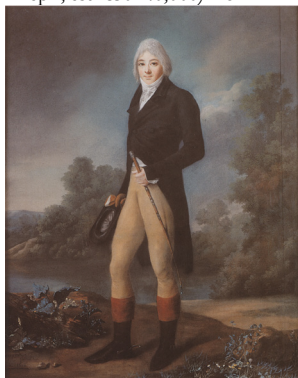


Photo courtesy Sotheby's

J.309.123 Quelques portraits, m/u, Salon de la Jeunesse 1772

J.309.124 Plusieurs portraits, m/u, Salon de 1800, no. 144

J.309.125 Deux portraits, pstl, Salon de 1808, no. 213

J.309.126 Pastel (Paris, Galerie Charpentier, 22.VI.1939)