

**STOP 3: Jane Avril at the Jardin de Paris 1893, Henri de
TOULOUSE-LAUTREC**



Music: Cancan/ orchestra

Narrator:

Jane Avril holds her leg up high as she dances the cancan. One contemporary critic, Arsène Alexandre, described her style:

She is a strange dancer - lost in an immense bonnet in these light, flowing and tumultuous silks, with the thin, fine face of a little working-class rabbit. Anaemic and determined, the dancer performs a step that is a must-see – one leg thrown out wildly in front, while her two hands grasp her orange

skirt, making it perform grand undulating movements, alternately up and down, following the rhythm, making you think of an orchid in a frenzy.

Narrator

Avril commissioned Lautrec to create this poster advertising her debut performances at the Jardin de Paris - an open-air dance hall in the gardens of the Champs-Élysées. It is a captivating image. The neck of the double bass scrolls round, framing Avril in her bright skirts. With this unusual view, the artist places the spectator in the orchestra pit, drawing us close to the action.

Avril was quick to see the potential of using posters to advertise her personal brand. And her alliances with artists – especially Lautrec – helped her become one of the most famous stars of her day. This began with the Moulin Rouge – which remained Avril's favourite venue.

SFX: Street sounds, fairground sounds, including laughter and shouts of delight

The Jardin de Paris was one of the city's most popular café-concerts, combining the attractions of a concert hall, dance hall and fairground. It even had a diorama and an entrance hall filled with crazy mirrors!