Recherches sur la musique française classique

L'art vocal en France aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles

La vie musicale en France sous les rois bourbons
APPROPRIATION, PARODY, AND THE BIRTH
OF FRENCH OPERA: LULLY'S
LES FESTES DE L'AMOUR ET DE BACCHUS
AND MOLIÈRE'S
LE MALADE IMAGINAIRE

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In the spring of 1672, Jean-Baptiste Lully ended his ten-year association with Jean-Baptiste Molière and purchased the royal monopoly to produce operas in France. On 1 April Pierre Perrin's erstwhile Académie Royale des Opéra disbanded, and its theater, the Jeu de paume de la Bouteille, closed by the king's decree.¹ Lully meanwhile was seeking a suitable theater for his Académie Royale de Musique. Perrin's theater would have been the obvious choice, since it was already equipped for operatic performances. Lully, however, refused to have dealings with Perrin's former associates, the Marquis de Sourdéac and the Sieur de Champeron (who still held the lease to the Jeu de paume de la Bouteille), and instead he requested the Salle du Louvre—the hall where Cavalli's opera Xerxes had been performed twelve years earlier.² But the king declined on the grounds that the Louvre was inappropriate for public performances,³ and so Lully leased the Jeu de Paume de Béquet (known as "le Bel-Air"), the first site of Perrin's academy, through the remainder of the 1672-73 theatrical season;⁴ and to finance his

¹ The author wishes to thank the following colleagues for reading and commenting on early drafts of this article: Stephen Fleck, Andrew Walking, and H. Wiley Hitchcock.


⁴ See Nutter & Thoïnan, Les Origines de l'opéra français, pp. 272-73. Because Perrin neglected to receive proper authorization from La Reynie, Lieutenant de police du roi à Paris, to give performances in the Jeu de paume de Béquet, the academy was forced to vacate and seek a new location. Sourdéac and Champeron had already begun constructing « des loges, théâtre, amphithéâtre et autres choses qui ont esté inutiles par le moyen des defenses verbales à eux faites de la part de M. de la Reynie de parachever ces travaux et
opera venture, Lully went into partnership with the Italian scenic designer Carlo Vigarni. Meanwhile, Lully’s former associate Molière had reaped the considerable financial rewards from the public performances of *Psyché*, their only *tragédie-ballet*. The profits accrued during its first performance-run helped to pay for the 1671 renovations made to the Théâtre du Palais-Royal, including the installation of a state-of-the-art transformation stage. Little surprise that when Molière died suddenly and unexpectedly in February of 1673, Lully requested and obtained this theater from the king for his opera productions.

Molière and Lully had been a dynamic team throughout the 1660s, and their dozen *comédies-ballets* set new standards for the lyric stage that prepared the way for French opera. Indeed, there were signs that Molière and Lully had planned to take over Perrin’s monopoly and form their own opera company. By the summer of 1671 Molière had the playhouse and the sin-

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6. Bauderon de Sénécè’s pamphlet “Lettre de Clément Maret à Monsieur de ***” (Cologne: Pierre Moreau, 1688), pp. 54-57, written soon after Lully’s death, lends support to the hypothesis that Lully and Molière once planned to acquire the opera privilege together. Sénécè portrays an internal tribunal, in which Perrin and Cambert have just finished their testimony against Lully: “Le grand bruit que faisaient dans le Monde les OPERAS... excitèrent ma curiosité, et revêverrent ma cupidité. J’apprehendia que cette nouveauté ne fit desenter mon Théâtre; et je me persuadai que si je pouvois m’en rendre le maître, rien ne pourroit désormais me troubler dans la qualité, que je pretendois m’attribuer d’arbitre des plaisirs, et de bon grand de ce siècle galant ou j’ai vécu. Comme j’avois besoin d’un Musicien pour exécuter ce projet, je jettais les yeux sur Lully, et lui communiquai ma pensée, persuadé que j’eusse que la raison que nous avions depuis long-temps, en concourant ensemble aux plaisirs du Roi, et le succès merveilleux qu’avoyoit eu depuis peu de temps le charmant spectacle de *Psyché*, où tous deux nous avions eu notre part au plaisir et à la gloire, méritoient des garans infaiiblés de notre future intelligence. Je m’eusse donc à lui, il applaudit à mon dessein, il me promit une fidélité, et même une subordiation invariable, nous firmes nos conventions, nous regloirions nos emplois, et nos partages, et nous primes jour pour aller ensemble mettre la faux dans la moisson d’autrui en demandant au Roi, le Privilege de la représentation des OPERAS... Je dormois tranquile sur la bonne foi de ce traité, quand Lully plus éveillé que moi partit de la main deux jours avant celui dont nous étions convenus. Il alla au Roi demander le privilege pour lui seul, il l’obtint à la faveur des belles couleurs qu’il sçait donner à sa requête, et l’obtin même avec des condicions rigoureuses, qui me donnerent beaucoup à courir pour conserver pendant ma vie quelques ornemens à mon théâtre.”

Although a work of fiction, Sénécè’s satire has a ring of truth about it. As “premier valet de chambre” to the queen, Sénécè left court intrigues; see Georges Mounin, “La vie de Molière,” p. 10.


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gers, dancers, and instrumentalists that would have enabled his company to move into opera; moreover, their summer performances of *Psyché* demonstrated the popularity and commercial viability of serious lyric theater. But when Lully went to the king and demanded the opera privilege for himself, 7 the break-up of "les deux grands Baptistes" showed all the signs of a hostile divorce. News of Lully's coup caused a general uproar, for the initial draft of the privilege prohibited public performances "de plus de deux airs et de deux instruments" without Lully's written permission. 8 When Molière learned of this, he and his actors protested against Lully's patents; 9 as a result, the objectionable clause was struck from the final version (issued the next day), which carried only a general prohibition "de faire chanter aucune pièce entière en musique, soit en vers français ou autres langues, sans la permission par écrit dudit Sr de Lully, a peine de 10.000 l dr d'amende et de confiscation de théatres, machines, decorations, habit et autres choses...". 10

Perrin's 1669 privilege also carried general restrictions to safeguard his opera monopoly; but they proved to have little actual effect when Molière troupe, the Marais company, and the Italian *commedia dell'arte* actors continued performing their *comédies-ballets*, musical machine-plays, and musical comedies. 11 In May of 1672 Molière began testing the efficacy of Lully's monopoly by increasing the amount of music and dance in his own productions. He revived several of the *comédies-ballets* (*Le Bourgeois gentilhomme, Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, Les Fâcheux, L'Amour médecin*), and furnished several of his non-musical plays (*L'Avarie, L'École des maris, Le Coucou imaginé, L'Étouardi*) with "augmentation de simphonie." 12 He also teamed up

chambre » to the queen, Sénéçé lived at court and was in a position to be well-informed about court intrigues; see Georges Mongrédien, « Molière et Lully », *XVIIe Siècle*, 98-99 (1973), p. 10.


11. Perrin's privilege prohibited anyone else « de faire chanter de pareils opéra ou représentations en musique et en vers français dans toute l'estendue de notre Royaume pendant douze années, sans le consentement et permission dudit exposant, a peine de dix mil livres d'amende, confiscation des théatres, machines et habitz, applicable un tiers a nous, un tiers a l'hospital general et l'autre tiers aud. exposant. » See the « Privilege au Sr Perrin pour l'establissement d'une academie d'opera en musique et vers français » (dated 28 June 1669), reproduced in Benoit, *Musiques de cour*, p. 24.

with Marc-Antoine Charpentier for the public premiere of *La Comtesse d'Essobargnus*, for which they provided a new *comédie-ballet* version of *Le Mariage forcé*.¹³ Even though the Troupe du Roy charged twice the usual admission for the first four performances, Parisians flocked to this musical production; when prices reverted to normal on 17 July, the audience tripled in size to a record 687—the largest attendance of any comedy of the season.¹⁴ Soon thereafter, Lully imposed his first set of specific restrictions on music: the ordinance of 12 August 1672 forbade any company from leasing Lully’s playhouse, limited theaters to a maximum of six singers and twelve instrumentalists in their employ, and prohibited the hiring of singers and instrumentalists engaged by Lully or of dancers on the royal payroll.¹⁵

While Lully awaited Vigarni’s conversion of the *Jeu de paume de Béquet*, he seems to have provided music to Molière’s rivals—the Italian company that shared the Théâtre du Palais-Royal with the Troupe du Roy. During July and August of 1672 the Italians performed Joseph Girardin’s *Le Collier de perles*, a farce based on an incident reported by Donnée de Visé in the first issue of the *Mercure galant*.¹⁶ A young man, having stolen a pearl necklace, swallowed the thirty-two pearls in order to conceal his crime; later, he was caught and forced by means of enemas to surrender his ill-gotten goods.¹⁷ In the Italians’ production, Arlecchino frenzied his character’s name as “Arlequin Shobofel, Marquis Franço” and portrayed the hapless young man in question. Robinet praised Girardin’s comedy for its “...bonne musique / Et de tres beaux pas de ballet.”¹⁸ Indeed, with its two *intermèdes* and a concluding pastorela (complete with songs, dances, a magician, and dancing demons) not only did the play resemble a *comédie-ballet*, but Molière’s *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* inspired some of its comic material.¹⁹ While the composer is not mentioned by name, the play’s preface strongly hints, perhaps with a nod to Lully:²⁰

> “Au reste il est inutile d'imaginer, les airs, et les entrées de figures illustres n'y aient employés sans subtilité, et ce serait un admirable génie, & de si grandes choses si surprêmement.”

These references to the *comédie-ballet* are amenable,²¹ and yet it is hard not to associate the popular Italian theater influence on Molière.

Molière responded with *Les Précieuses ridicules* in his next *comédie-ballet*, *La Princesse de Cleves*, a popular Italian *commedia dell’arte* performed the year before.²² Robinet is said to have enjoyed the double revenge on Molière in the midst of a success with a parody of his own success,²³ as the *commedia dell’arte* often did. One also wonders whether Molière and Lully, each with his own sensibilities and disorders that broke out at different moments, were performing *La Comtesse* during the performances of *Le Bourgeois genteilhomme*.

At any rate, around 10 August, Molière’s *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* was encored.²⁴ This was in

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¹⁵ The *Ordinance portant defences a toutes les troupe de comedus francois et estrangers de louer la salle qui a servy aux representations des ouvrages de theatre en musique*, dated 12 August 1672, is reproduced in Benoit, *Musiques de coul.* pp. 38-39.

¹⁶ *Le Mercure galant* (1673), 1, pp. 7-17.


¹⁹ For instance, the scene where Arlequin’s tailor, harlequin, and apprentice-wigmaker argue over the relative importance of their professions derives from the altercation between the Maître de Musique, Maître à Danser, and the Maître d’Armes in Act 2, sc. 2 of *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*.

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²⁰ The frères Parfait (ibid., p. 128) eloquently praise the *comédie-ballet* and c’est peut-être le seul moment de cour qu’il a jamais aimé. Couvreur (Jean-Baptiste Lully, Marc Vokar, 1992), p. 280 p. in *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*: “… drôles et drolades… “de perles” : o, cet éditeur attardé !” (cette époque tous les autres)”.

²¹ Lionel de La Laurencie (Les Comédies et les Tragédies de Molière, 1643-1722), p. 64, and Eugène Boileau (Oeuvres de Molière, 1958), p. 191) all feel that the words “...bonne musique / Et de tres beaux pas de ballet.” imply adherence to Lully.

²² The above statement on Le Bourgeois gentilhomme is from Molière, *Recherche sur la comédie*.

²³ Couvreur, Jean-Baptiste Lully, p. 288.

²⁴ The *Plaide et information en ceste survenue au théâtre de l’opéra au mois d’octobre 1672* is reproduced in pp. 530-37.
strongly hints, perhaps with a note of wry irony, that it was none other than Lully:

« Au reste il est inutile de nommer celui qui a pris la peine de composer les airs, & les entrées de ballet qui en sont tout l'ornement ; quoique cet illustre n'y ait employé que le peu de moments que lui laissent les divertissements qu'il prépare pour le Roi, on ne laisse pas de reconnaître d'abord son admirable génie, & de juger que ce n'est que de lui seul que peuvent partir des choses si surprenantes, & si peu forcées. »

These references to the king's Surréndant de la musique are unmistakable; and yet it is hard to imagine that Lully would have composed for the popular Italian theater — unless it were to exact a measure of revenge on Mollière.

Molière responded with characteristic satire by including an Italian interlude in his next comédie-ballet, Le Malade imaginaire. 22 Plagiarizing Il candelaio, a popular Italian comedy by Giordano Bruno, Molière transformed the commedia dell'arte clown Polichinelle into "the old moneylender Polichinelle" (lover of the hypochondriac's maid servant Toinette), and thrust him in the midst of a surreal parody of French opera. Mollière thereby enjoyed the double revenge of mocking Lully's operatic ventures, as well as the commedia dell'arte actors'renchification of their own Italian comedies. One also wonders whether the growing antagonism between Molière and Lully, each with his own cabal of supporters, may have provoked the disorders that broke out at the Palais-Royal on 9 October 1672 and disrupted performances of La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas and L'Amour médecin. 23

At any rate, around 10 November 1672 Lully inaugurated his new Académie Royale de Musique with a pastoral opera, Les Festes de l'Amour et de Bacchus. 24 This was in fact Lully's second collaboration with the playmaker and apprentice-wigmaker argue derives from the altercation between the Maître d'Armes in Act 2, sc. 2 of Le

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20. The frères Parfait (ibid., pp. 389-90, n. 1) reproduce this avis, and remark that « A ces éloges si flatteurs pour le Musicien, il n'est pas difficile de reconnaître le fameux Lully ; & c'est peut-être le seul merite de l'œuvre. » In support of this hypothesis, Manuel Couvreur (Jean-Baptiste Lully : Musique et dramaturgie au service du Prince [Bruxelles : Marc Vokar, 1992], p. 280) points out that Robert Ballard printed the livret for Le Collieur de perles : « or, cet éditeur attiré des divertissements royaux, et donc de Lully, abonde à cette époque tous les autres livrets à la concurrence. »

21. Henri de La Laurencie (Les Créateurs de l'opéra français [Paris : Alcan, 1921], p. 160), and Eugène Borrel (« La Musique au théâtre au XVIIe siècle », XVIIe Siècle, 39 [1958], p. 191) all feel that the preface refers to not to Lully, but rather to Louis de Molière. But the above statement (« quoique cet illustre n'y ait employé que le peu de moments que lui laissent les divertissements qu'il prépare pour le Roi ») would not have applied to Molière in 1672 — for, according to Elizabeth Maxfield-Miller, Louis de Molière retired from court life around 1665 (« Louis de Molière, musicien, et son homonyme Molière », Recherches sur la Musique française classique, 3 [1963], p. 32).

22. Couvreur, Jean-Baptiste Lully, pp. 281-83.

23. The « Plainte et information faites à la requête du commissaire du roi au sujet d'une émanc se survenue au théâtre du Palais Royal pendant la comédie » (dated 14 and 15 October 1672) is reproduced in Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans de recherches, pp. 532-37.

24. According to the libretto (Les Festes / De l'Amour / et / De Bacchus / pastorale, /
wright Philippe Quinault, 22 who had provided the sung lyrics for Psyché. Aside from its prologue, the majority of this pastorale consisted of musical scenes and intermèdies borrowed from La Pastorale comique (1667), George Dandin (1668) and Les Amants magnifiques (1670) – three of the Mollière-Lully comédies-ballets least familiar to the Parisian public. 26 “On a essayé de lié ces Fragmens choisis, par plusieurs Scenes nouvelles, on y a joint des Entrées de Balet, on y a meslé des Machines volantes, & des Decorations superbes, & de toutes ces parties differentes on a formé une Pastorale en trois Actes précédée d’un grand Prologue.”27 Notwithstanding the Frères Parfait’s assertion that “le mélange qui formoit cette Pastorale, ne produiroit qu’un spectacle médiocre,”28 the appeal of the magnificent scenery and machine effects, the intercalated ballet entrées, and the musical celebration of idyllic love all served to make Les Festes de l’Amour et de Bacchus sufficiently popular for revival in 1689, 1696, 1706, 1716, and 1738. 29 Despite the extensive borrowings, Quinault skillfully wove the old and new material into a spectacular balletic entertainment that looks forward to opéra-ballet (see Table 1). Nutter and Thoman contend that Mollière had no grounds to complain of Lully’s recycling of these excerpts, since the comédies-ballets had been commissioned for court performance and paid for by the king. 30 But there may have been another reason for Mollière’s complaisance: a new production of Psyché was about to open at the Palais-Royal, for which the Troupe du Roy was planning to use Lully’s music. 31

25. There remains some confusion regarding the author(s) of the libretto. According to many modern sources, Isaac Benserade and the Président de Pergny helped Quinault piece together the livret from fragments by Mollière, to which they added some new scenes of their own. However, since Pergny died in 1670, it is unlikely that he provided much assistance with the project. The notion that Benserade contributed verses to Les Festes de l’Amour et de Bacchus may stem from the fact that excerpts were borrowed from Les Amants magnifiques to Benserade in his premature review of the court premiere (letter of 8 February 1670), and later corrected his error (letter of 22 February 1670); see Brooks, ed., Le Théâtre et l’opéra vers par les gazetiers Robines et Loret, 1670-1678, pp. 27-31). As far as we know, nothing contradicts Tralage’s assertion that « les vers sont de M. Quinault et de M. de Mollière, la musique de M. Lully » (Notes et Documents sur l’histoire des théâtres de Paris au XVIIe siècle, p. 110).

26. La Pastorale comique and Les Amants magnifiques were never performed publicly at the Palais-Royal, and George Dandin seems to have been presented as a non-musical play shorn of its pastoral intermèdies.


31. One looks in vain in the company’s account books, the Registre de La Grange, for a record of royalty payments to Lully for his music, to Quinault for his sung lyrics, or to Corneille for his versification (from Act 2, sc. 2 to the end of the play).

Molière no doubt bridled similarly when Lully acquired the privilege to produce such passeïsme arrangements of literary material. To fill out what many of the singers and dancers were forced to seek out and train at the company’s preparations for the new performance-run of Psyché began:

ed the sung lyrics for *Psyché*, pastorale consisted of musical *pastorale comique* (1667). George (1670) – three of the Molière-Parnassian public.26 “On a essayé Scenes nouvelles, on y a joint des volantes, & des Decoration s on a formé une Pastorale en ?” Notwithstanding the Frères moit cette Pastorale, ne produis- if of the magnificent scenery and s, and the musical celebration thes de l’Amour et de Bacchus ) 1, 1706, 1716, and 1738.27 Des- illuwed the old and new act that looks forward to opéra- cont that Molière had no these excerpts, since the comé- f performance and paid for by r reason for Molière’s complai- put to open at the Palais-Royal, to use Lully’s music.21

/ Paris... François Maguet, (1672) the part(s) of the libretto. According to many t de Perigny helped Quinault piece which they added some new scenes of it is unlikely that he provided much ade contributed verses to *Les Festes de* that excerpts were borrowed from *Les* ributed the verses of *Les Amants magni- née court première (letter of 8 February 1670); see Brooks, ed., *Le* et Loret, 1670-1678, pp. 27-31). As for on that « les vers sont de M. Quinault (Notes et Documents sur l’histoire des s were never performed publicly at the been presented as a non-musical play.

Molière no doubt bridled at Lully’s appropriation of his lyrics, particularly when Lully acquired a privilege on 20 September 1672 granting him publication rights to all future works that he would set to music, including *les Vers, Paroles, Sujets, Desseins, & Ouvrages.* Even though the text of the privilege appeared at the beginning of the *livret* to *Les Festes de l’Amour et de Bacchus*, it is a moot point whether this extended Lully’s rights over such *pastiche* arrangements. But Lully’s “borrowings” did not stop with literary material. To fill out the ranks of his opera company, Lully recruited many of the singers and dancers that Molière had hired for *Psyché* and trained at the company’s expense. This drain of talent coincided with preparations for the new production of *Psyché*. Consequently, Molière was forced to seek out and train replacement singers, while Beauchamps returned to organize a new *corps de ballet* at the Palais-Royal.22 The third performance-run of *Psyché* began on 11 November 1672 – around the same time

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as the première of Les Festes de l'Amour et de Bacchus; and so Molière's successful tragédie-ballet and Lully's untasted first opera were in direct competition. How Molière must have gloated when Robinet waxed eloquent in his praise of Psyché, declaring that it surpasses "tous les Opéra / Qu'on vold &. Je croi qu'on vermer." 33

Unable to stop Lully from appropriating his poetry and from luring away his singers and dancers, Molière retaliated with his most lethal weapons—parody, satire, and laughter. Plans were underway for a new comédie-ballet when the August 1672 issue of the Mercure Galant announced a forthcoming "pièce de spectacle nouvelle, toute comique" by Molière and Beauchamps. 34 Charpentier, flushed with the victory of La Comtesse d'Esparbagnas and Le Mariage forcé, began composing a brilliant musical score. 35 General preparations began on 22 November 1672, 36 and by mid-December the musical rehearsals commenced. In all, there were fifty-three rehearsals for the ballet (fifteen of them combined with the comedy), and on 10 February 1673 Le Malade imaginaire premiered in a lavish and expensive production "remplis de danses, musique et ustencilles." 37

Molière's comedies and comédies-ballets had a long history of satirizing different factions of 17th-century French society (aristocrats and provincials, doctors and lawyers, philosophers and pedants, musicans, dancers, and poets), for which the playwright often drew his caricatures after real-life. Louis Auld suggests that the character of Lysandre, the dancing nuisance in Les Fâcheux (1661), might have been inspired by Perrin who, after his success with the Pastoral d'Issy (1659), began to lobby the king and Mazarin for an opera privilege. 38 The joke here is that Lully himself composed this comédie-ballet, which was his sole contribution to the Beauchamps-Molière comédie-ballet. Since Lully's comédie survives only in partition, it would seem that Lully was forced to perform a menial task. 39

Thereafter, Molière's poetry, and music domineering, and shepherdesses that appeared in Robinet's Pastoral d'Issy (1668) and Les Amants persécutés. For Perrin's Pastoral d'Issy, Molière used a chanson ridicule, a ridicule Jourdain's old-father, furthermore, Molière, playing the chanson in a ridiculous fashion, found conventions of the pastourelle reductions some singers dressed, that he is to imagine that some "comiques, bergers?" the bemused Perrin. But the Maitre à Danser, who parle en musique, il faut passer la bergère. Le chant a été primitif et guère naturel en dialogue en musique. Five months later, Perrin complained of the "caquet des envieux, des fous qui se moquent des paroles de l'opéra, "une fronde de deux anciens, provocateurs."

In Le Malade imaginaire and its conventions when singing to be shepherd and by singing a "petit opera" interrupts their performance, the singer demands to see her score, "notated there, Cléante旱, dans sa misère, qu'on a trouvé des notes, même?" Here, Molière would de composer des paroles to which Molière himself devised

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36. "On a icy commencé la preparation du malade Imaginaire" [next to entry dated 22 November 1672], Registre de La Grange, I, p. 140.
37. Registre de La Grange, I, p. 144.

- Perrin était grand garçon, maigre et mal vêtu, toujours agité et qu'on disait un peu fol. Il se lamente de ce que d'autres lui volaient ses idées et vous riait à l'oreille, en grand mystère, des vers fort communs qu'il prétendait d'une nouveauté surprenante.
réduite, it would seem that “Baptiste le très cher” refused Lysandre’s request to perform a menial task that he would later assign to his secretaries.39

Thereafter, Molière seized every opportunity to ridicule the operas, poetry, and music-dramatic theories of Perrin.30 The hysterical shepherds and shepherdesses that populate the pastoral intermèdes of George Dandin (1668) and Les Amants magnifiques (1670) might well parody those of Perrin’s Pastorel d’Issy (1659). Then in Le Bourgeois gentilhomme (1670), Molière used a chanson by Perrin (set to music by Sablières) in 1.2 to ridicule Jourdain’s old-fashioned musical tastes (“Je crois Janneton”); furthermore, Molière, playing the role of Monsieur Jourdain, sang Perrin’s chanson in a ridiculous falsetto voice. The playwright also mocks the musical conventions of the pastorale en musique when the Maître de Musique introduces some singers dressed in everyday clothes, and tells Monsieur Jourdain that he is to imagine them dressed as shepherds. “Pourquoi toujours des bergers?” the bemused Bourgeois replies, “On ne voit que cela partout.” But the Maître à Danser explains that “Lorsqu’on a des personnes à faire parler en musique, il faut bien que, pour la vraisemblance, on donne dans la bergerie. Le chant a été de tout temps affecté aux bergers; et il n’est guère naturel en dialogue que des princes ou des bourgeois changent leurs passions.” Five months later, in the preface to his pastoral opera Pomone, Perrin complained of the “mauvais bruits” that have been spread by the “caquets des envieux, des intéressés, des ignorans,” which have incited “une ronde de deux années.”41 Molière no doubt was one of the leading provocateurs.

In Le Malade imaginaire, Molière continued to satirize pastoral opera and its conventions when the young lovers Cléante and Angélique, pretending to be shepherd and shepherdess, express their feelings for one another by singing a “petit opéra impromptu” (Act 2, sc. 5). Her father Argan interrupts their performance, complains of the poor moral example it sets, and demands to see her score. When he is surprised to find only wordless music notated there, Cléante hastily explains: “Est-ce que vous ne savez pas Monsieur, qu’on a trouvé depuis peu l’invention d’écritre les paroles avec les notes mêmes?” Here, Molière alludes to Perrin’s discovery of “la manière de composer des paroles sur un chant noté sur la note meme.”42 Ironically, Molière himself devised a similar method for theatrical declamation — by

Il avait toujours ses poches pleines de papiers sur lesquels il avait copié ses chansons et les donnait à tous les musiciens qu’il rencontrait, les engageant à les mettre en musique. On fuyait ce flâneur dès qu’il paraissait.

39. The score for Les Fâcheux is in Vol. 44 of the Collection Philidor (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Rés. F. 530); Lully’s courante is found on p. 68.
32. Perrin reported on this invention in his 1659 Lettre à Monseigneur Della Rovera, reproduced in Auld, The Lyric Art of Pierre Perrin, I, pp. 101-08.
which he had “imaginé des notes pour marquer les tons qu’il devait prendre en déclamant les rôles qu’il récitait toujours de la même manière.”

Perrin did not remain Molière’s sole target of parody, for the playwright soon took aim at Lully and his new librettist, Philippe Quinault. Given Molière’s penchant for satire and topical allusion, it is surprising that few scholars have noticed the network of associations that exist between Lully’s first opera and Molière’s last comédie-ballet. The pastoral connection is the most obvious similarity, and the “petit opéra impromptu” sung by the young lovers in II,5 of Le Malade imaginaire is a satire of such pastoral operas. However, Molière’s prologue, the “Églogue en musique et en danse,” is a more subtle parody of the kind of royal compliment found in the operatic prologues performed at Perrin’s Académie Royale des Opéras and Lully’s Académie Royale de Musique. Dismissed by most critics as completely unrelated to the spoken comedy, the original pastoral prologue is almost invariably omitted from modern productions. And yet, its seeming incongruity with the Molière’s farcical comedy and its devastating satire of the medical profession suggests that closer critical scrutiny might be in order.

Quinault’s prologue to Les Festes de l’Amour et de Bacchus, modelled after that of Boyer’s Les Amours de Jupiter et de Sémélie (1660), in turn became a subject of parody in Molière’s Le Malade imaginaire — as will be shown presently. Quinault’s prologue is in two distinct parts, defined by means of dramatic tone and the presence of allegorical figures (see Table 2). Part I shows various provincials vying for livrets for the forthcoming entertainment, and its tone is comic and satirical. Part II abruptly changes mood when Polyème, the Muse of Pantomime, appears in the heavens seated inside a mechanical cloud and surrounded by paintings and works of architecture. She commands the spectators of Part I “Élevez vos concerts / Au-dessus du chant ordinaire,” and urges them “Songez que vous avez à plaire / Au plus grand Roi de l’univers.” In one stroke, Quinault and Lully silenced the riotous gaiety and esprit gaulois that dominated Molière’s “Ballet des Nations,” and exhorted the arts henceforth to show more dignity in their entertainment of Louis XIV. In short, the age of comédie-ballet is past, now that a new type of serious, high-minded opera has taken its place.

In sc. 3, Melpomène (the Muse of Tragedy) and Euterpe (the Muse of Pastoral Harmony) arrive on two more clouds to the antiphonal sound of their characteristic symphonies — “dont l’une est très-forte & l’autre extrê-


44. The exception being the 1990 production directed by Jean-Marie Villégier with Chaperrier’s music performed by William Christie and Les Arts Florissants — which restored the operatic prologue and intermèdes to their rightful place.

45. As Couvreur points out (Jean-Baptiste Lully, p. 288) « par la voix de la Muse, Quinault banniât de la scène de l’Académie Royale de Musique les comédiennes-ballets de Molière et de Lully. »
mement douce, & qui forment une espèce de combat.” Melpomène and Euterpe intend to present a dramatic performance: they present their arguments for the tragic and pastoral genres, and beseech Polyinnie to embellish their divertissements with her music and dance. Melpomène’s “nobles récits,” presented in the declamatory style of French recitative with its characteristic anapestic rhythms, contrast with Euterpe’s rustic dance song (see Example 1). In sc. 4, Polyinnie decides to support them both — but she confides to the tragic muse “Je réserve pour vous mes travaux les plus grands.” The second entrée is a pantomime danced by the followers of the three muses. Referring back to the instrumental combat, “Les Héros font une manière de combat avec leurs armes; les Pâtres jouent avec leurs bâtons; les Ouivriers travaillent aux décorations de la Pastorale que l’on prépare, & accordent le bruit de leurs marteaux, scies & rabots avec l’harmonie des violons & des hautbois; & tous ensemble forment la seconde entrée.” The prologue concludes with the following spectacular multi-media tableau:

> « Les hautbois & les musettes répondent, & cependant les Héros & les Pâtres rentrent sur le Théâtre avec les Ouivriers qui apportent des ornements qu’ils ont faits pour servir à la pièce qui va commencer, & autour desquels les Héros & les Pâtres dansent, tandis que les Muses & tous les chevaux continuent leurs chants; ce qui forme un jeu concerté des Muses qui chantent dans leurs machines au milieu des nuages, de la troupe qui leur répond, placés dans des balcons, & des Héros, Pâtres & Ouivriers qui dansent sur le Théâtre. »

Boyer’s prologue to Les Amours de Jupiter et de Sémélé (1666) also debates the efficacy of the tragic, comic, and pastoral genres in glorifying the king. Elements common to Quinault’s and Molière’s prologues include: the epiphany of the poetic muses; the singing contest, which ends in a harmonious reconciliation; and the presentation of a spectacle to entertain Louis XIV. In Boyer’s prologue, Melpomène appears on-stage to a fanfare of trumpets and clarions, while Thalia (the Muse of Comedy) descends from Parnassus on a cloud to the music of violins and tambour de Basque. Thalia chides Melpomène for loving only “les vers enflés & magnifiques” — for the king now favors comedy over tragedy, which is no longer in fashion. But Melpomène maintains that Louis admires her grand, heroic tragedies both for their instructional value and “puisqu’il aymé la gloire.” Euterpe then descends on a cloud to the music of musettes and oboes, and announces that Louis’s reign has brought about a Golden Age of peace, justice, and prosperity. Her pastoral diversions, “ny trop haut, ny trop bas,” are a worthy pastime for a great monarch:

**EUTERPE**

> Mais vous verrez un jour ce que peut ma musette,
> Nostre grand Apollon a porté la houlette,
> Et ma voix pour les Roys n’est pas à négliger,
> Si les Dieux ont puri sous l’habit de Berger.

Quinault’s prologue begins in much the same manner, but excludes Thalia (Molière’s comic muse) from the sisterhood. Quinault’s muses also descend
C'est mon dort la voix est tant A droit de cé le te hence est plus

grands, Les neiges ne dis que je chante Sont les plus dig nes jue des tempe inquis -

nans, Les neiges ne dis que je chante Sont les plus dig nes jue des tempe inquis nans.

C'est un doux a mi soi mon Que d'aim aire chan son

net tes. Les dou cours n'en sont pas lai tes

Pour les Bar gens seu l ment. Les tan dres chan son

net tes, Qu'on chante à nœu de bois Sur les Mul net tes. Ne sont

pas que j'ais Des jas in dig nes des grands Roya

APPROPRIATION, PERFORMANCES, AND DRESSED PROLOGUES
from Parnassus to their others of these arguments. But declaim in alexandrine and dramatic genres. He casts drines and octosyllables defense of the pastoral past length and varied rhyme.

A droite
Sont les plus dig nes jue des tempe inquis nans.

 Whereas Quinault bore Molière appears to have parallels between the tw directly from Quinault's following points of com featur ed entertainment, common to the prologue setting, and (4) parodic.

Relationship of the prologue
Quinault's and Molière's theater-within-a-theater spect steelers of sc. 1 observe the play-to-come in sc. tured entertainment of spoken comedy. In Quinall with the nymphs and she Eglise, the nymphs, s urban middle-class char engage in a play of comic, heroic vs. comic tone, examination of dramatic be tween the two prologues.
APPROPRIATION, PARODY, AND THE BIRTH OF FRENCH OPERA 15

from Parnassus to their characteristic music and deliver a condensed version of these arguments. But unlike Boyer’s prologue, where all three muses declaim in alexandrine couplets, Quinault assigns verse-forms befitting their dramatic genres. He casts Melpomène’s plea in vers irréguliers of alexandrines and octosyllables (the “nobles récits” of tragedy), while Euterpe’s defense of the pastoral genre appears in chanson verse with lines of shorter length and varied rhyme-scheme:

MELPOMÈNE

C’est moi dont la voix éclatante
A droit de célebrer les exploits les plus grands,
Les nobles récits que je chante
Sont les plus dignes jeux des fameux conquérans.

EUTERPE

C’est un doux amusement
Que d’aimables chansonnères :
Les douceurs n’en sont pas faibles
Pour les Bergers seulement.
Les tendres amourettes,
Que l’on chante à l’ombre des bois
Sur les musettes.
Ne sont pas quelquefois
Des jeux indignes des grands Rois.

Whereas Quinault borrowed from Boyer the dramatic debate of the muses, Molière appears to have borrowed Quinault’s dramatic structure. Indeed, the parallels between the two prologues suggest that Molière may have worked directly from Quinault’s livret. To test this hypothesis, we will consider the following points of comparison: (1) the relationship of the prologue to the featured entertainment, (2) internal structural similarities and themes common to the prologues, (3) similarities in rhetoric, language, and musical setting, and (4) parodic aspects of Molière’s text and Charpentier’s music.

Relationship of the prologue to the featured entertainment

Quinault’s and Molière’s prologues both use the dramatic devices of a theater-within-a-theater and a play-within-a-play — whereas the on-stage spectators of sc. 1 observe a song-competition in sc. 3, and then prepare for the play-to-come in sc. 5. These prologues are also set apart from the featured entertainment of Quinault’s pastoral opera-pastiche and Molière’s spoken comedy. In Quinault’s prologue, the provincials and muses contrast with the nymphs and shepherds of the opera that follows, while in Molière’s Églogue, the nymphs, shepherds, and mythological gods contrast with the urban middle-class characters of Argan’s household. Both prologues thereby engage in a play of contrasts: gods vs. mortals, pastoral vs. urban settings, heroic vs. comic tone, on-stage performers vs. on-stage spectators. Closer examination of dramatic structure will disclose further interconnections between the two prologues.

Lully (Les Festes de l’Amour et de Bacchus [Paris, 1717])
Table 2. Structure of the Prologues to Les Festes de l'Amour et de Bacoclus and Le Malade imaginaire

| Part | Scene | Prologue | Characters | Text
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ouverture</td>
<td>Le Bourgeois gentilhomme</td>
<td>[Chœur] A moi, Monsieur, à moi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Flore, Clémence, Daphné, Tircis, Dorilas, Troupe des Bergers et des Bergeres</td>
<td></td>
<td>[Air] Quitez, quitez vos Troupeaux</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Polyèmnie</td>
<td>Retournelle</td>
<td>[Air] De vos Flutes bocageres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Flore, Melpomène, Enterpe</td>
<td>Symphonie</td>
<td>[Ensemble] Mon jeune amant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>as above</td>
<td>[Dialogue] Commencez de répondre à mon impatience</td>
<td>[Air] Quand la neige fondue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>as above, with des Héros, des Pâtres, &amp; des Ouvriers, and 2 Chœurs</td>
<td>Symphonie pour les Hautbois &amp; les Musettes</td>
<td>[Air] Le foudre menaçant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>as above, with 2 Zéphirs, Satyres</td>
<td>Symphonie pour les Hautbois &amp; les Musettes</td>
<td>[Air] Des fabuleux Exploits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ouverture (repeated)</td>
<td>[Ensemble] Il faut entre mes soeurs</td>
<td>[Air] Louis fait à nos temps</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPROPRIATION, FIGURES

Internal structural similarities

As shown by Table 2, the prologues' dramatic flow. In the first, the commences of the prologue to Le Malade imaginare describes Louis XIV in Le Malade imaginare as being exults the mortal to a draw, and in the final, the praises. Both prologues, and ceremony, floral cloth commonplace of the drama, contests aim to mythologize larger than life. After they express joy, approbation, and veneration, as actors themselves into actors themselves.

Similarities in rhetoric

It is not surprising to find the rhetorical commonplace of the official vocabulary even in the Flore in sc. 3 refers to echoing Melpomène's allusion to Caesar Augustus and his sister muses ("Si Tircis a l'air de l'espoirant..., "Ô mot pleurant...")

Dialogue en musique comme phrases (bracketed passage B) - the rustic lovers pair off -
Internal structural similarities and themes common to the prologues

As shown by Table 2, the prologues have a similar structural design and dramatic flow. In the first scene, mortals anticipate an extraordinary event—the commencement of a ballet in *Les Festes de l'Amour*, a hero's welcome for Louis XIV in *Le Malade imaginaire*. In sc. 2, an allegorical or divine being exhorts the mortals to praise the king. A song-competition follows in sc. 3, whereby instrumental and dance numbers, described by Quinault as “une espèce de combat,” and by Molière as “Le Combat”—introduce the singing contestants. In sc. 4, the contests are interrupted and declared to be a draw, and in the final scene all characters join in chorus to sing the king's praises. Both prologues are therefore grand celebrations demanding pomp and ceremony, floral crowns and festoons, in which the singing contest—a commonplace of the dramatic pastoral—occupies a central position. Both contests aim to mythologize the French warrior-king, making him appear larger than life. After the contest is over, the characters of the prologues express joy, approbation, and universal harmony through massed choruses, orchestral music, and figured dance. In the prologues, the characters function as both performers and spectators; but thereafter, a metatheatrical shift takes place as these provincials, muses, nymphs, shepherds, and gods transform themselves into actors to perform a *divertissement* for Louis XIV.

Similarities in rhetoric, language, and musical setting

It is not surprising that Quinault and Molière used stock metaphors and rhetorical commonplace to eulogize the king, for both dramatists drew upon the official vocabulary of the Petite Académie's royal image-makers. Hence Flore in sc. 3 refers to Louis XIV as “le plus auguste des rois,” thereby echoing Melpomène's reference to “le plus auguste Roi” and her punning allusion to Caesar Augustus, with whom Louis XIV was frequently compared (see Table 3). But sc. 3 reveals further linguistic parallels that seem more than fortuitous. The dialogue between Molière's pairs of bookend lovers (“*Si Tircis a l'avantage,*” “*Si Dorilas est vainqueur,*” “*Ô trop chère espérance,*” “*Ô mot plein de douceur*”) mimics the exchange between Quinault's sister muses (“*Joignez à mes chants magnifiques...*”, “*Joignez à mes concerts rustiques...*” see bracketed passage A). Moreover, at the end the *dialogues en musique* coalesce in sung duets composed of repeated, balanced phrases (bracketed passage B). Later in sc. 5, Molière's rustics mimic Quinault's trio of muses when they proclaim “*Joignons tous dans ces bois / Nos flûtes et nos voix*” to sing the praises of “*LOUIS... le plus grand des rois*” (see Table 4, bracketed passage A). Quinault's ensemble repeats Polynice's exhortation “*Faisons tout retentir du bruit de ses exploits*” (bracketed passage B) thereby setting off the individual exhortations of the muses against the group expression of the chorus. In like manner, Molière's rustic lovers pair off—first in duet, then in quartet—and finally join their
Table 3. Scene 3 of the Prologues to 
*Les Festes de l'Amour et de Bacchus* and *Le Malade imaginaire*

**Les Festes de l'Amour et de Bacchus**

- **MELPOMÈNE**
  - Joignez à mes chants magnifiques
  - La pompe de vos ornemens.

- **EUTERPE**
  - Joignez à mes concerts rustiques
  - Vos agréments les plus charmans.

**MELPOMÈNE**

Votre secours m'est nécessaire ;
Je cherche à divertir le plus auguste Roi
Qui méritait jamais de tenir sous sa loi
Tout ce que le soleil éclaire.

**LES DEUX MUSES ENSEMBLE**

C'est à moi, c'est à moi
De prétendre à lui plaire.

**Le Malade imaginaire**

- **FLORE**
  - Mon jeune amant, dans ce bois
  - Des présents de mon empire
  - Prépare un prix à la voir
  - Qui saura le mieux nous dire
  - Les vers et les exploits
  - Du plus auguste des rois.

- **CLIMÈNE**
  - Si Tircis a l'avantage,
  - Si Dardas est vainqueur,
  - A le chérir je m'engage.

- **DAPHNÈ**
  - Je me donne à son ardeur.
  - Ô trop chère espérance !
  - Ô mot plein de douceur !

- **TOUS DEUX**
  - Plus beau sujet, plus belle récompense
  - Peuvent-ils animer un cœur ?

Voices with the chorus to publish the news of Louis’s exploits (bracketed passage B).

The final scenes of the two prologues are also very similar. Lully’s muses, all sopranos, are first heard by themselves, and then join the three-part chorus of male voices (*haute-contre*, tenor, and bass) and five-part orchestra — after which the concertato texture alternates between the trio of muses and the full ensemble. In Charpentier’s score, Flore and the quartet of lovers sing the upper parts of the five-part chorus (first and second sopranos, *haute-contre*, and tenor), while the other characters join in singing the bass part. Here the full ensemble alternates antiphonally with an orchestral ritornello to portray the news (through echo repetitions and terraced dynamics) of Louis’s exploits resounding throughout the kingdom, as they repeat the joint proclamation of Flora and Pan, "Heureux, heureux qui peut lui consacrer sa vie!" (bracketed passages B and C).
APPROPRIATION, PARODY, AND THE BIRTH OF FRENCH OPERA

Table 4. Scene 5 of the Prologues to
Les Festes de l’Amour et de Bacchus and Le Malade imaginaire

Les Festes de l’Amour et de Bacchus

(D’Apollon, des Muses et des Ouvriers des arts qui servent aux spectacles, obéissent aux ordres des Muses. Les Muses font un rituel de combat avec leurs armes; les Ouvriers jouent avec leurs bâtons; les Ouvriers travaillent aux décorations de la Pastorale que l’on prépare, & accordent le fruit de leurs matières, icos & rabats avec l’hymnique des visions & des hauchos; & tous ensemble forment la seconde entrée.)

Second Entrée : Quatre Muses, quatre Pâtres & quatre Ouvriers.

(Toute la troupe qui avait commencé de chanter d’une manière comique avant l’arrivée par leur présence, répond à leurs chants par des chœurs.)

Le Malade imaginaire

FLORE

Bien que, pour étudier ses vertus immortelles,
La force manque à vos esprits,
Ne laissez pas tous deux de recevoir le prix ;
Dans les choses grandes et belles
Il suffit d’avoir entrez.

Entrée de Ballet : Les deux Zéphirs dansent avec deux couronnes de fleurs à la main, qu’ils viennent donner ensuite aux deux Bergers.

Les Trois Muses Ensemble

Joignons nos voix & nos voix
Pour plaire au plus grand des Rois.

A

LES CHOEURS RÉPÈTENT

Joignons nos voix & nos voix
Pour plaire au plus grand des Rois.

B

MELPOMÈNE

Chantons la gloire de ses armes.

(En Chœur répété le même vers)

C

EUTERPE

Chantons la douceur de ses lois.

(En Chœur répété le même vers)

POLYVHE

Faisons tout sentir au fruit de ses exploits.

(En Chœur répété le même vers)

(Tous les Chœurs répondent)

MELPOMÈNE

Feu ce concert plein de chœurs.

EUTERPE

Faisons entendre nos hauchos.

(En Chœur répété le même vers)

Les Muses & les musettes répondent, & cependant les Héros & les Pâtres reviennent sur le Théâtre

avec les Ouvriers qui apportent des ornemens qu’ils ont faits pour servir à la pièce qui va commencer, & autour desquels les Héros & les Pâtres dansent, tandis que les Muses & tous les chœurs continuent leurs chants; ce qui forme un jeu concerté des Muses qui chantent dans leurs machines au fil des mages, de la troup qui leur répond, placée dans des balcons, & des Héros, Pâtres & Ouvriers qui dansent sur le Théâtre.)

Climène et Daphné, en leur donnant la main
Dans les choses grandes et belles
Il suffit d’avoir entrez.

Tirés et Dorilas

He ! que d’un doux succès notre audace est suivie !

Flore et Pan

Ce qui est fait pour Louis, en ne le perd jamais.

Les quatre Amants

Au voix de ses plaisirs donnons-nous désormais,

Flore et Pan

Heureux, heureux qui peut lui consacrer sa vie !

Tous

Joignons tous dans ces bois

Nos flûtes et nos voix,

Ce jour nous y convie ;

Et faisons aux échos rendre belle fois : « Louis est le plus grand des Rois ;

Heureux, heureux qui peut lui consacrer sa vie ! »

Dernière et Grande Entrée de Ballet : Faunes, Bergers et Bergères, tous se mêlent, & il se fait entre eux des jeux de danse, après quoi ils se vont préparer pour la Comédie.
TOUS ENSEMBLE
Faisons tout retentir du bruit de ses exploits

POLYMINE
Préparons des fêtes nouvelles.

MELPOMÈNE
Que nos chansons soient immortelles.

EUTERPE
Que nos airs soient doux & touchans.

TOUS ENSEMBLE
Mélons avec plus animables chants
Les danses les plus belles.
Joignons nos voix & nos yeux
Pour plaier au plus grand des Rois.

Parodic aspects of Molière’s text and Charpentier’s music

As mentioned earlier, Molière’s pastoral episodes suggest different aspects of parody. The tone of zealous enthusiasm struck by the shepherds and shepherdesses in sc. 2 of the Églogue is matched in the pastoral opera of Act 2, sc. 5 by the singing lovers, who are more than eager to mimic the fervent passion of their pastoral and operatic counterparts. But the full scope of Molière’s parody only becomes clear in light of the play’s burlesque, musical finale, the Cérémonie des Médecins. Here, the fanciful musical en-croation of quasi-religious academic ceremonies, in which the hypochondriac receives a doctoral degree in medicine, mirrors many aspects of the prologue. The figured dances of the nymphs and shepherds become transformed into grandiose marches, processionals, and choreographed rituals; the pastoral singing-contest now becomes an academic contest, in which the candidate Argan competes not for a floral crown but for “le bonnet,” the baccalaureate’s cap; and, most strikingly, the concertato choral cheers of the doctors and apothecaries (“Vivat, vivat, cent fois vivat”) in praise of Argan, their newest member, recall the shepherds’ choral praises of Louis XIV (“Joignons tous dans ces bois”). In this musical phantasmagoria, the apothecaries herald Argan’s surreal apotheosis into the world of doctorhood with a charivari of mortars and pestles. Les Festes de l’Amour et de Bacchus set the precedent for introducing unusual percussion instruments, when the artisans of Polymnie “accordent le bruit de leurs marteaux, scies & rabots avec l’harmonie des violons & des hautbois.” Molière’s mortars, cast in a bell foundry, no doubt produced a more musical sound than the clamor of Lully’s hammers, saws, and planes.

Molière’s prologue, like Quinault’s, celebrated the return of Louis XIV

APPROPRIATION.

from the Dutch Wars. He celebrated the masters and dangers of the bay. The image of Louis was a striking contrast to the Dutch soldiers who appeared on the stage at the time. Afterwards, the King himself joined the performance and Holland “under the French flag” declared “The King’s Voice.” The final word of their crowns on the heads of the audience. The prologue echoed this response by showing “by his vast exploits, he has saturated his lands, flooded the lowlands, and forcing the king into a triumph.”

Molière’s Églogue of Argus, the last scene of the play, sees Flora proposing a singing contest. Charbonnier demonstrates his prowess in praising “Les fèves de l’Huître” and Tireis commits a faute glorieuse by singing the dikes that put an end to the floods.

Quand il pourra
Contrôle de lui-même.

Tandis qu’il dormait

Dorilas makes a move to kill his rival, he inadvertently sings an ode to his glorious accomplishment

LOUISE
Croire tout

PAUL GAGNAT 1784

46. These parallels between the prologue and the finale are discussed in more detail in my article, “Music, Fantasy and Illusion in Molière’s Le Malade imaginaire”, Music and Letters 73 (May 1992), pp. 222-233 [228-30].
47. It is also possible that Lully borrowed this unusual musical effect from the Second Intermezzi of Psyché (1671), where “Six Cyclopes, avec quatre Fées, y font une entrée de ballet, où ils achèvent, en cadence, quatre gros vases d’argent que les Fées leur ont apportés.”
50. This may be an allusion to the dikes and canals that grace the Seine, as well as to the flood defenses that were a feature of the cityscape.
Arpentier's music

Musical episodes suggest different usiasms struck by the shepherds' matched in the pastoral opera are more than eager to mimic erotic counterparts. But the full fear in light of the play's bur-Médecins. Here, the fanciful scenes in which the medicine, mirrors many aspects nymphs and shepherds become professional and choreographed by an academic contest, for a floral crown but for "le strikingly, the concertato choral (lyat, vivat, cent fois vivat") in the shepherds' choral praises (s)." In this musical phantas-real apotheosis into the world festes. Les Festes de l'Amour cing unusual percussion instruments le bruit de leurs marteaux, & des hautbois." Mollière's produced a more musical sounds and planes.

rated the return of Louis XIV the are discussed in more detail in my Le Malade imaginaire «. Music and musical effect from the Second Inter- rée quatre Fées, y font une entrée de vases d'argent que les Fées leur ont from the Dutch Wars. Forsaking the pleasures of the court for the drudgeries and dangers of the battlefield, the king had led this campaign in person. The image of Louis crossing the Rhine at the head of an army of 20,000 troops appeared on medallions, engravings, paintings, and in tapestries of the time. Afterwards, a Te Deum performed in Notre-Dame and a fireworks display given in the Tuileries, with "luminous pictures" of Apollo, Victory, and Holland "under the yoke," commemorated the king's victory. The Gazette trumpeted "See how Victory and Glory take pleasure in heaping their crowns on the head of so magnificent a monarch," and Mollière's prologue echoed this rhetoric: Flora, the Goddess of Spring, announces that "by his vast exploits, he sees everything subjected, failing enemies, he lays down his arms." However, the Gazette neglected to mention that ten days after the French army crossed the Rhine, the Dutch opened their dikes and flooded the lowlands—thereby bringing a temporary end to the hostilities and forcing the king's premature and hardly victorious return to France. Mollière's singing shepherds, in their eagerness to distinguish themselves in the singing contest, will inadvertently allude to this detail that was left out of the official account.

Molière's Eglogue delineates multiple levels or aspects of praise singing—and herein lies an undercurrent of satire overlooked by modern critics. Flora proposes a singing-contest, with a prize to the winner who best succeeds in praising "Les vertus et les exploits / Du plus auguste des rois." Tircis commits a faux pas when he indelicately refers to the floods and dikes that put an end to the king's conquest of the Dutch republic.

TIRCIS

Quand la neige fondue enfle un torrent fameux,
Contre l'effort soutain de ses flots écumous
Il n'est rien d'assez solide :
Diges, châteaux, villes, et bois,
Hommes et troupeaux à la fois,
Tout cede au courant qui le guide :
Tel, et plus fier, et plus rapide,
Marche LOUIS dans ses exploits.

Dorilas makes a more serious blunder when, while attempting to outdo his rival, he inadvertently casts doubt on the official reports of Louis XIV's glorious accomplishments:

DORILAS

LOUIS fait à nos temps, par ses faits trouvés,
Croire tous les beaux faits que nous chante l'histoire
Des siècles évanouis :
Mais nos neveux, dans leur gloire.

50. This may be an allusion to the competition started in 1671 by the Académie Royale de Peinture for the best work on the theme « Louis giving Peace to Europe. »
N'auront rien qui fasse croire
Tous les beaux faits de LOUIS.

Pan then intervenes to repair the damage and put an end to the shepherds' inept and politically suicidal attempts at praise singing. "Le silence est le langage / Qui doit louer ses exploits." Pan sings, and the chute of his melodic line graphically illustrates how, like Icarus, the foolish shepherds risk falling precipitously into the waves by means of their high-flying, reckless rhetoric (Example 2).

Example 2
Molière, Le Malade imaginaire (1673)
Charpentier (F-Pn, Ms. Rés. Vm. 259, vol. XIII)

In his Mémoires of 1661, Louis XIV showed that he recognized genuine praise, offered for truly praiseworthy deeds, as distinct from empty flattery, and he often tested the character of his courtiers by encouraging them to praise things he had done badly – only to reproach them later for it. 31 While his esteem for the king was genuine enough, Molière was no sycophant.

APPROPRIATION, PAST AND PRESENT

Even when in 1663 his seigneur Molière, excellent with a tongue-in-cheek prologue to the flooding, set the official record of the tongue-in-cheek. But the repetitions of the same performance, recalls the theatrical "victory" – and results.

But it is unlikely that at the king's official tea, Festes de l'Amour et de la Fidélité, recreation after these happy: "Songez que vous avez phrase becomes more melismatic on the words:

Example 3
Quinault, Les Festes de l'Amour et de la Fidélité

of official praise singing where Vertumnaeus, insists that "Jamais, jamais / ne fâchez des Césars," his vocal lines are and wide-ranging as it becomes similarly, in the prologue to the exerts Fame to go forth is to be advertised as "One reaches almost Wagnerically, then melistimatically.

51. "J'avais, dès les premières années, apparente assez de sujet d'être content de ma conduite ; mais les applaudissements que cette nouvelle m'attirent, ne laissaient pas de me donner une continue inquiétude, par la crainte que j'avais, et dont je ne suis pas encore tout à fait exempt, de ne les pas assez bien mériter. On vous dira dans quelle défiance j'ai vécu là-dessus avec mes courtisans, et combien de fois éprouvant leur génie, je les ai engagés à me louter des choses même que je croyais avoir mal faites, et pour le leur reprocher aussitôt après, et les accoutumer à ne me point flatter." (Louis XIV, Mémoires, les Réflexions sur le métier de roi, les Instructions ou du duc d'Anjou, and un Projet de harangue, ed. J. Longnon [Paris : Tallandier, 1978], p. 50.)

52. For more on the allegorical machine-plays and early in France, 1600-1690, Play, Oxford University
APPROPRIATION, PARODY, AND THE BIRTH OF FRENCH OPERA

Even when in 1663 his name was added to the annual pension list ("Au sieur Molière, excellent poète comique... 1 000 livres"), Molière responded with a tongue-in-cheek "Remerciement au Roy." Molière’s allusions in his prologue to the flooding of the Dutch Republic and the doubts he cast on the official record of Louis’s superhuman accomplishments are surely tongue-in-cheek. But the play’s musical finale, with its mindless, choral repetitions of the bogus medical faculty in praise of Argan’s farcical performance, recalls the shepherds’ choral praises of Louis XIV’s empty military “victory” — and resonates with facetiousness.

But it is unlikely that Molière’s barbs were aimed at the king, but rather at the king’s official team of praise singers. In Quinault’s prologue to Les Festes de l’Amour et de Bacchus, Polypheme attends to Louis’s rest and recreation after these heroic exertions. She urges the on-stage audience: "Soyez que vous avez à plaire / Au plus grand Roy de l’Univers." This phrase becomes more expansive and florid upon repetition, with short melismas on the words “de” and “et” (see Example 3). Other such examples

Example 3
Quinault, Les Festes de l’Amour et de Bacchus (1672)  
Lully (Les Festes de l’Amour et de Bacchus (Paris, 1717))

of official praise singing can be found in the prologue to Pomone (1671), where Vertumne proclaims Louis to be "un nouvel Mars." As the god insists that "Jamais, jamais un si grand homme / Ne fut assis au Thôrè des Césars," his vocal line becomes rhythmically excited, increasingly florid, and wide-ranging as it plunges a tenth from f’ to d (see Example 4). Similarly, in the prologue to Les Peines et les plaisirs de l’Amour (1672) Venus exhorts Fame to go forth and publish Louis’s great deeds, stressing that he is to be advertised as "le plus grand des Roys." Here the musical prosody reaches almost Wagnerian proportions, as the phrase is stated first syllabically, then melismatically (see Example 5). Furthermore, in both the livret

52. For more on the allegorical glorification of Louis XIV in the prologue to mythological machine-plays and early operas of this time, see my forthcoming book Music and Theatre in France, 1600-1680, Chapter 13, "The Musical World of the Mythological Machine-Play", Oxford University Press (in press).
and in the printed score Louis’s name appears printed wholly in capital letters – thereby visually emphasizing the aural impression given by the goddess’s floritura. In all three examples, the music does not attempt to depict the imagery or express the meaning conveyed by individual words in the manner of word-painting; rather, it serves to enhance the rhetorical majesty of royal praise through exaggeration, prolongation and embellishment.\(^5\)

Molière’s _Églogue en musique et en danse_ therefore juxtaposes genuine praises sung by the god to the praise-singing shepherd. A parody of the official pasteur de pastorale in a singing contest, the piece would sway the decision of French taste in approving of their sweet blending of XIV to the elemental for sheer beauty. Just as the verses so are the music that accompany them: they illustrate the literal meaning of word-painting: rather, their music is a verbal sword. At the close, the music is sung in a more florid, melodically expansive (see Example 6). Yet, however, this grandiloquent style of praise is not the fulsome tributes of

53. This old-fashioned, panegyric style can be traced to the _récit_ of early ballet de cour. According to Gérald, « these are generally pieces of a solemn character, in which the singer could also show off his art and virtuosity » (Théodore Gérald, _L’Art du chant en France_ [Strasbourg : Université de Strasbourg, 1921], p. 67). The author reproduces an example of such a _récit_ addressed to Marie de Médicis (« Pleine de langues et de voix »), written by Malherbe and set to music by Charles Chevalier for the _Ballet de la Reine_ (1609).
praises sung by the gods and chorus with the overblown eulogies of the praise-singing shepherds. Their clumsy attempts represent empty flattery, a parody of the official panegyrics of Louis XIV’s spin doctors. As contestants in a singing contest, their goal is not to offer genuine praise, but rather to sway the decision of Flora, the judge of the contest, and thereby win the approval of their sweethearts. In extravagant imagery they compare Louis XIV to the elemental forces of nature, and then to the great heroes of antiquity. Just as their verse is prone to hyperbole and rhetorical commonplaces, so is the music that accompanies it. Their vocal melodies do not aim to illustrate the literal meaning of the text, in the manner of Pari’s word-painting; rather, their vocal arabesques function like the brandishing of verbal swords. At the close of each argument, the vocal lines become increasingly florid, melodically expressive, and, consequently, rhetorically persuasive (see Example 6). When compared with genuine expression of praise, however, this grandiloquent adulation becomes laughable – calling to mind the fulsome tributes of the most obsequious of courtiers.

The music does not attempt to convey the rhetorical, prolongation and embellishments of the text, but reflects the simple, direct, and everyday language of the dialogue. The focus is on the text, not the music, which is subservient to the words. This is in contrast to the more florid and complex music of the opera seria, which often had complicated vocal lines and complex harmonic structures.

Given that Les Festes de l’Amour et de Bacchus and Le Malade imaginaire ran concurrently for six weeks during Carnival of 1673, Parisian audiences must have perceived the connection between these two works. As we have seen, the more obvious parallels include the device of a performance-within-the-prologue, which itself concludes with a dramatic presentation: the similar dramatic outline of the prologues; the central

Example 6
Molière, Le Malade imaginaire (1673)
(conclusion of « Quand la neige fondue »)

Charpentier (F-Pn, Ms. Rés. Ym' 259, vol. XIII)
singing-contests held in honor of the king; the concertato choruses and instrumental "combats." But the parodic aspects of Molière's text (its satire of pastoral opera, of Perrin's theories, of the pitfalls of official praise singing, and of Charpentier's score (with its unusual percussion instruments, and the excesses and redundancies of its musical praises) reveal hitherto unrecognized levels of comic meaning in Molière's final comédie-ballet, and sheds some new light on the turbulent birth of French opera.

Dans la nuit du 16...