

The Metamorphosis of *Psyché*

John S. Powell

When the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle (1668) brought a temporary peace with the Anglo-Dutch Alliance, France enjoyed a brief respite from war while Louis XIV entertained the court with a series of theatrical *divertissements*: *George Dandin*, *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac*, *Les Amants magnifiques*, and *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. *Psyché*, the Carnival entertainment for the winter of 1670-71, was a departure from these earlier *comédies-ballets* which marked the last collaboration of Molière and Lully. This dramatization of the classical fable of Psyche and Cupid was conceived as a spectacular machine play, featuring elaborate set-changes and machine-effects created by Carlo Vigarani, and grandiose tableaux of music and ballet designed by Lully and Beauchamps.

The choice of such a *pièce à grand spectacle* came about from Louis XIV's wish to re-use the Salle des Machines housed in the Tuileries Palace. This capacious playhouse built during 1659-60 by Le Vau and equipped by Gaspare Vigarani and his sons, Carlo and Ludovico, can be seen in the upper third of this diagram (image 1).¹ Vigarani's celebrated underworld set from Cavalli's opera *Ercole amante* (1662) had been in storage there for nine years when the king expressed his desire to see it used again.² According to Lagrange-Chancel, 'Louis XIV demanda à Racine, à Quinault et à Molière un sujet où pût entrer une décoration qui représentait les Enfers et que l'on conservait avec soin au garde-meubles. Racine proposa le sujet d'*Orphée*, Quinault *L'Enlèvement de Proserpine*, et Molière, aidé du grand Corneille, s'attacha au sujet de *Psyché* qui obtint la préférence.'³ Never had a spectacle been mounted in France with such a collaboration of talent. Sixty-eight years later, Voltaire would write that 'Il ne manquait à cette société de grands hommes que le seul Racine, afin que tout ce qu'il y eut jamais de plus excellent au théâtre se fût réuni pour servir un roi qui méritait d'être servi par de tels hommes.'⁴

¹According to Henri Le Maître, the king's mistress Mme de Montespan encouraged Louis to make use of this playhouse for machine plays; see *Essai sur le mythe de Psyché dans la littérature française des origines à 1890* (Paris: Boivin, 1944) 135 n. 3. This playhouse is described in abbé de Pure, *L'Idée des spectacles anciens et nouveaux* (1668), p. 311ff; in the livret to *Psyché*, given below; and in Robinet, *Lettre en vers à Monsieur* (24 janvier 1671).

² See Marie-Françoise Christout, 'Ercole Amante, 'L'Hercule amoureux,' à la salle des Machines des Tuilleries,' *XVIIe siècle* (Jan.-March 1984), 13.

³ Lagrange-Chancel, preface to *Orphée*, in *Oeuvres* (Paris, 1758), IV:63. Manuel Couvreur questions the credibility of this account—which was published 87 years after the event; see *Jean-Baptiste Lully: musique et dramaturgie au service du Prince* (Bruxelles: M. Volkar, 1992), 218.

⁴Vie de Molière avec de petits sommaires de ses pièces', in Voltaire, *Œuvres complètes* (Paris, 1879), 23:124.

Organization of the work. *Psyché* represents a watershed in French lyric theater. It marked the end of the collaborative masterpiece, in which the various literary components—the spoken verses and the sung lyrics, the prose sketch and the versification—were the work of a team of poets.⁵ The *au lecteur* (image 2) specifies that Philippe Quinault supplied the lyrics, with the exception of the *plainte italienne*, which the frères Parfaict tell us were by Lully. Furthermore, the *au lecteur* states that 'M. de Molière a dressé le plan de la pièce, et réglé la disposition'. Finally, we learn that Pierre Corneille was brought in at the eleventh hour to help out Molière with the versification—and toward the end of the *au lecteur* we learn exactly who versified what.

Clearly, Molière gave considerable attention to how the musical component would function. For instance, the bipartite division of the Prologue reflects its double purpose. First, we have the sung praises addressed to the monarch, then we have a spoken exposition, written by Molière, of the play's subject. Here the playwright hit upon an original manner to integrate the Prologue with the play that follows. Not only does Venus's arrival precipitate the main dramatic action, but her spoken verses—cast in the irregular verse lengths known as 'vers mêlés'—announce the pervasive use of lyric verse, as opposed to the alexandrins of classical tragedy.⁶

The conflict put forth by the Prologue will become resolved in the final *intermède*. Here the apotheosis of Psyche, her marriage to Cupid, and the reconciliation of the gods restores the celestial harmony in a grand *ballet à entrées*. Particularly striking is the symmetry formed between the Prologue and the final ballet—which becomes an expansion of the structural scheme of the Prologue, as shown by the following diagram (image 3). The Prologue begins with a *récit* by Flore, whereas the final ballet begins with *récits* by Apollo, Bacchus, Momus, and Mars (as shown in red). After the *récits*, a chorus of gods and demi-gods (as shown in green) frame the remaining numbers. These include *entrées* by that god's followers (as shown in blue), and *chansons* sung by that god or goddess (as shown in purple).

Première performance. According to the *au lecteur*, Louis 'se voulait donner ce magnifique divertissement plusieurs fois avant le carême.' Indeed, it would seem that the king had originally intended to give *Psyché* even earlier, for on 12 December 1671 Carlo Vigarani wrote that 'On prépare un grand spectacle, qui sera donné à l'Épiphanie sur le théâtre des Tuileries.'⁷ It

5. Such was the case with ballet de cour, which relied on the collaboration of an 'organiser of ballets,' a lyricist, and a poet for the spoken (and unspoken) portions.

6. As Christian Delmas points out, '*Psyché* est la première pièce française à user systématiquement de ce vers à la fois dans les intermèdes et dans le corps de l'œuvre.' (Le théâtre musical et *Psyché* de Molière,' 222).

7. Letter of 12 December 1671 from Carlo Vigarani to the Comte Graziani; quoted in Gabriel Rouchès, *Inventaire des lettres et papiers manuscrits de Gaspare, Carlo et Lodovico Vigarani* (Paris: H. Champion, 1913), 167-68. In his letter of 15 December 1671, also to the Comte Graziani (*ibid.*, 168), Carlo wrote, with some exasperation, that 'Carlo est très occupé à cause du spectacle que l'on prépare pour l'Épiphanie.'

must have been more than coincidental that the première was set for 17 January 1671, 25 years to the day after the performance of the *Ballet de Psyché, ou de la puissance de l'amour*—a production in which the young Louis XIV had danced three roles.⁸ According to the *au lecteur*, the king 'se voulait donner ce magnifique divertissement plusieurs fois avant le carême.' Indeed, Paris was all abuzz in anticipation of this event. Charles Robinet reported that 'Tout se prépare aux Thuilleries, | Pour de royales Momeries, | Pour Bal, Comédie & Balet, | Où tout fera du Feu violet.'⁹ The performance began at 5:00 p.m. and lasted five hours (as Saint-Maurice informs us). The *Gazette de France* gave a descriptive account of the première—which, upon closer examination, seems to be largely based on the *livret* (image 4). This monumental event would be forever preserved in a tapestry woven by the Gobelins factory (image 5).

Subsequent performance history. After the first two performances, the court departed for Vincennes to continue its Carnival festivities. There the actors of the Hôtel de Bourgogne performed Quinault's *Bellérophon*, and Molière's company performed Corneille's *Bérénice*. Then on January 24 the court returned to Paris, and performances continued ('Leurs Majestez retournèrent en cette ville [Paris]: où Elles ont continué plusieurs fois, le Divertissement du grand Balet, dancé au Palais des Tuilleries, dans la Sale des Machines' ; *Gazette*, 31 January 1671 ; image 6). Evidently, performances ceased the next week, for the *Gazette* reported that on 28 January the court returned to Versailles ('Leurs Majestez, avec lesquelles estoit Monseigneur le Dauphin, allèrent au Chasteau de Versailles, pour continuer, pareillement, en ce beau Lieu, les Divertissement de la Saison. Monsieur y estant, aussi, allé le lendemain' ; image 7)

The king and his court returned to Paris on 1 February, and saw *Psyché* again on the 3rd and 5th ('Leurs Majestez eurent, derechef, le Divertissement du Balet, que le grand nombre des belles choses qui le composent, rendent, tousjours, nouveau, & des plus agréables'; *Gazette*, 7 February 1671 ; image 8). The final performance evidently was on 9 February ('Leurs Majestez prirent, encor, le Divertissement du Balet de Psiché: & le lendemain, terminèrent tous ceux du Carnaval, par un grand Bal, dans le Palais des Tuilleries, où toute la Cour, à la réserve de Monsieur, qui demeura dans son Deuil, forma une Mascarade des plus belles, & des plus brillantes' ; *Gazette*, 14 February 1671 ; image 9). In all, the king and his court attended six performances of *Psyché* at the Salle des Machines.

Plans for an extended tour of Louis's northern fortifications were formed well in advance of the première of *Psyché*, for on 12 December 1670 the machinist Carlo Vigarani wrote that 'Le

Il est très fatigué. Il fait tout son possible pour contenter le Roi, mais il doute que ses forces lui permettent de continuer. Depuis qu'il a l'honneur de servir Sa Majesté, jamais il n'a eu un moment de répit.'

⁸ See Le Maître, *Essai sur le mythe de Psyché*, p. 136.

⁹ Letter of 17 January 1671 (obviously written before the première that evening); given in William Brooks, ed., *Le théâtre et l'opéra vus par les gazetiers Robinet et Laurent, 1670-1678* (Biblio 17 - 78; Paris, Seattle, Tübingen, 1993), 55-56.

Roi va repartir en avril pour les Flandres, où il passera cinq à six mois.¹⁰ Evidently a fully-staged performance of *Psyché* was part of the plans, and Vigarani was to accompany the royal entourage. According to Vigarani, the recently-acquired city of Lille had been chosen for this production, and the *Gazette d'Amsterdam* announced that « Le roi fait porter à l'Isle les machines du grand ballet pour en faire voir la magnificence aux peuples du Pays-bas, où Sa Majesté doit aller le 20 avril ».¹¹ Clearly, this performance of *Psyché* was intended to send a powerful political message to Louis's new subjects.

In the event, plans for the Lille performance was tabled when Louis chose a more impressive venue. On 11 April 1671, the *Gazette de France* reported that preparations were underway for Louis's grand tour of Flanders ('Tout se dispose ici [in Paris], pour le Voyage du Roy, en Flandres: & le Duc de Duras est parti, cette semaine, pour aller à Doncheri, recevoir les Troupes qu'on y attend de Lorraine, & les conduire à Dunkerque, où est le Rendez-vous de celles qui doivent accompagner Sa Majesté, qui luy en a donné le Commandement en Chef;'; image 10) The high point of this tour would be a performance of the prologue and finale of *Psyché*, given before the battlements at Dunkerque.

From Saint-Germain de Laye, the king, accompanied by his queen, his brother Monsieur, Monsieur's daughter Mademoiselle d'Orléans, and many gentlemen and ladies of the court, departed on 23 April in a grand *cortège* that would provide many provincials with their first glimpse of their monarch's splendor. That first evening, Louis and his court arrived at Chantilly, where they were received by his cousin, the Grand Condé (Louis II de Bourbon, Prince de Condé).¹² During that evening and throughout the next day, Condé regaled Louis with tours of his gardens and fountains, together with concerts, firework displays, and hunting and fishing excursions. They were given a banquet, where excerpts from the second *intermède* of *Psyché* were performed in the Cabinet des Peintres. According to the account in the *Gazette* (8 May 1671; image 11), the music included Vulcan's chanson.

The fable of Psyche and Cupid held special significance for the Grand Condé--for in 1541 his ancestor, the Counstable Anne de Montmorency, had commissioned 44 stained glass windows for his Château d'Écouen (and now housed in the Galérie de *Psyché* at Chantilly; images 12 and

¹⁰. Letter of 12 December 1671 from Carlo Vigarani to the Comte Graziani; quoted in Gabriel Rouchès, *Inventaire des lettres et papiers manuscrits de Gaspare, Carlo et Lodovico Vigarani*, 167-68.

¹¹. 'Le Roi, qui a quitté Paris pour Versailles et Saint-Germain, ira en Flandre. Carlo l'accompagnera parce que Sa Majesté comte donner cet été à Lille une grande fête avec des machines.' Undated letter from Carlo Vigarani to the Duchesse; quoted in Gabriel Rouchès, *Inventaire des lettres et papiers manuscrits de Gaspare, Carlo et Lodovico Vigarani*, 170-71. This letter must have been written shortly after 10 February 1671, when the *Gazette* reported that 'Leursdites Majestez, avec lesquelles estoit Monseigneur le Dauphin, partirent d'ici, pour aller au Chasteau de Versailles: & retourner de là, continuer leur séjour à Saint Germain en Laye.'

¹². Condé had commanded a French army in the invasion of Franche-Comté during the winter of 1667 (his first commission since 1647, when he sided against the royal family in the Fronde), and he would further distinguish himself in the coming Dutch War.

13).¹³ Chantilly was itself a veritable 'Palais d'Amour', and Vulcan's air no doubt made the listeners take note of the splendor of Condé's objets d'arts. The second day of Louis's visit was a Friday, and François Vatel, Condé's maître d'hôtel, arranged for a fateful fish dinner.¹⁴ Although the *Gazette* mentions only that all kinds of fine fish were served, it remains silent about an incident that would become immortalized in a recent film (image 14).

On 25 April the royal entourage left Chantilly and journeyed through Creil, Breteüil, Amiens, Abbeville, Montreüil, Calais, Gravelines, and arrived at Dunkerque on 3 May, where the king viewed the progress on Vauban's fortifications. While the queen and her ladies of honor spent their days walking on the seashore and visiting local convents, the king occupied himself with daily visits to review his troops.¹⁵ Over the next few days the king consulted with his ambassadors to England and Holland and received various foreign dignitaries—who were uneasy about this massive buildup of troops and fortifications.¹⁶ On May 6th Louis saw Lord Bellasis, envoy to Charles II, and Sire Waughan, envoy to the Duke of York who gave news of the death of the Duchess of York (*Gazette*, 13 May 1671; image 15).

By May 18th, the new fort at Dunkerque was nearing completion, and so the king arranged for a celebration on the Royal Bastion to entertain the 30,000 soldier-workmen. According to the *Gazette* (24 May 1671; image 16), he arrived around 6 :00 pm accompanied by Monsieur, the queen, and her ladies-in-waiting to preside at an *alfresco* banquet accompanied by music. The festivities ended with trumpet fanfares and drums, a wind concert, and the discharge of eighty cannon. A special issue of the *Gazette* (5 June 1671; image 17) provided the world with a fuller description of these festivities, which included musical excerpts from the Prologue and the final *intermède* of *Psyché*.

In the Prologue, the arrival of Venus (depicted by queen Maria-Theresa and her ladies-in-waiting) served as a dramatic foil for the image of the warrior-king Louis XIV bringing peace and recreation to his subjects. Here the Royal Bastion served as the main performance space (image 18), with the orchestra and chorus positioned in tents on either side. Seven-hundred drums of the regiment were posted on the ramparts, while

¹³ The Duke of Aumale had the Gallery of Psyche especially designed to exhibit these 45 stained glass windows from the Château of Écouen. Bequeathed in 1830 by his grand-uncle, the Duke of Bourbon, they were made from 1542 to 1544 at the Counstable Anne de Montmorency's request for his Castle of Écouen. They are painted in grisaille, embellished with strokes of yellow (hair, accessories).

¹⁴ This is reported by Mme de Sévigny.

¹⁵ The 30,000 workers labored fifteen hours a day in three shifts: 4-9 a.m.; 9 a.m.-2 p.m.; and 2-7 p.m.. 'Sa Majesté, pour encourager de plus en plus, les Troupes qui y sont employées, à se signaler, a proposé des Prix considérables, aux Régimens qui auront plustost, achevé leur Travail.'

¹⁶ In his letter of 21 May 1671 Saint-Maurice writes 'Les Hollandais ont des craintes horribles; ils ont partout des espions en mer et sur terre et on prend plaisir à leur faire des frayeurs; l'ambassadeur ne brave pas, comme l'on avait publié; il est étourdi de tout ceci, de voir les troupes, tout ce monde, toutes ces fortifications; il n'ose pas témoigner ni de la crainte ni de la

fifes, oboes, and trumpets were positioned below; 80 cannon were positioned on the courtine between the bastion and the chateau, to be fired during the Entrée de Mars.

‘Tous ces brüits, & ces sons différans, meslez ensemble, faisoient une espèce d'Harmonie, à laquelle l'oreille n'avoit point, encor, esté accoûtumée: & qui donnoit un plaisir meslé d'éfroy, qui élevoit l'Ame en la divertissant, & faisoit admirer la grandeur du Roy, aussi bien que sa magnificence.’

There is little doubt that this performance, together with the presence of Louis and his war machine, was calculated to deliver a message to his Flemish neighbors: that Louis was the first soldier of the day, and his kingdom the most powerful force in the world. Moreover, he delivered this message with a theatrical flair typical of the Sun King. The propaganda value of such a display was inestimable—particularly when the *entrée* of the Suite de Mars brought on a salvo of cannon-fire that would have been heard in Bruges, where the governor of the Netherlands, Don Juan Domingo Mendez de Haro, Count of Monterey, remained all the while Louis was in Dunkerque. In his letter of 21 May 1671,¹⁷ Saint-Maurice reports that 'Les Hollandais ont des craintes horribles; ils ont partout des espions en mer et sur terre et on prend plaisir à leur faire des frayeurs; l'ambassadeur ne brave pas, comme l'on avait publié; il est étourdi de tout ceci, de voir les troupes, tout ce monde, toutes ces fortifications; il n'ose pas témoigner ni de la crainte ni de la méfiance parce qu'on se moquerait de lui, car on ne lui dit rien que d'obligeant; il m'a témoigné qu'il voulait aller d'ici en Hollande pour instruire de vive voix les États de cette puissance. Je crois qu'on les réduira à ce qu'on coudra, pouvu qu'on veuille faire quelque traité avec eux qui les mette en sûreté. » But even more lasting was the irony of Louis XIV, at the northernmost strategic stronghold of his kingdom and on the eve of the Dutch War, heralded in Quinault's verses and Lully's music as the peacemaker.

After Dunkerque, the royal entourage went on to the newly-rebuilt fortifications in the cities acquired by the 1668 Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle (image 19) : Bergues (25 May), Lille (27 May), Oudenarde (29 May), and Tournai (31 May)--where court remained for two weeks.¹⁸ The Lille performance of *Psyché* never materialized.¹⁹ After leaving Tournai on June 15th, the king visited fortifications at Ath, Binche (24 June), Charleroi (25 June), and Philippeville (26 June).

méfiance parce qu'on se moquerait de lui, car on ne lui dit rien que d'obligeant; il m'a témoigné qu'il voulait aller d'ici en Hollande pour instruire de vive...[to be continued]

¹⁷ Marquis de Saint-Maurice, *Lettres su la cour de Louix XIV*, publiées par Jean Lemoine, 2 vols. ; Paris_Calman-Lévy) ; Deuxième Partie (1671-1673), 79-81.

¹⁸. These fortified cities were enclaves of French territory well within the Spanish Netherlands, and the cannon-fire that greeted Louis arrival must have made the Dutch nervous.

After returning for a week at Ath, the court departed on July 7th for Versailles, where it arrived on July 12th before continuing on to Saint Germain en Laye. Upon the king's return, musical excerpts from *Psyché* continued to be heard at court. The *Gazette* (image 20) reported on August 8th that 'Leurs Majestez prirent le soir, le Divertissement des Airs du Balet de Psiché, qui fut suivi d'un tres-superbe Festin, où toutes les Dames se trouvèrent'. Robinet corroborated this in his letter of 14 August : 'En bonne Santé, ledit Sire, | De qui si charmant est l'Empire, | Fait, encor, avecque sa Cour, | A Fontainebleau, son Séjour, | Et, de ses grands Soins, s'y délasse, | Par fois, dans l'ébat de la Chasse, | Et, par fois, par de doux Concerts, | Où l'on répète les beaux Airs | Qu'a faits le Sieur Lulli-Batiste, | (Qui ne manque pas de Copiste) | Dedans le dernier grand Balet, | D'un bout, à l'autre, si complet, | Et qu'on revoid dancier, de même, | Avec, certe, un plaisir extrême, | Ou, pour mieux dire, sans égal, | Tout joignant le *Palais Royal*'.²⁰

Robinet's last quatrain refers to the public performances of *Psyché* that were then playing at the Théâtre du Palais-Royal, with 'machines, decorations, music, ballet, and generally all the ornaments necessary for this *grande spectacle*'. During Easter break the Troupe du Roy began to remodel the interior of its playhouse, and had the stage rebuilt in order to accommodate machines. Moreover, it resolved henceforth to have a permanent theater orchestra of twelve strings. This 'tragi-comédie et ballet' must have seemed even more like 'tragédie en musique' when the company engaged professional singers 'to sing on-stage, unmasked, and dressed like the actors'.²¹

The first performance-run lasted for 39 performances, from 21 July until 25 October of 1671; the first revival ran for 13 performances from 15 January to 6 March 1672; and the second revival ran for 31 performances from 11 November 1672 until 22 January 1673—a grand total of 83 performances.²² According to Robinet, this was the same spectacle as that given in the Tuileries the previous Carnaval ('Il a les mêmes Ornemens, | Même éclat, mêmes agrémens. | Les Airs, les Chœurs, la Symphonie, | Sans la moindre Cacophonie, | Sont ici, comme ils étoient là').²³ He then goes on to praise the remarkable staging of this production, where 'Vous y voyez, outre cela, | Les divers Changemens de Scène | Qu'on ne s' imagine qu'à peine | Les Mers, les Jardins, les Deserts, | Les Palais, les Cieux, les Enfers, | Les mêmes Dieux, mêmes Déesses, | Soit à blondes, ou brunes Tresses'.

19. Lille and its surrounding countryside had been one of the major gains by the 1668 Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, and its siege was the first important assignment given by the king to Sébastien le Prestre de Vauban—the engineer who rebuilt the fortifications at Dunkerque.

20. Quoted in Brooks, ed., *Le théâtre et l'opéra vus par les gazetiers Robinet et Laurent, 1670-1678*, 88.

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

22. This data is collected from the *Registre de La Grange*, I:passim.

23. Letter of 1 August 1671; quoted in Brooks, ed., *Le théâtre et l'opéra vus par les gazetiers Robinet et Laurent, 1670-1678*, 81-86.

The scenic indications of the first published edition of the play reveal that, in fact, there had been many changes made with regard to: (1) the number of performers in the Prologue and *intermèdes*, (2) the internal organization of the spoken acts, (3) the décor, and (4) the organization of the final *intermède*. These differences between the 1671 *livret* and the first edition are summarized in the following table (image 21). Another *livret*, printed presumably for the public performances, conforms in detail to the indications given in the first edition (image 22).

The Palais-Royal production used significantly fewer singers and approximately half as many dancers than at court. Instead of the 300 musicians and dancers in the final *intermède*, the first edition specifies that 'Un chœur de toutes les voix et de tous les instruments, qui sont au nombre de quarante, se joint à la danse générale et termine la fête des noces de l'Amour et de Psyché.' The décor of Acts 1 and 4 substitutes painted flats of buildings and palaces for the gardens of the Tuileries production. We can also attribute the reduced scale of the décor and machine-effects to the differences in the performing spaces--for the stage at the Théâtre du Palais-Royal was not as wide or as deep as that of the Salle des Machines.

From Robinet's accounts of the three revivals at the Palais-Royal, we are able to reconstruct in part the cast-list of actors and singers for each production (image 23). According to the *Registre de La Grange*, the hired singers included Mlles de Rieux, Turpin, Grandpré, and Messieurs Forestier, Mosnier, Champenois, Ribou, and Poussin.²⁴ Only the first two names appear in Robinet's accounts of the various productions. Mlle Turpin was a soprano, who was hired for a revival of *Le Mariage forcé* given during the summer of 1672 along with the tenor Forestier.²⁵ Poussin (Louis-Joseph Poussin) was an *haute-contre* who sang in *Psyché* (1671), *Le Malade imaginaire* (1673, rev. 1674), and *L'Inconnu* (1675). If we were to assume that Mlle de Rieux took over the singing roles of Hilaire Dupuis, that Mlle Turpin sang the secondary soprano roles, Mlle Grandpré the third-order roles, Poussin the *haute-contre* and Forestier the tenor roles, and that all joined in singing the roles of the Nine Muses (perhaps with La Grange, who sang tenor) in the final *intermède*, we might consider the following distribution of roles:

Role (in order of appearance)	Jan. 1671 première (from livret)	July 1671 (from Robinet)	Jan. 1672 (from Robinet)	Nov. 1672 (from Robinet)
--------------------------------------	---	---------------------------------	---------------------------------	---------------------------------

²⁴. *Registre de La Grange*, I:124-26.

²⁵. See *Registre d'Hubert*, p. 33. Hubert's entry on p. 102 reads 'Pour Vne coiffure a la petite Turpin du mariage forcé, 7#10s'. 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: Minkoff, 1972), p. 202, n. 3.

Play				
Psyché	Mlle Molière	Mlle Molière / Mlle Beauval	Mlle Molière	Mlle Molière
Deux Sœurs de Psyché	Mlles Marotte and Boval [Beauval]	Mlles Beauval / Mlle Du Croisy and Létang	Mlle Beauval	Mlles Beauval, & de la Grange
Le Père de Psyché	La Thorillière	La Thorillière		La Thorillière
son Capitaine des Gardes	Chasteau-Neuf	M. Beauval [from livret]		
Les Deux Amants de Psyché	Hubert and La Grange	Hubert and La Grange		Hubert and La Grange
Deux petits Amours	Thorillon and Barillonet	Les petits Baraillon et Barbier [from livret]		Le petit la Torilliere, & Barbier
Un Fleuve Jupiter Zéphir	De Brie Du Croisy Molière	Du Croisy Molière		
Premier Intermède				
Femme désolée Deux hommes affligés	Hilaire Dupuis Morel and Langeais	[Mlle de Rieux?] [Forestier and Champenois?]		
Second Intermède				
Vulcain	none listed	[Poussin?]		
Troisième Intermède				
Zéphyr qui chante	Jannot	[Mlle Turpin?]		
Deux Amours chantant	Renier and Pierrot	les petits Baraillon & Barbier		
Dernier Intermède				
Apollon Bacchus Mome Mars Les Neuf Muses	Langeais Gaye Morel Estival Mlles Hilaire, Desfronteaux, Piesche sœurs; MM. Gillet, Oudot, Henry Hilaire, Descouteaux, and Piesche cadet	[Forestier?] [Poussin?] [Champenois?] [Ribou?] [Mlles de Rieux, Turpin, Grandpré, and Messieurs Forestier, Mosnier, Champenois, Ribou, and Poussin]		
Deux Muses	Mlles Hilaire and Desfronteaux	[Mlles de Rieux and Turpin?]		Turpin?

In the middle of the first performance-run at the Palais Royal Mlle Molière fell ill, thereby causing performances to be canceled for a week. In his letter of 26 September Robinet exclaimed: 'La Belle PSICHE, qui tout charme, | Justes Dieux! quel sujet d'allarme! | A presque passé, tout de bon, | Dans la Nacelle de Caron, | Où. [ar feinte, on void qu'elle passe, | Au Balet, sans qu'elle

trépassé. | Mais son Mal, d'abord, véhément, | Se modère présentement, | Et bien-tôt, étant drüe,
& saine, | Icelle reprendra son Rôle, sur la Scène.²⁶

During Mlle Molière's illness, her understudy, Mlle Beauval, took over the title role, while Mlle du Croisy played Mlle Beauval's role of Psyche's sister. Both actresses received Robinet's critical acclaim: 'L'Actrice dont je parle ainsi, | Est la petite du *Croisi*, | D'esprit, & de grace pourvüe, | Et, de vous, assez bien connuë; | Qui, dans deux jours avoit appris | Ce beau Rôle qu'elle avoit pris | De la grande *Actrice* choisie, | *Beauval*, qui, d'un beau feu, saisie, | Sçait joüer, admirablement, | Sur tout, un Rôle véhément. | Or cette merveilleuse Actrice | Lors, de *Psyché*, Coadjutrice, | Joüoit son Rôle, & le joüera, | Tandis que malade sera | Mademoiselle de *Molière*, | Autre Actrice si singulière, | Qui sçait joüer si finement, | Si proprement, si noblement, | Que tout chacun, je le puis dire, | A la revoir, en bref, aspire.'²⁷ By 24 October, Robinet reported that Mlle Molière had recovered from her near-fatal illness and returned to her role of Psyche.²⁸

Literary and Musical Sources. Materials pertaining to the 1671 version of *Psyché* appeared in various sources over a thirty-year span (image 24). The earliest datable source for the *tragédie-ballet* is the *Airs du balet royal de Psyché* (image 26). That Lully had these vocal numbers printed up by Robert Ballard in advance of the première shoots holes in the myth of precipitate creation that surrounds *Psyché*. The collection seems not to have been intended for rehearsal or performance, for the 'Dialogue de Vertumne et de Palæmon' appears not as a duet for haute-contre and tenor voices, but as an untitled solo air for soprano. One might conjecture that the collection was intended for sale to the public, and this may explain the demand for a second edition printed by Christophe Ballard two years later (image 27). In the second edition the changes are minor, and are largely confined to text-corrections, the addition of slurs in the basso-continuo part, and the simplified notation of repeats.

Three different traditions of *livrets* survive from the 1671 performances. The first two were clearly intended for distribution at the première performances given at the Tuileries, as it contains a detailed description of the Salle des Machines, the names of the singers, dancers, and some instrumentalists, and the names of the nobility who participated.²⁹ Curiously, the lyrics for the *Récit de Vulcain* in the second intermède are lacking--though this vocal air is found in the 1670 *Airs du balet royal de Psyché*. This

²⁶. Quoted in Brooks, ed., *Le théâtre et l'opéra vus par les gazetiers Robinet et Laurent, 1670-1678*, 93-94.

²⁷Letter of 3 October 1671; quoted in Brooks, ed., *Le théâtre et l'opéra vus par les gazetiers Robinet et Laurent, 1670-1678*, 94-96.

²⁸. Quoted in Brooks, ed., *Le théâtre et l'opéra vus par les gazetiers Robinet et Laurent, 1670-1678*, 97-98.

²⁹. The main differences between these *livrets* consist of (1) French translations of the Italian lyrics from the Premier Intermède, (2) text repetitions written-out, and (3) slight discrepancies in the casting of singers and listing of instrumentalists.

suggests that the number might have been added after the *livret* had gone to press. A second *livret*, seems to have been reprinted for the production given at Molière's theater. Its title page reads: LE GRAND BALLET | DE PSICHE | DANSE' | au mois de Janvier 1671 | *ET DANSE'* | SVR LE THEATRE DV PALAIS ROYAL, | AVEC LA TRAGI-COMEDIE | représentée par la Troupe du Roy, | au mois de Iuillet 1671. | A PARIS, | Par ROBERT Ballard, SEUL Imprimeur du Roy | pour la Musique, ruë S. Jean de Beauvais, | au Mont-Parnasse. | M. DC. LXXI. | *AVEC PRIVILEGE DE SA MAIESTE'*. As the title mentions the Palais-Royal production of July of 1671, it seems unlikely that it would have been printed for the court performances of the previous January.

The first edition of the play was printed by Pierre le Monnier, after this new production at the Palais-Royal was well underway. Whereas Molière acquired the *privilège* on 31 December 1670 (registered 13 March 1671), the play was not published until 6 October 1671; its scenic descriptions correspond not to that of the Tuileries production, but rather the new staging at the Théâtre du Palais-Royal. The third, above-mentioned *livret* also preserves these new staging descriptions, and confirms that it was printed by Ballard for the Palais-Royal production.³⁰

Comparing the court *livret* with the Palais-Royal *livret* and the first edition of the play, we can see that there was some reorganization of scenes in the public performances. Whereas the Prologue and *intermèdes* were reproduced without change (except for differences in décor and the numbers of singers and dancers mentioned), the final *intermède* was shortened, and the order of the individual numbers substantially rearranged. Indeed, it is instructive to compare the order of numbers as they appear in the *livret* and the first edition (image 25). The final *intermède* as it appears in the first edition of the play is shortened by several vocal numbers (the *Récit de Mars* ['Mes plus fiers Ennemis'], the *Chanson de Silene* ['Bachus veut qu'on boive à longs traits'], the *Trio de Silène et de deux Satyres* ['Voulez-vous des douceurs parfaites?']), the *Chœur des Dieux* ('Chantons les plaisirs charmants'), and two dance numbers (the *Arts travestis en bergers galants*, and the *Deux satyres voltigeurs*). The order of the existing numbers is also altered—resulting in a lessening of the balletic orientation. In the printed edition, the numbers praising Cupid by Apollo and the Chorus of Divinities open the *intermède*, and are followed by numbers warning against falling under Cupid's power. After two successive ballet *entrées* for the followers of Bacchus and Momus, each god delivers a *récit* (formerly labeled '*chanson*') in praise of their respective attributes. The conclusion of the *intermède* follows the 1671 *livret* beginning with the arrival of Mars and his entourage. At the end, Molière included the following note in reference to the manner in which the final chorus was performed at the time of the première: Dans le grand salon du palais des Tuileries, où *Psyché* a été représentée devant Leurs Majestés, il y avait des timbales, des trompettes et des tambours mêlés dans ces derniers concerts, et ce dernier couplet se chantait ainsi ('*Chantons les plaisirs charmants*').

A copy of the full score of the *tragédie-ballet* was made in 1690 by the André Danican Philidor, music librarian to Louis XIV. This score (image 29) contains all of the instrumental and vocal music together with the complete spoken text, but is riddled with many copying errors which preclude its use as a performing score. Another manuscript copy recently surfaced in an auction given by Otto Haas in 2003. This full score (image 30) omits several numbers listed in the court *livret*, its instrumentation is somewhat reduced—evidence which suggests that the reading may reflect the music used in public performances at the Palais-Royal. Yet another manuscript containing only the instrumental numbers from the *tragédie-ballet* is found in the National Library of Scotland (image 31). The manuscript contains instrumental music from 29 French ballets, *comédies-ballets*, and operas dating from 1657- 1677, and represents nearly all of Lully’s output during this period. The collection was brought to Scotland by James Maule (4th Earl of Panmure) and his brother Harie after their visits to France between 1678 and 1683.

Lully later recycled selections from *Psyché* in *Le Ballet des Ballets*, a pastiche of the king’s favorite selections from royal divertissements given during the previous years. Here it served as entertainment within the framework of Molière’s frothy comedy, *La Comtesse d’Escarbagnas*. The entertainment premiered on 2 December 1671, in celebration of the arrival of Monsieur’s new *fiancée*, Elisabeth-Charlotte of Bavaria. The only manuscript score that has surfaced so far is found in the Bibliothèque Publique de Besançon. This copy of unknown date (image 32) probably stems from the turn of the century—as its copyist, known among Lully circles as ‘copyist Z’, also copied François Couperin. *Le Ballet des ballets* includes the prologue, the first *intermède*, the ‘Entrée des Cyclopes’ and the ‘Air de Vulcain’ from the second *intermède* of *Psyché*. This is the only musical source to include the ornamented repeats and second verses, which Lecerf tells us were composed by Lully’s father-in-law, Michel Lambert.

The final metamorphosis of *Psyché* came about in 1678, when Lully decided to transform his *tragédie et ballet* into a full-fledged *tragédie en musique*. This decision was undoubtedly precipitated by the *Isis* scandal, where Lully’s librettist Quinault fell into disgrace for allegorizing the king’s turbulent domestic life. So Lully turned to Thomas Corneille, author of numerous machine plays, as his new literary partner. Corneille was aided in his task by his nephew Fontenelle, and together they replaced the long spoken tirades of Molière and his older brother, Pierre Corneille, with recitatives and other vocal numbers (image 33; numbers in red were added to the original 1671 *tragédie-ballet*). According to the *Mercure galant*, it required but three weeks to transform the ballet into an opera, and from its première in April of 1678 this final version of *Psyché* received an enthusiastic reception.

Psyché therefore underwent numerous changes in its metamorphosis— from court spectacle into a tool of propaganda, into a financial windfall for the Théâtre du Palais-Royal, into

³⁰ . The is the only instance of Robert Ballard printing a *livret* for the public theater.

a continuing source of royal entertainment in a court *divertissement*, and, finally, into a full-fledged *tragédie en musique* at Lully's Académie Royale de Musique—where ‘on y court en foule et le merveilleux talent de Mr de Lully ne paraît pas moins dans cet opéra que dans tous ceux que nous avons admirés en lui.» (*Mercurie Galant*, p. 381). *Psyché*, this seminal work for the creation of French opera, remained in this final transformation throughout the rest of the seventeenth-century.