

Performance Practices at the Théâtre de Guénégaud and the Comédie-Française, after the manuscript indications of Charpentier

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When Jean-Baptiste Lully took over directorship of the Académie Royale de Musique, he took over the theater that Molière's company had occupied for 14 years. Thereafter, the actors relocated to the Hôtel de Guénégaud, where they were forced to contend with a series of restrictions limiting the use of music, dance, and spectacle in its productions. Charpentier's association with the company began in 1672 and continued through the infancy of the Comédie-Française. His scores, composed for these singing actors and their resident theater orchestra, provide a wealth of information not only on the musical practices of the company, but they also reveal the extent to which the composer was involved with practical matters of the theater.

Jan Clarke's excellent two volume study of *The Guénégaud Theatre de Paris, 1673-1680* details these transitional years, and her comprehensive examination and interpretation of the financial registers sheds much new light on the history, organization, production schedule, and performance practices of the company. Yet Professor Clarke overlooks one important source—Charpentier's autograph manuscripts, which includes incidental music composed for some 15 theatrical productions.

From these scores we may determine how many and what kinds of instruments played in the theater orchestra, as well as the identities of the performers. We can determine the makeup of the continuo ensemble, and the role of continuo accompaniment in vocal, choral, and instrumental movements. From marginal inscriptions we can identify the names of singers and singing actors, and assess their vocal ranges and abilities from the music that Charpentier composed expressly for them. The numerous dances found in these scores attests to the fact that dance continued to figure prominently in productions, even after royal restrictions forbade dancers from appearing on-stage in public theaters. And lastly, marginal staging directions and performance rubrics prove that Charpentier's music was not only functional, but integral to these theatrical production.

The Orchestra. After Molière and Lully parted ways in the spring of 1672, Molière engaged Charpentier to provide music for a revival of *La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas* and *Le Mariage forcé*—two works for which Lully had composed music previously. Instead of the Lullian five-part orchestration, we see that Charpentier's music is scored in four parts notated here in [G1, C1, C2, and F4 clefs](#). The question as to whether this implies two violins, viola, and bass “à l'italienne” or *dessus*, *haute-contre*, *taille*, and *basse de violon* “à la française” seems to have been settled in favor of the latter configuration. Indeed, the fact that the composer adopted the [French terminology in his score for Corneille's *Circé*](#) suggests that he intended only the *dessus* part to be played by violins, the *haute-contre* and *taille* parts by violas, and the *basse* part by bass violins.

The matter of instrumental doublings in this four-part texture remains to be considered. Lully's opera *privilege* still allowed public theaters 12 instruments, and so Charpentier's score for *La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas* and *Le Mariage force* made full use of these forces. [Here on fol. 38v](#), the full ensemble cadences, and soloists continue with imitative entrances. Charpentier writes over the G1 part "premier et second seuls", and under the C1 and the C2 parts "seul"; nine measures later he writes "tous" under each of the four parts. This would suggest there had been more than one player on the lower three parts, and probably more than two on the top. One possible distribution might have been 4 *dessus de violon*, 2 *hautes-contres*, 2 *tailles*, and 4 *basses*, which would appear to have been the standard configuration for a small string orchestra.¹

Charpentier's score for *Le Malade imaginaire* together with some legal contracts provide us with the names of some of the players engaged for the 1672-73 season. Here in the Overture to the *Second Intermède* we see the [three top string parts are assigned to "duvivier" \(G1\), "nivelon" \(C1\), and "dumont" \(C2\)](#). Don Fader, who has dissertated on the musical establishment of Phillipe, duc d'Orléans, has uncovered a 1694 pay record that shows that Jacques Duvivier, Jacques Nivelon, and Edme Dumont were among the "9 violins of Monsieur, Brother to the King" (*neuf violins de Monsieur Frère du Roy*).² Other archival records show that in July of 1672 Molière contracted three string players from Monsieur's musical establishment—Jacques Duvivier,³ Jean Converset,⁴ and Pierre Marchand⁵—to play in the summer revivals of *La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas*, *Le Mariage forcé*, and other works.⁶ In mid-February of 1673 the trio ("tous trois violons de Monsieur frere unique du roy") signed an agreement to play for the first run of *Le Malade imaginaire*.⁷ After the company moved to the Hôtel de Guénégaud, instrumentalists from Monsieur's musical establishment made up the nucleus of its theater orchestra. Here the names of Duvivier, Converset, Marchand, and Dumont appear listed in the account-books for the [1675 production of Thomas Corneille's *L'Inconnu*](#).

In Charpentier's score for *Circe* (1675), [Marchand's name](#) appears next to an obligato bass part for the Act 1 chanson of the second satyre ("Un jour la jeune Lisette"). By then, royal restrictions limited the number of strings to 6—that is, to half their former number. Albeit composed for reduced forces, Charpentier's music nevertheless retains the tutti-solo contrast. [Here \(in yellow\)](#) is one of numerous examples in which the composer writes "récit" to distinguish instrumental solos from the full ensemble.

The question remains as to how these 6 strings were assigned and doubled in Charpentier's four-part orchestration. If 12 strings were configured 4-2-2-4, then we might speculate that half that number would be configured 2-1-1-2. Yet *divisi* indications in the manuscripts reveal something quite different. Here is the final chorus for the 1682 revival of *Andromède*, which shows: [\(1\) premier and second dessus above the top staff, troisième dessus and haute-contre above the second staff, and \[basse de\] violon and clavecin above and below the third staff](#). Then in the third system down, we see [\(2\) troisième dessus and haute-contre notated in the margin \(red\) beside the third staff, les deux premières dessus above the second staff \(white\)—which then divides into premier and second dessus](#). This is immediately followed by [\(3\) 3d, h.c., and clavecin \(blue: in other words, troisième dessus, haute-contre, and clavecin\)](#). And finally, at the end of the system, we see [\(4\) "tous les dessus" above the top staff, and in the next system "violon \[that is, basse de violon\] and clavecin" notated in the margin next to the](#)

instrumental bass. It is therefore clear that there were 3 violins on top, a single *haute-contre* and a single *taille* on each of the inner parts, and a *basse de violon* and harpsichord on the bass.

The Continuo Ensemble. As the account book show, the royal restrictions that limited string instruments to six evidently did not include the continuo ensemble. Indications throughout Charpentier manuscripts show that harpsichord was routinely doubled by a bass viol or violin. Indeed, in the Epilogue to *Circé*, the bass line appears to have been doubled by multiple bass viols. Two bass viols would seem to have been in norm in purely orchestral music, for in the Overture to *Les Amours de Diane et d'Endimion* (1681) the composer writes “pr basse seule”, and then “les deux ensemble”.

But there is some evidence that the continuo ensemble consisted of more than just harpsichord and bass viol or cello. A clause in a contract, drawn up in February of 1673 between three *violons* to play in the theater orchestra, states that “in case the aforesaid actors put in their *musicque douce* only two *dessus de violons*, a harpsichord, a theorbo, and a *basse de violon*, then the profits will be divided equally among all three—regardless of whether they all three actually performed.” Turning to the company’s account books for corroboration, we see that payments were made to a theorbist named Carle André for the 1675 production of *L’Inconnu*.¹ This latter ensemble corresponds to the well-known recommendations given in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* (II, 1), where Monsieur Jourdain is told that for private concerts he would need “three singers: a soprano, an *haute-contre*, and a bass, who will be accompanied by a *basse de viole*, a theorbo, and a harpsichord for the *basse continue*, along with two treble violins to play the ritornelles.”⁸

Ultimately, the presence or absence of figures in purely instrumental movements proves to be an unreliable guide with regard to the presence or absence of keyboard continuo accompaniment. Figured bass parts are found in all vocal solos, ensembles, and choral numbers. Approximately a third of Charpentier’s four-part overtures carry figures, whereas in dance movements usually, but not always, lack figures. The modern practice has been to omit continuo accompaniment from dances and other purely instrumental numbers. However, Charpentier provides a handful of dance movements with figured bass. In the “Rondeau pour trois figures” from Thomas Corneille’s *Circé*, a lone, forlorn figure appearing at the bottom of the page testifies to the presence of keyboard continuo. This number calls for acrobats, and Charpentier provides verbal cues as to where they (1) are to prepare, (2) run and take their positions, (3) form their figures, and (4) disperse. Another rondeau with figured bass is found in an entr’acte from *Vénus et Adonis* (1685). Interestingly, in this instance only the couplets carry figures, while the four-part refrain is unfigured (two pages). From this evidence we might be inclined to restrict the keyboard continuo to the couplets.

Other purely instrumental movements such as preludes and ritornellos—in both three and four parts—also carry figures on occasion, and the pattern of figures permits us to speculate on the figuring habits of the composer. Charpentier often dispenses with figures in predictable, diatonic passages—where he can trust the player’s ability to derive the harmony from the parts. However, in passages involving suspensions and chromaticism, such as in the “Prélude pour la plainte de la bergère” from *Vénus et Adonis*, figures are required to clarify the chromatic change

¹ This is no doubt the same 'M^r Carles' listed for the 1674 revival of *Le Malade imaginaire*.

from minor to major third in bar 3, and the 9-8 suspension and mode change in bar 5. As the remaining instruments enter and the harmonic movement becomes increasingly diatonic, the composer omits the figures. Then in the concluding measures, the harmonies change over a dominant pedal, and the figures reappear.

For orchestrally accompanied solos the continuo part appears notated separately, either on its own staff or on the same line as the choral bass part, as in the “Choeur des quatre éléments” of *La Pierre philosopale* (1681). Charpentier rarely specifies as to whether a *basse de viole* or a *basse de violon* is to play the continuo bass.⁹ One exception is found in his score for *Le Malade imaginaire*, where he specifies basse de violon on the continuo staff. (That is why I was struck by the indication in Peter’s paper, where Charpentier specified *basse de viole*, *basse de violon*, and *clavecin*—all on the same continuo bass line). Most often, the *basse de violon* doubles the continuo bass; but occasionally Charpentier provides an obligato bass part (shown here in red). Here the line stays in the bass clef and rises only to e’. Since we might expect an obligato *basse de viole* part to exploit the instrument’s upper register, this florid bass line rather suggests the *basse de violon*—which was the primary instrument of Pierre Marchand, the performer listed here whose name is circled to the left of this part.¹⁰

As a side note, I might add that Charpentier takes pains to specify the order of repeats—particularly in rondeaux, where the performers need to skip around the score between successive couplets and repeats of the refrain. The following example is typical of Charpentier’s verbal directions, where he specifies “bis au commencement, une fois au milieu, bis à la fin.” (twice at the beginning, once in the middle, twice at the end”).

The Location of the Orchestra. So, given that orchestral music was an important concomitant to staging, the question remains as to exactly where the instruments were placed in the theater. The location of the orchestra was somewhat variable in the 17th century. The famous engraving entitled “Le Soir,” which depicts an evening ballet performance in the Palais-Royal around 1642 given for Louis XIII, Cardinal Richelieu, Anne of Austria, and the young Louis XIV, shows instrumentalists positioned in one of the boxes closest to the stage. In 1674, the theater historian Samuel Chappuzeau tells us that theater orchestras were normally situated “at the rear of the stage, in the wings, or in an enclosed partition between the stage and the *parterre*”.¹¹

We know that such an orchestra enclosure on the *parterre* level was in place at the Palais-Royal.¹² Proof of this comes from an unlikely source: a police report describing a disturbance that broke out during a performance of *Psyché* in January of 1673. The officer in charge witnessed the following event:¹³

... as soon as the first *entrée* began, we noticed in the *parterre* by means of the light from the candles several men with swords who were unknown to us, and who had approached the stage muttering and stamping on the ground; and when the machine carrying Venus descended and while the chorus sang “*Descendez, mère des amours*”, the men with swords, as many as 25 or 30 of the conspiracy, disrupted the singers by howling, singing derisive songs, and stamping their feet

in the aforesaid *parterre* and [kicking them] against the planks of the enclosure where the instrumentalists were situated. . . .

After Molière's death in March of 1673, Lully obtained an ordinance (in April 1673) forbidding playhouses from having orchestra "pits".¹⁴

So where was the orchestra found at the Guénégaud Theater? A clue is given in Charpentier's music for *Le Malade imaginaire*, which was revised a number of times to comply with the latest musical restrictions. For the first *intermède*, Charpentier's verbal notes indicate that a group of [string-players were positioned in back of the stage](#) ("the fantasy without interruption is played behind the stage"). But this appears to have been only a temporary solution, for the theater historian Samuel Chappuzeau tells us that, "recently [the strings] have been placed in one of the rear boxes (*loges du fond*), where they emit much more sound than anywhere else they have been placed".¹⁵

The Singers. The 1671 production of *Psyché* marked an upgrade of the musical and balletic component at the Théâtre du Palais-Royal. From that point on, the company resolved to have a permanent theater orchestra, and to engage singers were willing to appear on-stage and unmasked, together with the actors. This last essential step toward verisimilitude is underscored in the [Registre de La Grange](#), which read:¹⁶

Until now the male and female singers had not wished to appear before the public. They sang in the theater from latticed boxes. But this impediment was overcome, and with some minor expense individuals were found to sing on-stage, unmasked, and in costume dressed like the actors, namely: Mlles de Rieux, Turpin, Grandpré, and Messieurs Forestier, Mosnier, Champenois, Ribou, and Poussin.

Curiously, of the eight above-mentioned singers, only two were hired back two years later for *Le Malade imaginaire*. At that time the company engaged seven professional singers, of which [six appear listed in the left margins of a chorus](#) from the final *intermède* ("Bene, bene responderé"):¹⁷ Mlle Mouvant (first soprano), Mlle Hardy (first soprano), Mlle Marion (second soprano), M. Poussin (*haute-contre*),¹⁸ M. Forestier (tenor), and M. Frison (bass).¹⁹ Moreover, from an earlier inscription it would appear that [the male actors joined in on the bass line](#)—at least, that seems implied by the rubric "for the other shepherds".

With an eye toward dramatic realism the company in the 1670s began to hire actors with proven singing abilities. The *haute-contre* Jean Deschamps, *dit de Villiers*²⁰ joined the troupe in 1672, and sang in a revival of *Le Mariage force* along with the soprano Turpin and the tenor Forestier (both listed above as having sung in *Psyché*), and the bass Le Roy.²¹ Around the same time, a voice teacher was hired at company expense to coach Michel Baron, Molière's young *protégé*, for his forthcoming role as a singing lover in *Le Malade imaginaire*.²² We know from contemporary accounts that Baron's performance with Mlle Molière in the "petit opéra impromptu" of Act 2, sc. 5 created a sensation.

After the company relocated to the Théâtre de Guénégaud, the hiring of external singers was abandoned and the actors themselves sang on-stage. One singer listed in the company's

account books for the 1674 revival of *Le Malade imaginaire* is one “Mlle Babet”. This was perhaps Elisabeth Danneret, known as “Babet le Chanteuse”—who later joined the Italian company and became the wife of Evaristo Gherardi. After the dismissal of the Italian troupe she became a singer at Lully’s Opéra.²³ Another singer that I have otherwise been unable to identify is [Mlle Bastonnet](#), who sang (along with Monsieur Poussin) in the première of *L’Inconnu*.

A chorus of these singing-actors appeared in margins of Charpentier’s score for the 1675 production of Thomas Corneille’s *Circé* ([“Bast\[onnet\]”, “Pous\[sin\]”, “Des Tri\[chés\]”, “La Gr\[ange\]”, “Vern\[euil\]”, “Hub\[ert\]”, and “De Gaye”](#)). We have already encountered Mlle Bastonnet (whose line seems to have been supported by violin) and the *haute-contre* Monsieur Poussin. “Des Tri[chés]” is the actor Guérin d’Estriché, who also sang *haute-contre*. The actors La Grange, Verneuil, and Hubert sang tenor, bass, and bass, respectively. The final name might be Jean Gaye, who had sung in the court premieres of a number of earlier comedy-ballets, as well as in *Le Malade imaginaire* (1673) and *Circé* (1675).

After the Guénégaud company merged with the Hotel de Bourgogne in 1680 to form the Comédie-Française, singing actors and actresses continued to appear on-stage. Charpentier’s score for *Andromède* (1682) lists in the margin [the names of several founding members of the company—de Villiers, Guérin d’Etriché, La Grange, de Verneuil, and Hubert](#). The names of two singing actresses are also known. Mlle Guyot [[Charpentier writes “Dyot”](#)] sang the role of Melpomene in the Prologue. Her full name was Judith de Nevers, *dite* Mlle Guyot, and she had belonged to the Marais company before she joined the Théâtre de Guénégaud; rumor had it she was his mistress of Guerin d’Estriché.²⁴ Another singing actress from the Marais theater is known to us by means of the 1682 livret: [Mlle Ennebaut](#). Her real name was Françoise Jacob, until she married the actor Mathieu d’Ennebaut.²⁵ Judging by the music composed by Charpentier specifically for Monsieur de Villiers and Mlle Guyot, the vocal abilities of these singing actors were quite respectable:

Dancers and Dancing Masters. During the mid-1670s, the Théâtre de Guénégaud specialized in spectacular machine plays—which required the company to hire professional dancers, aerial artists, acrobats, and choreographers. As we see in the *Registre de La Grange*, the first run of *Psyché* in the spring of 1671 featured [12 dancers and 4 petits danseurs, 2 little graces, and 6 cupids and zephirs to perform spectacular aerial flights, and 2 acrobats](#). But when Lully split with Molière the next year to take over the directorship of the Academie Royale de Musique, the company was forbidden any further use of dancers in the public theater. This, however, did little to stop the flow of dance music from Charpentier’s pen,²⁶ [or from dancers appearing under the guise of “marcheurs” or “assistants”](#).

Three prominent ballet masters served at various times as choreographers for the public theater: Pierre Beauchamps, Anthoine des Brosses, and Pierre de la Montagne.²⁷ [Pierre Beauchamps](#), the most acclaimed baladin of his day, served as dancing master for the Troupe du Roy from 1664 until 1671. For the 1671 production of *Psyché* Beauchamps’s duties included not only for [choreographing and rehearsing the dances, but also for conducting the orchestra](#). After working briefly for the Troupe du Roy in 1664, Anthoine des Brosses served as dancing master for the Théâtre du Marais ~~before it joined with Molière’s former company at the Théâtre de Guénégaud,~~²⁸ and then later for Perrin’s Académie Royale d’Opéras.²⁹ Later Des Brosses became

one of the principal choreographers for Lully's Académie Royale de Musique.³⁰ Beauchamps took over for Des Brosses in Perrin's Académie Royale d'Opéras and, like Des Brosses, he later moved on to the Académie Royale de Musique. When Molière's former company relocated to the Guénégaud theater, they engaged Pierre de la Montagne as their dancing master. Here [La Montagne's name](#) is listed as the “compositeur des pas” among the expenses for *L'Inconnu*. La Montagne had long danced in the court productions of the *comedies-ballets*, and his association with the Comédiens du Roy would extend over three decades.

In conclusion, the music that accompanied the plays given by the Théâtre de Guénégaud and the early years of the Comédie Française is more extensive and is of higher quality than generally recognized. Indeed, evidence seems to show that the number of singing actors and actresses on-stage and the number of instrumentalists in the pit often exceeded the royal limitations, and prompted Lully repeatedly to petition the king and stand up for his rights. Composed for a well-documented ensemble of singers and instrumentalists with whom Charpentier had close and direct contact, this repertory provides insight into many issues germane to French baroque performance practices.

The Dramaturgic Function of Instrumental Music. Charpentier's manuscripts provide provocative clues with regard to the practical usage of instrumental music in the theater. Most of his incidental instrumental music serves to accompany dance, and by far the greatest number of dances could be described as *danses de caractère*. Drawn from the long tradition of court ballet, these dance-pantomimes depict certain types of stock ballet characters: husbands and peasants, Moors and gypsies, demigods of the woods and streams, furies and demons, or mythological gods. Other dances accompany stage actions. These include the decorators [preparing the hall](#) for the farcical initiation ceremony that concludes Molière's *Le Malade imaginaire*, [acrobats forming human towers](#) in the epilogue to Thomas Corneille's machine play *Circé*, and the [winds carrying off Andromeda](#) in Act 3 of Pierre Corneille's *Andromède*. The most numerous of the standard dances is the *menuet*, followed by the *passepied*, *gavotte*, *gaillarde*, *sarabande*, *gigue*, *bouffée*, and *marche*. Other instrumental genres played during entr'actes—the *chaconne*, *rondeau*, *passecaille*, *caprice*, *fantaisie*—depict the passage of time and change of locale.³¹

In two instances, Charpentier's instrumental music rises to new dramatic heights. In *Circé*, music depicts unspoken emotions, as [the sorceress interacts with a group of mute demons](#). Each passage reacts to her quicksilver changes of mood, as expressed in the intercalated speeches. My [web edition of this scene](#) illustrates how each episode of pantomime relates to the speech preceding it. The prototype for this episode is found in the first *intermède* of *Le Malade imaginaire*, during the well-known [altercation between Polichinelle and an ensemble of strings](#). In the following short excerpt the short musical excerpts respond to Polichinelle with facetious repartee.

Seventeenth-century theater that involved music and dance became a collaborative effort. The 1671 version of *Psyché* is a case in point. Here the overall plan and scenic display was devised by Molière and sketched out in prose. He versified the first act and the first scene of the second act, and enlisted the aid of Pierre Corneille to versify the rest of the play. Philippe Quinault provided the sung lyrics of the prologue and the intermèdes—with the exception of the

Italian lament, which was evidently by the composer Jean-Baptiste Lully. Three ballet masters were paid for this production: Pierre Beauchamps, Nicolas Delorge, and Antoine Desbrosses, all of whom went on to become choreographers at Lully's Académie Royale de Musique. Costumes were designed by Henry Gissey, Claude Fortier, and Jean Baraillon, and the elaborate sets were created by Carlo Vigarani. Indeed, the overture served not only to quiet down the audience, but also to build anticipation for first sight of the set. This function of is underscored in Charpentier's manuscript to Gabriel Gilbert's *Les Amours de Diane et d'Endimion* (1681), where the composer writes "[Ouverture devant que de lever la toile](#)".³²

When a prologue precedes the main action of the play—as in *Le Malade imaginaire*, *Circé*, *Andromède*, *Endimion*, and *Vénus et Adonis*—the overture is normally repeated after the Prologue. Typically the prologue will take place on a loftier, more supranatural level than the action that follows. For example, in Corneille's *Andromède* the prologue has nothing to do with the main action, but rather is a musical encomium to Louis XIV—whereby the tragic muse Melpomene appears at the summit of Mount Parnassus and joins Apollo to spread the news of the wondrous exploits of Louis XIV. In Charpentier's manuscript for the 1682 revival, a rubric found at the end of the Prologue reads "Après le chœur Apollon parle, et quand il s'est envolé [on rejoue l'ouverture](#)". The main action that follows then shifts to Ethiopia and the forthcoming nuptials of Andromeda and Phineus. These indications confirm what we already know intuitively: that the instrumental overture serves to set the Prologue apart and frame its action, and consequently it is directly connected to the overall theatricality and scenic display.

The play's entr'actes also become directly tied to staging and theatricality. Here, rondeaux, chaconnes, dance movements, or instrumental song arrangements serve a triple function: to distract the attention of the spectators from the noise of the set changes, to prepare for the change of locale, and to symbolize the passage of time.³³ By virtue of necessity, entr'actes were variable in length to allow sufficient time for the set preparations. Charpentier's manuscripts attest that it fell upon the composer to build this flexibility into his score. For example, in *Les Amours de Diane et d'Endimion* the composer provides a "[Gavotte pour allonger l'intermède du 2^d au troisième acte d'Endimion](#)". Clearly this dance movement was inserted to accommodate the needs of the staging, and Charpentier—always attentive to musical continuity—provided for adjustments to make this transition. In the rubric he advises the performers "[when one wishes to continue with the gavotte, the last note of the sarabande will last a half measure](#)" (in green). Incidentally, encircled in red is a verbal indication regarding how to perform the rondeau repeats: "rondeau bis la première, semel la seconde, et bis la 3^e fois."

Thus, purely instrumental music is associated with change and movement—the raising of the curtain, the changing of sets, the passage of time and change locale, and machine effects. Of course music also accompanied various types of dances, pantomimes, and acrobatics, but it also accompanied other stage movement. In the Prologue to *Les Amours de Diane et d'Endimion*, a prelude provides the connecting link between Cupid's spoken monologue and the chorus's tribute to the god. [Charpentier's marginal indication specifies that during this prelude the singers were to take their positions on-stage](#). During large-scale tableaux featuring chorus, orchestra, and ballet, the dancers seem to have moved only during the orchestral passages and they remained stationary during the choral episodes. At least this is what is suggested in the following number from the Prologue of *Le Malade imaginaire* ("Ah, quelle douce nouvelle") in

which [dancers and the chorus alternated](#). According to Mary Cyr, Rebecca Harris-Warwick, and others, this was common practice at the Paris Opera at a later time. It is interesting to note, however, that this procedure was in place in Molière's theater by the early 1670s.

¹ Marcelle Benoit has found a contract of association drawn up between twelve *violons--4 dessus*, 2 *hautes-contres*, 2 *tailles*, and 4 *basses* (discussed in 'Une Association de joueurs d'instruments à Paris en 1681', *Recherches sur la musique française classique* 4 [1964], 91-93).

² . Don Fader's dissertation [title?]. This receipt is described in Antoine Vidal, *Les Instruments à archet* (Paris: J. Claye, 1877), vol. 2, p. 247, n. 1: "les neuf violins de Monsieur frère du Roy: Quittance de 1,800 livres pour gages et nourriture pendant le second semestre de l'année 1694, signée Jacques Duvivier – J. B. Prieur – Jacques Nivelon – Edme Dumont – Pierre Marchand – J. B. Anet – Guillaume Dufresne' Signatures originales."

³ . The contract between DuVivier, Converset, and Molière (now lost) is cited in Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, *Cent ans de recherches sur Molière*, Document CCLVII, 519.

⁴ . Jean Converset (or Convercet) entered the musical establishment of the Duc d'Orléans beginning in 1673. He was a composer, and a highly-respected performer and teacher of the *basse de violon*, and in 1709 he purchased a position in the Vingt-quatre Violons. See the article by Bernard Bardet in *Dictionnaire de la musique en France aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles*, ed. Marcelle Benoit (Paris, 1992), 439 (s.v. 'Convercet').

⁵ . Pierre Marchand, the son-in-law of Pierre Beauchamps, also played the *basse de violon*. The contract between Molière and Marchand (now lost) is cited in Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, *Cent ans de recherches sur Molière*, Document CCLVIII, 519. His name ('Mr. Marchand') also appears next to the *basse* part in Charpentier's score for *Circé*, performed at the Hôtel de Guénégaud in 1675 (Bibl. Nat., Ms Rés Vm¹259, XVII, fol. 5). Marchand belonged to the musical establishment of the Duc d'Orléans beginning in 1673, and in 1695 he joined the Vingt-quatre Violons. See the article by Bernard Bardet in *Dictionnaire de la musique en France aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles*, ed. Marcelle Benoit (Paris, 1992), 439 (s.v. 'Marchand').

⁶ . The names of DuVivier, Marchand, Converset, and Du Mont appear listed in the company's registers for the 4 May 1674 revival of *Le Malade imaginaire* (among the *symphonie*, where they were responsible for playing *ritournelles*), for the 17 March 1675 premiere of *Circé* (among the *symphonie* where harpsichord appears as a separate line-item), and in the 17 November 1675 premiere of *L'Inconnu* (where they comprised the 'petit choeur', and harpsichord and theorbo appear as a separate line-item). See Jules Bonnassies, *La Musique à la Comédie-Française* (Paris, 1874), 15, 16, and 19.

⁷ . Minutier central, XXXIV: 199; cited in Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, *Cent ans de recherches sur Molière*, Document CCLXXX, 549-50. This contract of association (signed, ironically, on the day of Molière's death) deserves quotation in full:

Furent presens Jean Converset, Jacques Duvivier et Pierre Marchand, tous trois violons de Monsieur frere unique du roy et estans presentement occupez aux pieces et comedies du sieur de Moliere, demeurans scavoit ledict sieur Converset rue Bethizy, ledict sieur Duvivier rue des Fossees et ledict sieur Marchand rue Saint-Honoré, parroisse Saint-Germain-l'Auxerois, lesquelz sont demeurez d'accord entr'eux de ce qui

ensuit, c'est ascavoir qu'ilz ont promis de ne se point separer les uns des autres pour jouer ausdictes pieces dudict sieur Molliere et autres commedies qui se jouent et representent par les François sur le theatre du Pallais royal que d'un mutuel consentement. Et, en cas que les commediens voullusent mettre l'un d'eulx ou deux dehors pour quelque cause et soubz quelque pretexte que ce soit ou puisse estre, les deux autres ou l'un d'eulx seront tenus audict cas de quitter lesdicts commediens et de ne plus jouer à leurs pieces sans y pouvoir rentrer que tous trois ensemblement. Et, où lesdicts commediens voudroient en rappeler un ou deux des trois, aucune des parties ne pourra rentrer sans le consentement des trois à peyne de payer par chacune desdictes parties aux deux autres ou à l'une d'elles la somme de cinq cens cinquante livres chacun de peyne commise avant d'y pouvoir rentrer, sans que ladicte somme de cinq cens cinquante livres de peyne commise par chacune des parties soit réputée comminatoire ains de rigueur. Et a esté convenu qu'en cas que lesdicts commediens voullusent les rappeler tous trois et qu'il y en eust un ou deux des trois qui ny voullusent rentrer, qu'en cedict cas celuy ou ceux qui y rentreront ne seront tenus de payer aucune chose de ladicte peyne commise, comme aussy qu'il sera loisible à chacune desdictes parties de se retirer volontairement et de ne plus jouer ausdictes pieces sans pour ce sujet payer aussy aucune chose de ladicte peyne commise. Et a esté encores convenu entre lesdictes parties qu'en cas que lesdictes commediens mettent seulement dans leur musique douce deux dessus de violons, un clavesin, un tuorbe et une basse de violon, qu'en ce cas celuy ou ceux qui jouront des trois rapporteront à celuy ou ceux qui ne jouront point leur proffict pour estre partagé entr'eux esgallement; et, où il n'y auroit de clavesins ny de tuorbe ledict Converset ne sera tenu de rapporter aucune chose. Car ainsy etc, promettans etc, obligeans chacun en droict soi, renonceans etc.

Faict et passé à Paris ès estudes etc. le quatorziesme febvrier après midy mil six cens soixante-treize et ont signé ces presentes:

Jean CONVERSET
Pierre MARCHAND

Jacques DUVIVIER

PILLAULT [*notaire*]

DUPUYS [*notaire*]

From the wording of this contract, it would appear that Converset served as a subcontractor for two of the continuo instruments (harpsichord and theorbo) in the ensemble. The conditional statement 'et, où il n'y auroit de clavesins ny de tuorbe ledict Converset ne sera tenu de rapporter aucune chose' (and, were there to be neither harpsichords nor theorboes, the aforesaid Converset will not be required to yield anything) was probably added to protect Converset should Molière not require continuo instruments of him. Bardet's suggestion that Converset 'devait jouer la partie de clavecin ou de théorbe' probably derives from a misunderstanding of this clause (see *Dictionnaire de la musique en France aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles*, s.v. 'Converset').

⁸ It is not surprising that Charpentier does not indicate theorbo in his theater scores—for, as Shirley Thompson points out in her dissertation, only twice in his manuscripts does he specify this instrument—once in his famous ensemble sonata, H. 548, and again in a Marian motet of 1683-85 ("Pro omnibus festis B.V.M., H. 333). See Shirley Thompson, "The Autograph Manuscripts of Marc-Antoine Charpentier: Clues to Performance (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Hull, 1997), 4 vols., I:200. Thompson also points out that the Guise musical establishment, for which Charpentier composed both sacred and secular music, employed a theorbo player—Philippe de Goibaut, sieur de Bois ('M. du Bois'); see *ibid.*, I:201. In her study of the *Meslanges autographes* Thompson has found *clavecin* and *basse de viole* listed together in H.

85 and H. 418, *clavecin* and *basse de violon* listed together in H. 408, and *clavecin*, *basse de viole*, and *basse de violon* listed together in H. 326; see “The Autograph Manuscripts of Marc-Antoine Charpentier,” I:202.

¹⁰ See Thompson, *ibid.*, I:56-57. In another work (H. 206), Thompson notes the following indications in the continuo line: “icy monsieur Marchand se separe”; “Mr Marchand pere se rejoint”.

¹¹. See Georges Monval, ed., *Le Théâtre françois, par Samuel Chappuzeau [1674]* (Paris, 1875), 146. Nicola Sabbattini (*Pratica di fabricar scene e machine ne' teatri* [1638], Ch. 36) also recommends placing the musicians in balconies on each side of the stage.

¹². The 1671 remodelling of the stage and auditorium at the Palais-Royal may have made it necessary to move the orchestra into an enclosure at the *parterre* level. When the theater was completed in 1641, the musicians were placed in balconies close to the stage, and five stone steps led from the *parterre* to the front of the raised stage (as can be seen in the famous engraving titled 'Le Soir' [see Plate 00]). It is possible that these steps were removed in 1661, when Molière's company first took up residence at the Palais-Royal, and that the orchestra had been stationed there all along; or, on the other hand, perhaps the construction of an orchestra pit was part of the 1671 renovations.

¹³. 'Procès-verbal des désordres advenus au Palais Royal pendant une représentation de Psyché', dated 13 January 1673; reproduced in Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, *Cent ans de recherches sur Molière*, 542-44.

¹⁴. 'Ordonnance portant deffenses aux comediens de se servir dans leurs representations de plus de deux voix et six violons', dated 22 April 1673; reprinted in Marcelle Benoit, *Musiques de cour*, 41.

¹⁵. Chappuzeau, *Le Théâtre françois*, ed. cit., 146-47. Evidently, the strings remained in these boxes until the 1675 production of *L'Inconnu*, when according to Bonnassies they were one again brought down front; see Jules Bonnassies, *La Musique à la Comédie-Française*, 2.

¹⁶. *Registre de La Grange*, I:124-26.

¹⁷. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms Rés Vm¹ 259, XVI:74.

¹⁸. Louis-Joseph Poussin.

¹⁹. Antoine Frizon (or Frison) later sang as a *chantre ordinaire* in the royal chapel; see Benoit, *Musiques de Cour*, 68, 76, and 152.

²⁰. For more on the active career of Jean Deschamps de Villiers, see Georges Mongrédien and Jean Robert, *Les Comédiens français du XVII^e siècle* (Paris, 1981), 207.

²¹. See *Registre d'Hubert*, 33. Hubert's entry on 102 reads 'Pour Vne coiffure a la petite Turpin du mariage forcé, 7#10s'. This singer was celebrated by Robinet as 'la jeunette Turpin, / qui chante d'un air si poupin'; see Letter of 26 November 1672, given in William Brooks, ed., *Le théâtre et l'opéra vus par les gazetiers Robinet et Laurent, 1670-1678* (Paris, Seattle, Tübingen, 1993), 118-25. Nutter and Thoinan mention that 'Mademoiselle Turpin chantait sur les théâtres particuliers et dans les concerts'; see *Les Origines de l'opéra français* (Paris, 1886; repr. Geneva, 1972), 202, n. 3.

²². *Registre d'Hubert* lists on 10 January 1673 'a Mons^r Baron pour deux mois de musique. . .15# 10s'; and on 10 February 1673 'a M^r Baron pour son maistre a chanter. . .22#.

²³. See Virginia Scott, *The Commedia dell'Arte in Paris, 1644-1697*, p. 336. Scott finds the first trace of her in the Italian repertory in *Le depart des comédiens* (August 1694). Whereas it is by no means certain that Babet le Chanteuse is the same Mlle Babet that appears in the registers of the Troupe de Guénégaud in 1674, it is at least possible. Her future husband, Evaristo Gherardi, was born in 1663; if she were around the same age, it is conceivable that she sang on-stage at age 11 or 12 (Anna Gottlieb was 12 when she premiered the role of Barbarina in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*).

²⁴ Mongredien, 109.

²⁵ Mongredien, 96.

²⁶. Danses de caractere

- Arts et Plaisirs (C)
- Divinités des forêts et de la mer (C)
- Esclaves du Sicilien (S)
- Furies (I)
- Démons (I)
- Combatants (I)
- Plaisirs (I)
- Naiades et dryads (I)
- Pour le dieu Pan (I)
- Satyres (I)
- Les Villageois (F-d)
- Les fous déchainés (F-d)
- Les geôliers (F-d)
- Les rieurs petite entrée (F-d)
- Pour les comédiens (F-d)
- Fous à marottes (F-d; gigue?)
- Les Eléments (P-p)
- Air pour les paysans (Nopce)
- Les Vents (A)
- Song arrangements (C)
- Menuet with words (P-p), (V et A; double)
- Menuet (C), (I), (F-d; assoc. with gypsy/Moor), (F-d), (P-p)
- Menuet en rondeau (V et A)
- Passepied (V et A)

- Gavotte (D et E)
- Gaillarde (D et E)
- Sarabande en rondeau (C)
- Sarabande (D et E)
- Gigue (unspecified) (F-d)
- Gigue (D et E), (A; Gigue anglaise)
- Rondeau (C), (A), (V et A)
- Bourrée (C), (F-d)
- Marche (I), (F-d), (F-d)
- Fantaisie (D et E)
- Caprice (A), (V et A)
- Chaconne (RvT), (V et A)
- Passecaille (C)

Entr'actes in *Andromède*

- Rondeau
- Les vents (pantomime for flying figures)
- Caprice
- Premier air; Gigue anglaise

Entr'actes in *Vénus et Adonis*

- Bruit de guerre d'après la chaconne dans le ballet de Polieucte
- Rondeau pour jouer jusqu'au second acte (figured couplets)
- Chaconne pour jouer jusqu'au 3e acte
- Passepied pour jouer jusqu'au 4e acte
- Caprice pour jouer jusqu'au 5e acte

²⁷. See this author's article, 'Pierre Beauchamps, Choreographer to Molière's *Troupe du Roy*', *Music and Letters* 76:2 (May 1995), 168-86.

²⁸. According to S. Wilma Deierkauf-Holsboer, Des Brosses served as ballet master for their January 1666 production of Boyer's *Les Amours de Jupiter et de Sémélé*; see *Le Théâtre du Marais*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1958), II:159. Later, he left Perrin's Academy to choreograph the ballets for their production of De Visé's machine-play, *Le Mariage de Bacchus et d'Ariane*, which opened at the Théâtre du Marais on 7 January 1672; see the *Sujet des Amours de Bacchus et d'Ariane* (Paris: Pierre Promé, 1672), 14.

²⁹. Des Brosses choreographed the ballets for the Perrin-Cambert opera *Pomone* (1671) and served as ballet master to the Academy until Beauchamps took over his position sometime in the late fall or early winter of 1671. A legal document from this time states 'et pour l'opera des peines et des plaisirs d'Amour il [est] constant que toute la musique estoit preste auparauant que Pomone cessat puisque M^r de beauchamps qui a dansé enuiron deux mois a Pomone a entendu la repetition dudit second opera le premier jour qu'il entra [~~'dans'~~] a l'opera et que M^r des brosses auoit tous les airs [~~'auparau'~~] des ballets de ce second opera auparauant qu'il cedat sa place audit beauchamps'. (Ms., Archives de la Comédie-Française.)

³⁰. Lully employed des Brosses to choreograph his pastiche *Les Fêtes de l'Amour et de Bacchus* (November 1672) and his first *tragédie-lyrique*, *Cadmus et Hermione* (April 1673)--both performed in a rented theater on the Rue Vaugirard (Jeu de Paume de Béquet, called 'le Bel-Air').

³¹ These instrumental numbers include the following:

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- Dances
 - Pantomimes
 - Les maris (M-f)
 - Les grotesques (M-f)
 - Le songe (M-f)
 - Le combat (M-i/P)
 - Les zephyrs (M-i/P)
 - Air des satyres (M-i/P)
 - Air des mores (M-i/2)
 - Les tapissiers (M-i/3)
 - Le remerciement (M-i/3)
 - Arts et Plaisirs (C)
 - Divinités des forêts et de la mer (C)
 - Esclaves du Sicilien (S)
 - Furies (I)
 - Démons (I)
 - Combatants (I)
 - Plaisirs (I)
 - Naiades et dryads (I)
 - Pour le dieu Pan (I)
 - Satyres (I)
 - Les Villageois (F-d)
 - Les fous déchainés (F-d)
 - Les geôliers (F-d)
 - Les rieurs petite entrée (F-d)
 - Pour les comédiens (F-d)
 - Fous à marottes (F-d; gigue?)
 - Les Eléments (P-p)
 - Air pour les paysans (Nopce)
 - Les Vents (A)
 - Song arrangements (C)
 - Menuet with words (P-p), (V et A; double)
 - Menuet (M-f), (M-i/P), (C), (I), (F-d; assoc. with gypsy/Moor), (F-d), (P-p)
 - Menuet en rondeau (V et A)
 - Passepied (V et A)
 - Gavotte (M-f), (D et E)
 - Gaillarde (D et E)
 - Sarabande with words (M-f)
 - Sarabande en rondeau (C)
 - Sarabande (D et E)
 - Gigue with words (M-f)
 - Gigue (unspecified) (F-d)
 - Gigue (D et E), (A; Gigue anglaise)
 - Rondeau (unspecified) (M-i/P)
 - Rondeau (C), (A), (V et A)
 - Bourrée (unspecified) (M-i/P)
 - Bourrée (C), (F-d)
 - Marche (M-i/3), (I), (F-d), (F-d)
 - Fantaisie (M-i/1), (D et E)
 - Caprice (A), (V et A)

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- Chaconne (RvT), (V et A)
 - Passecaille (C)
 - Ouvertures
 - Frame the Prologues in *Malade imaginaire*, *Circé*, *Andromède*
 - First act follows immediately in *Les Fous divertissants*
 - *Les Amours de Diane et d'Endimion*: 'ouverture devant que de lever la toile'
 - Attests to the presence of the stage curtain
 - *Vénus et Adonis*
 - 'on rejoue l'ouverture jusque au Pr acte'
 - Ritornelles separating strophes of songs: alternative offered in *Circé*
 - Ritornelles used to facilitate stage movement in *Andromède*
 - 'pendant cette ritornelle les bergers entrent'
 - Dancers move only during instrumental ritornellos in concertato choral numbers
 - Entr'actes in *Circé*
 - Sarabande en rondeau (explicit performance directions for the rondeau)
 - Passecaille
 - Menuet et bourrée
 - Les pantomimes
 - Entr'actes in *Les Fous divertissants*, *Les Amours de Diane et d'Endimion*
 - Entr'actes made up of dances
 - Fantaisie
 - Entr'actes in *Andromède*
 - Rondeau
 - Les vents (pantomime for flying figures)
 - Caprice
 - Premier air; Gigue anglaise
 - Entr'actes in *Vénus et Adonis*
 - Bruit de guerre d'après la chaconne dans le ballet de Polieucte
 - Rondeau pour jouer jusqu'au second acte (figured couplets)
 - Chaconne pour jouer jusqu'au 3e acte
 - Passepied pour jouer jusqu'au 4e acte
 - Caprice pour jouer jusqu'au 5e acte
 - Instrumental music to reflect emotions pantomimed on-stage
 - Les pantomimes in *Circé*
 - *Ballet de Polieucte*
 - Fanfares
 - *L'Inconnu*
 - Préludes
 - Prologue to *Les Amours de Diane et d'Endimion*
 - Prelude played 'pour donner le temps aux bergers d'entrer'
 - Gavotte pour allonger l'intermède du 2d au troisième acte d'Endimion
 - Prologue to *Andromède*
 - Pendant que Melpomène vole dans le char d'Apollon: Prélude
 - Pr. Int. of *Les Fous divertissants*
 - Prélude pendant lequel entrent en rêvant deux fous
 - Prelude de caprice des violons

³² A *toile* is a stage curtain (rideau) that conceals the set.

³³ These set-changes took place in full view of the audience—thus confirming music’s association with the *merveilleux*.