16

COMIC VISION AND REVISION IN LE MARIAGE FORCÉ AND LE SICILIEN

Le Mariage forcé (1664) and Le Sicilien (1667), two of the shorter comédies-ballets written on royal command for the Carnival celebrations at court, were essentially balletic in conception. Le Mariage forcé was presented as the 'Ballet du Roy' of 1664, whereas Le Sicilien became an eleven-hour addition to the Ballet des Muses. Neither comédie-ballet was particularly successful financially when Mollière first transferred them to the Palais-Royal: Le Mariage forcé closed after twelve ruinous performances, while the first run of Le Sicilien proved to be an exceedingly risky venture. Years would pass before Mollière's company revived either of these plays. Mollière rewrote Le Mariage forcé as a non-musical, one-act farce for production in 1668, while Le Sicilien received only a single performance in 1669 and two showings in 1671.

In the 1670s Mollière's company revived both works with new intermèdes, set to music by Marc-Antoine Charpentier. Judging by the company's account books, these revised comédies-ballets became instant hits: they enjoyed longer runs and generated higher box-office receipts than had the premières. In both cases, Charpentier's new musical numbers are of a more ribald, satiric, and even parodic character—suggesting that they were reworked to appeal to the esprit gaulois of the heterogeneous Paris audiences. Moreover these new intermèdes provide a fresh counterpoint to the themes underlying Mollière's comedies, while at the same time they parody Lully's original songs and dances.

MUSIC AND THE SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY IN LE MARIAGE FORCÉ

The Original Version of 1664

For his Carnival celebrations of 1664, Louis XIV requested a new ballet du Roy from Mollière and Lully. As he did with Les Fâcheux, Mollière replaced the spoken elements of ballet with comic episodes, and interwove them with the music and dance into a unified fabric. However, unlike Les Fâcheux, where the dance numbers were confined to the ballet entr'actes, here the vocal numbers and dances became integrated into the spoken play. The dances in the earlier work represented balletic continuations of the preceding scenes, whereas the musical episodes in Le Mariage forcé evolve from the play's dramatic action, and directly relate to the fantaisies of its protagonist Sganarelle. Like Eraste in Les Fâcheux, Sganarelle remains on-stage throughout the comédie-ballet to provide liaison de scènes between the play and the ballet entr'actes. Also, as in Les Fâcheux, Le Mariage forcé concludes with a musical finale in which the musicians, dancers, and the play's characters all join in celebrating the wedding of the protagonist.

However, another possible influence on both the design and content of Le Mariage forcé may derive from a musical comedy by one of Mollière's rivals, Antoine Montfleury. Montfleury's Le Mary sans femme seems to have premiered at the Hôtel de Bourgogne in 1663, at a critical point in the evolution of the comédie-ballet genre. Whereas its musical intermèdes interrupt the main action and contribute to the unfolding of plot, the finale (as with Le Mariage forcé) is a musical celebration linked directly to the play's denouement. Thematic similarities between the two works suggest a further connection: both plots are propelled by the consequences resulting from mismatched spouses; both introduce exotic elements within the context of musical interludes (Turkish singers and dancers in Le Mary sans femme, Spanish/Gypsy singers and dancers in Le Mariage forcé); and both conclude with musical festivity, tinged with dramatic irony, on the themes of marriage and divorce. Moreover, the success of Montfleury's Le Mary sans femme at the Hôtel de Bourgogne may have had something to do with Mollière's improvident decision to stage Le Mariage forcé at the Palais-Royal in an expensive production 'avec le ballet et les ornemens'.

1 Carnaval was the traditional time for the ballet du Roy, in which the King and his courtiers would dance. Prunitres (Opéra italiens en France, 80) points out that it was customary to refer to a variety of theatrical spectacles given during Carnival as ballets reyens.

2 According to the avvertissement to the Oeuvres de Théâtre de Messieurs de Montfleury, père et fils (Paris, 1719), quoted in the frères Parisiains, Histoire du Théâtre Français, i, 300–3. Montfleury's Le Mary sans femme first appeared in 1663. While 'no contemporary documentation confirms the date of the first performance of the comedy', Edward Forman gives credence to the 1663 date—as the biographical and bibliographical date given in this avvertissement derives from information provided to its editors by Montfleury's grand-niece, who learned these facts from her grandmother (Montfleury's daughter). See the intro. to Le Mary sans femme, pp. viii–viii.
Be that as it may, the première of Le Mariage forcé took place on 29 January 1664 at the Louvre, where a temporary stage had been built by Vigarni in the apartments of the Queen Mother. The King called for a repeat performance on 31 January, and Monsieur invited the company to perform it twice more in his wife's apartments at the Palais-Royal. The Dutch mathematician Christian Huygens, who frequented court entertainments while he was in Paris, gave a brief account of one of these performances:

Last Sunday, I saw at the Louvre the little ballet that was danced in the salon of the Queen Mother. This is a very funny little comedy by Molière which is named Le Mariage forcé, interspersed with ballet entrées and several musical récits performed by Mademoiselle Hilaire [Dupuis] and Signora Anna [Bergerotti]. The King himself dances in it, and I believe that it is being given today for the sixth and last time.

The livret printed for these court performances contains the sung lyrics (except for those of the Concert Espagnol), staging descriptions, a summary of the play's action, and a list of the musicians, dancers, and nobles who danced in the ballet entrées. Alongside the King appeared four high-ranking courtiers (Comte d'Armagnac, Marquis de Villeroi, Marquis de Rassan, Duc de Saint-Aignan), together with seventeen professional baladins (Dolivet, Saint-André, des Brosses, de Longe, Le Chantre, d'Heureux, Beauchamps, Des-Airs le jeune and l’ainé, Raynal, Noblet, La Pierre, Mercier, du Pille, Tartas, La Lanne, Le Duc). Instrumentalists from the Chambre and Écruère (François Pignon [dit Descouteaux]; and Jean, Nicolas, and Louis Hotteterre) played the overture and dance music—presumably along with the Vingt-quatre violons de la Chambre du Roi that customarily performed for court ballets. It is clear from the livret that the ballet was of paramount importance, for the musicians and dancers listed outnumbered the actors by more than four to one. In the spirit of burlesque court ballet, the dance entrées had been designed to feature a cortège of colourful or grotesque characters (see Table 16.1).

It has been tacitly assumed that Molière and Lully were the solo collaborators in this ballet du Roi; and yet, there is evidence that Le Mariage forcé may have incorporated some lyrics and music by others. As shown by the livret, the 'Concert Espagnol' was performed by the Italian musicians of the Cabinet de sa Majesté: Anna Bergerotti (soprano), Paolo Bordigone (bass), Giuseppe Chiariini (contralto castrato), Gian Agostino Poncelli (tenor), Gian Francesco Tagliavacca (tenor), and Angelo Michele Bartolotti (theorist). While the music for this Spanish concert is missing from the existing sources for Le Mariage forcé, its lyrics alone are preserved in the Philidor score (Bibliothèque Nationale, Res. F. 512); however, as

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* According to Registre de La Grange, i. 64, ‘Le même jour mardi 28ème commanç au Louvre devant le Roy dans l’apartement bas de la Reynne mère Le Mariage forcé Comedie Balet.’
* In a letter to Cardinal Rinaldo d’Este, dated 15 Feb. 1664, Carlo Vigarni mentions that he has recently constructed two stages, ‘Toue aux ‘Illustres pour un ballet qu’a donné le Roi (Ballet des Amours dépouvels), l’autre au Louvre pour une mascarade où Sa Majesté a figuré’. See Rouches, Inventaire des lettres et papiers manuscrits de Gasparo, Carlo et Lodovico Vigarni, 88.
* Le lendemain le même Ballet du mariage forcé chez Madame au palais Royal (Registre de La Grange, i. 64; La Grange records that it was repeated on Saturday, 9 Feb.). ‘Madame’ was Henriette, sister of Charles II of England and wife to Philippe d’Orléans, the King’s brother (‘Mouennier’).
* Christian Huygens, letter dated 8 Feb. 1664; cited in Méthée, Répertoire analytique, 122. Huygens’s letter contradicts the known facts, for we have no record of Molière’s troupe performing Le Mariage forcé at the Louvre on the Sunday of 3 Feb. 1664, as Huygens states; nor was this the sixth and last performance given for the royal family.

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Table 16.1 Structure of Le Mariage forcé (1664)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dramatic division</th>
<th>Musical number</th>
<th>Key</th>
<th>Performers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ouverture</td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>5 pt strings, b.c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act 1, sc. 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S populace, Géronimo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act 1, sc. 2</td>
<td>Rétournelle</td>
<td></td>
<td>S populace, Dorimène</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act 2, sc. 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S populace, Géronimo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act 2, sc. 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S populace, Pancrace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act 2, sc. 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S populace, Marphurias</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troisième entrée</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S populace, Géronimo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act 2, sc. 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S populace, 2 Ecuyeresses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act 2, sc. 5</td>
<td>Rétéc d'un Magicien (&quot;Holi! qui va là&quot;)</td>
<td>g</td>
<td>S populace, bass, b.c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act 3, sc. 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S populace, Alcantor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act 3, sc. 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S populace, Lycante</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act 3, sc. 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S populace, Alcantor, Lycante</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinquième entrée</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S populace, 5 pt strings, b.c., 4 dancers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act 3, sc. 4 [lost]</td>
<td>Rétournelle</td>
<td></td>
<td>S populace, Géronimo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act 3, sc. 4 [lost]</td>
<td>Concert espagnol [lost] (&quot;Ziego me tiens, Belisa&quot;)</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 pt strings, b.c., 7 singers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act 3, sc. 4 [lost]</td>
<td>Menestra pour deux Espagnoles et deux Espagnoles</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>5 pt strings, b.c., 2 Espagnoles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act 3, sc. 4 [lost]</td>
<td>Un Charivari grotesque: Rondeau</td>
<td>g</td>
<td>5 pt strings, b.c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act 3, sc. 4 [lost]</td>
<td>Deuxième Air pour les mêmes</td>
<td>g</td>
<td>5 pt strings, b.c., 4 Galants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act 3, sc. 4 [lost]</td>
<td>Gavotte pour quatre Galants cajolant la femme</td>
<td>g</td>
<td>5 pt strings, b.c., 4 Galants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act 3, sc. 4 [lost]</td>
<td>Bouffée pour les autres</td>
<td>g</td>
<td>5 pt strings, b.c., 4 Galants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lully was hostile toward the Italian faction at court during this time, it seems
doubtful that he had composed the music. Furthermore, the lyrics for the
‘Récit de la Beauté’ appear in Perrin’s later manuscript *Recueil de Paroles de
musique* (where they are entitled ‘récit pour un Ballet du Roy, chanté par Mademoiselle Hilaire representant la Beauté’, but without attribution to Molière); 11 hence, it
would seem that this récit was written by Perrin.

The similarity of Molière’s plot to a real-life incident no doubt contributed to
the popularity of *Le Mariage forcé* at court. Louis XIV had recently banished
Philibert, the Comte de Grammont, for the attentions that the courtier had paid
to Louise de La Vallière, the King’s mistress. Philibert thereupon went to the
English court, where he became engaged to Elizabeth Hamilton, granddaughter
of the Duke of Ormond. When at last he was allowed to return to France,
Philibert would have deserted the lady, were it not for the intervention of her two
brothers, who intercepted Philibert at Dover. According to the story, when the
brothers caught sight of Philibert they shouted ‘Comte de Grammont, Comte de
Grammont, have you not forgotten something in London?’ ‘Pardon me,’ the
Count replied, guessing at their meaning; ‘I forgot to marry your sister, and I will
return with you to complete this affair.’ 12 This was perfect material for farce, and
few courtiers would have overlooked the resemblance between the fate of
Philibert and that of Molière’s hapless bachelor, Signesarell.

 Shortly after the court performances, Molière premièred *Le Mariage forcé* at the
Théâtre du Palais-Royal on 15 February 1664, where it received twelve perfor-
mancess ‘avec le ballet et les ornementst’. La Grange listed in his *Registre* (I. 142–3)
a daily expense of 109 livres for music and dance (in excess of the ordinary oper-
ating expenses), as well as a payment of 550 livres to Pierre Beauchamps ‘pour
faire le Ballet’. By comparing these figures with those recorded in *Le Second
Registre de La Thorillière*, we can calculate that Molière’s troupe employed 12
violins, 9 dancers, 1 singer, probably 4 oboes, and 3 tambours de basque for the Paris
performances. Although the comédie-ballet was without doubt a popular success,
these frais extraordinaires substantially reduced the profit margin and, hence,
affect each actor’s share of the receipts (see Fig. 16.1). After the tenth perfor-
mancess (Friday, 7 March 1664), for instance, the company took in only 200 livres,
and so each full share amounted to a meagre 2 livres 5 sous. The production
closed after two more performances. While the Troupe de Monsieur presented
*Le Mariage forcé* once more at court (on 13 May 1664) within the context of *Les
Plaisirs de l’Isle enchantée*, the comédie-ballet would never be seen again at the
Palais-Royal in its original version.

13 *Opéra italien à la cour de France*, 310–11.
14 *Opéra italien à la cour de France*, 310–11.
15 *Opéra italien à la cour de France*, 310–11.
Molière's comedy focuses on Sganarelle, a middle-aged bachelor who is anxious about his forthcoming marriage to the young coquette Dorimène. On the one hand, he desires companionship and children; but on the other, he fears being made a cuckold. Géronimo advises his friend not to think of marriage; but realizing that his advice is falling on deaf ears, he gives Sganarelle his approval. Sganarelle then meets up with his betrothed, who informs him that their pending marriage will finally free her from parental authority and provide her with the opportunity to pursue her own pleasures. Dorimène then leaves on a shopping spree, intending to send the bills to her future husband (1.2).

The episode that follows depicts a world of dreams and allegory, where Sganarelle is presented with symbolic warnings of his impending fate through song and pantomime. According to the 1664 livret, 'Sganarelle is left alone, rather stunned; he complains after this discourse of a heaviness weighing on his head, and going to a corner of the stage to sleep he sees a woman while dreaming...who sings this récit'. This vision is Beauty personified, an idealization of his fiancée Dorimène, who exhorts Sganarelle to choose someone more worthy of his suffering. The persistent dotted rhythmic figure, the reiterated vocal accent, and the 7-6 suspensions over a descending bass-line give an aural image of love's chains—which arrive at a half-cadence on 'plein d'appas' (Ex. 16.1). A more ingratia ting rhythmic figure in the second half of the air makes these 'belles chaînes' seem more appealing, even though the harmonic sequences lead to a 'beau trêpas' in B flat Major. The closing measures dwell on the words 'mourir' and 'trêpas', which occur no less than seven times in twelve measures and which resonate with portent for Sganarelle—who will soon have to choose between a 'beau trêpas' with Dorimène or else a distasteful alternative at the hands of her bloodthirsty brother. In his 1668 revision Molière underscored the bachelor's pending fate with an added scene, wherein Sganarelle overhears his fiancée and her lover Lycaste 'en tête à tête', planning their future together after his anticipated demise.

An allegorical dance of 'La Jalousie, les Chagrins, et les Soupçons' reveals through figurative expression the inner torments of the lover who ignores Beauty's advice (first entrée). This is immediately followed by another entrée of 'Quatre Plaisants ou Goguenards' ('jesters or scoffers') who make fun of the bachelor's foolishness—and this dance prefigures the eighth entrée, where four gallants will flirt with Dorimène at the wedding reception. Through song, symbolism, and pantomime, the audience discovers that Sganarelle's fate—perhaps even his death—is sealed. These surreal manifestations of Sganarelle's fantaisies magnify his folly, while at the same time they provide the spectator with both intellectual and sensual pleasure.

*comèdie-ballet it remains unclear to the end whether Sganarelle's suspicions are founded, or are merely the product of an over-active imagination.*
The dream-sequence ends abruptly when Sganarelle's friend Géronimo wakes him, and encourages him to tell of his dream. While in the comédie-ballet (2. 1) Sganarelle claims to understand nothing of dreams, in the 1668 version (sc. 3) he ponders their significance ('You know, dreams are like mirrors, in which one can sometimes discover all that will happen to us'). Next, Sganarelle seeks professional council from two learned philosophers, neither of whom listens to what he has to say. The consultation with Pancrace, an Aristotelian philosopher, results in a kind of semantic pas de deux (2. 2). Unable to gain the first philosopher's attention, Sganarelle then approaches the Pyrrhonion philosopher Marphuriaus; but, having been driven to distraction by the sceptic's incertitude, Sganarelle assaults him—and then disputes whether or not the beating ever took place (2. 3). Afterwards, Sganarelle comes upon a troupe of dancing gypsies, and requests that two gypsy girls tell his fortune. When asked whether or not he will become a cuckold, the gypsies taunt Sganarelle and avoid answering him by singing and dancing (third entrée).

After the gypsies leave, Sganarelle meets up with a magician who sings his responses to Sganarelle’s questions in recitative (see Ex. 7.15). When asked if he is to be a cuckold, the magician conjures up four demons and, after making their hideous forms more acceptable to Sganarelle, he tells Sganarelle that these demons will answer with 'intelligible signs'. As the magician and the four demons dance the fourth entrée, the latter pantomime cuckold's horns. Like the allegorical figures of the earlier dream-sequence, these supernatural beings also communicate through music, metaphor, and gesture—a language that Sganarelle clearly does not comprehend. As Sganarelle turns to the occult for advice and reassurance, we see how far he has become divorced from sanity and common sense. The G minor tonality of the first and third entrées relates the world of the gypsies, magician, and demons to the inner reality of Sganarelle's dreams. As in the dream sequence, where a shift of mode to the parallel major for the second entrée brought the reality of Sganarelle's anxieties ('jealousy, chagrins, and suspicions') into focus ('jesters or scroffers'), here the demons of the fourth entrée likewise deliver their pantomimic oracle in the relative major key.

By Act 3, Sganarelle is convinced of his mistake, and he goes to Dorimène's father, Alcantor, to call off the wedding. At first Sganarelle is hardly allowed to get a word in; but when he does, Alcantor proclaims that he has nothing more to say to him, and will send him his response forthwith. This response arrives in the form of Dorimène's brother (Lycaon in the 1664 comédie-ballet, Alcidas in the 1668 revision) who, with exaggerated politeness, challenges Sganarelle to a duel to the death.17 As in the episode with the philosophers, this linguistic ballet

14 In his 1668 revisions, Molière moved the episode of the singing and dancing gypsy fortune-tellers to sc. 6, see above, n. 14.

17 Tradition has it that Molière based this character on the Marquis de La Tronse, who was always overly polite and apologetic when killing an opponent in a duel.
Comtesse d'Escarbagnas and Le Mariage forcé opened on 8 July 1672 for a highly successful run of fourteen performances. Parisians flocked to this musical production, even though the Troupe du Roy charged double for the first four performances; when the ticket prices dropped to normal on 17 July, the audience tripled in size to a record 687, the largest attendance of any comedy of the season. La Grange entered the following note in his Registre: 

"N.B. That Le Mariage forcé, which was performed with La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas, was accompanied with ornaments—for which M. Charpentier composed the music, M. de Beauchamps [choreographed] the ballets, M. de Baraillon [designed] the costumes, and M. de Villiers was used in the music of the interludes.' Molière had recently recruited Jean Deschamps, Sieur de Villiers, partly for his ability to sing in musical productions. The names of two other singers (Forestier, a tenor, and Le Roy, a bass) along with the number of dancers and instrumentalists are known to us, thanks to a second register kept by the actor André Hubert. A later entry in Hubert's Registre shows that a young singer named Mlle Turpin performed the role of the singing gypsy.

A slight, one-act play in nine scenes, La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas dramatizes the foolishness of a provincial noblewoman who, after returning from a two-month visit to Paris, is eager to associate with persons of quality. Eager to imitate 'les grands airs de Versailles' and the intellectual pursuits of précieuse society, the Countess maltreats her servants, scorns provincial manners and customs, and trusts in her beauty, youth, and breeding to enamour a young Viscount. In fact, the Viscount has come to court not the Countess, but her young protégée Julie, and has arranged for an entertainment to be given for Julie in the Countess's home. When the actors send word in sc. 7 that they are ready to begin the play, the Viscount cautions that 'it is necessary to say that this comedy has been written only to connect together the different pieces of music and dance, of which they wished to compose this divertissement, and that ...', but the countess interrupts, saying 'My God! let us see the affair: we have enough intelligence to understand such things'. A staging rubric directs that the play is to begin 'after the violins have played something, and the audience is seated'. The performance is interrupted on two occasions: when one of the Countess's suitors arrives, argues, and breaks off with her (sc. 8), and when a letter arrives in sc. 9 which results in the engagement of Julie and the Viscount, and leads to the denouement of the play—after which the characters again turn their attention to the remainder of the spectacle.

La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas and Le Mariage forcé are allied by the common theme of the protagonists' misplaced affections: indeed, the romantic triangle of Le Mariage forcé (Sganarelle—Dorimède—Lycaste) is a mirror reflection (with gender reversal) of that of La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas (the Countess—the Viscount–Julie). The 1664 comédie-ballet format would have allowed Le Mariage forcé to be performed in three instalments—after scenes 7, 8, and 9 of La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas. Unfortunately, no livret survives from the 1672 performances, and so the order and placement of Charpentier's musical numbers listed in Table 16.2 is hypothetical.

Common sense dictates where many of Charpentier's musical numbers would occur within the dramatic context of Molière's play. Obviously, the 'Ouverture de La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas' introduces the framing play, whereas the dance 'Les Marys' evidently precedes the first act of Le Mariage forcé, given that the inscription 'intermèdes nouveaux du Mariage forcé à Molière' ('new interludes for Le Mariage forcé by Molière') heads the music following 'Les Marys'. Most likely, this dance was played in scene 7 while the Countess and her guests took their seats. The dance-pantomime 'Le Songe' clearly belongs to the dream-sequence found at the end of Act 1 of Le Mariage forcé, just as 'Les Boemiennes: Sarabande' must be part of the gypsy fortune-telling scene. However, the placement of the other vocal numbers and dances remains a matter for conjecture.

The question of authorship of these 'intermèdes nouveaux' has often been raised. Moland first discovered them in Charpentier's manuscripts and published them in his complete edition of Molière's works, but with the following disclaimer: 'I would not dare take it upon myself to place the signature of Molière below these fragments which, after all, are anonymous.' Despois and Mesnard also included some of them with other 'Poesies diverses attribuées' in their monumental edition of Molière's complete works. On the grounds of their supposedly inferior literary quality, both editions attribute the burlesque lyrics of the 'La
la la la bonjour’ trio to Charpentier. Georges Couton, however, has no reservations about crediting Molière with all the ‘intermèdes nouveaux’ lyrics: ‘we do not see why he would have entrusted them to someone else and, given the competency of these verses, nothing stops us from attributing them to him.’

Furthermore, there is some evidence that the lyrics of at least one song derive from the fifth entrée of 'Le Ballet des Nations' (the balletic conclusion to Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme), which includes a sung minuet that resembles ‘Les Boemienes, Sarabande’.

‘Le Ballet des nations’, (1670), fifth entrée
Ahl qu’il fait beau dans ces Bocages
Ahl que le Ciel donne un beau jour!
Le Rossignol sous ces tendres feuillages
Chante aux Echos son doux retour:
Ce beau séjour, ces doux ramages,
Ce beau séjour nous invite à l’Amour.

Le Mariage forcé (1672), ‘Les Boemienes, Sarabande’
Les rossignols, dans leurs tendres ramages,
Du doux printemps annoncent le retour.
Tout refleurt, tout rit en ces bocages
Ahl belle Iris, le beau temps! le beau jour!
Si tu voulais m’accorder ton amour!
Si tu voulais imiter leur amour!

Here, the later text seems to imitate (1) the imagery—with its nightingales, its woods, and the return of spring and love, (2) the verse-structure and end-rhymes (ramages, retour, bocages, jour, amour), and (3) the parallelism of the final rhyming couplet. This would appear to be an instance of self-borrowing, which lends support to the hypothesis that Molière wrote all the lyrics of the ‘intermèdes nouveaux’.

Molière and Lully had designed their 1664 comédie-ballet around a succession of varied ballet entrées that derived from traditional burlesque ballet. Moreover, as one of two ballets du Roy organized for Carnival of 1664 (the other was the Ballet des Amours désunisés), Le Mariage forcé allowed for the participation of Louis XIV and his courtiers in the second, third, and eighth entrées. That a total of twenty-one noble and professional dancers performed in twelve dances confirms the essentially balletic orientation of the original comédie-ballet. Molière’s and Charpentier’s 1672 revision, on the other hand, was intended for the spectators who frequented the Théâtre du Palais-Royal (servants, students, tradesmen, writers, and aristocrats). It therefore struck a more even balance between vocal music and ballet (five songs, five dances), and replaced the allegorical, pastoral, and exotic ballet entrées with musical intermèdes of a more popular character. Only the gypsies were left in the 1672 version, for their fortune-telling scene remained integral to the main action.

The ‘intermèdes nouveaux’, however, retained a thematic connection with the play. Charpentier’s replacement number, ‘Le Songe’ (see Ex. 16.2), is a duple-

metre dance of dreamlike character—with its reiterated dotted ‘funeral’ rhythms, its conjunct motion in all parts, and its wandering tonality (D minor, moving to F major in m. 4, and arriving on a half-cadence in m. 8). In fact, the dotted-note motive in the violin part, with its upper neighbour accent on the eighth-note, is related to Lully’s ‘Récit de la Beauté’ (Ex. 16.1). No doubt Beauchamps’s choreography also expressed its nightmarish character, and explored Sganarelle’s marital anxieties through figured expression. The lyrics of Charpentier’s songs address the concerns that weigh most heavily on the old bachelor’s mind: marriage transforming wives into deceitful shrews (‘Mon compère en bonne foy’, ‘Belle ou laide il n’importe guère’) who pose the ever-present threat of cuckoldry (‘Ah, quelle estrange extravagance!’).

In particular, the Trio grotesque (‘Amants aux cheveux gris’) dramatizes Sganarelle’s ongoing mental debate by means of three allegorical figures. The
tenor portrays the voice of reason, and offers a counterpoint to the common-
sense advice Géronimo offered Sganarelle in the first scene of the play:

GÉRONIMO. ... and I will tell you frankly and in friendship, since you have made me
promise, that marriage is hardly for you. It is a thing that young people must ponder
in depth before doing; but men of your age should not consider it at all; and if it is said
that the greatest folly of all is to marry, I see nothing more inappropriate than to com-
mit this folly in the time of life when we should be wiser.

An haute-contre, on the other hand, personifies the voice of Sganarelle’s libido—
reassuring the middle-aged ‘barbon’ that it is not unusual to fall in love late in life.
The latter, suitably portrayed by a bass, agrees with him, and his sprightly dance-
rhythms culminate in an athletic hemiola-cadence, implying that he still has the
viriety and stamina to satisfy feminine needs. But the tenor warns Sganarelle, in
finger-wagging dotted rhythms, not to take a young wife, for he will soon disgust
her. All three then join in close imitation (‘Vous les rebutez, vous les desgoustez’) and
progress through the circle-of-fifths to a homophonic cadence of reversion
(mm. 23–31). After a pregnant pause, the trio predicts that such an unnatural
union can only lead to infidelity, and in mm. 42–3 the growth of cuckold’s horns
is drawn to comic length in the haute-contre and tenor parts (Ex. 16.3).39

The gypsies’ dance-song (‘Les Boemiennes, Sarabande’)40 presents a more optimis-
tic view of nature in its proper balance. Its lyrics depict the arrival of spring
and life in the pastoral world, where the nightingales herald spring’s return,
Flora basks in Zephyr’s kisses, and Iris and Sylvie (i.e. idealized shepherdesses)
should follow nature’s example. In the world ruled by nature’s laws, love appears
in its proper season:

C’est blesser la loi naturelle
De laisser passer des moments
Que l’on peut se rendre si charmants.
La saison du printemps parait belle,
Et tous ans sont riants tous comme elle;
Mais il faut y metter la douceur des amours,
Et sans eux il n’est point de beaux jours.

However, these merry pursuits are intended for the young, and Sganarelle’s
obsession with wedding a woman half his age goes contrary to ‘la loi naturelle’.

39 This musical portrayal of three nameless, abstract personas recalls that of Act I, scene 2 of Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme,
where the differing philosophies of three pastoral archetypes were presented and reconciled in a vocal trio (see Chapter
11, pp. 213–14). The thematic relationship of these passages argues in support of Molière’s authorship of the ‘Intermèdes
nouveaux’ lyrics.

40 Coutou’s ed. (Œuvres complètes i. 1319) states that ‘Les Boemiennes, Sarabande’ is a trio of sopranos, but we know
the name of only one singer who participated (Robine’s ‘la petite Turpin’). Moreover, Charpentier’s MS score suggests
that only the uppermost part was sung, probably as an accompanied solo; for fuller discussion, see this author’s Musici
Ancêtres: Charpentier’s Music for Molière’s Comedies, pp. 1–6.
Sganarelle’s enquiries by singing nonsense (‘La, la, la, la’). Words become further divorced from meaning when Dorimène’s brother enforces his murderous challenge to Sganarelle in polite compliments. The ‘La la la bonjour’ trio completes this process, as language degenerates into animal calls and onomatopoeic gibberish—eschewing sense for the purely musical qualities of verbal sound.

Charpentier’s musical setting also mirrors this escape from reason and sanity into the world of the absurd. As the three singers ‘unsheath’ their voices, they deliberate upon what to sing, and settle on nonsense (see Ex. 16.4). Ensemble pitter-singing projects the frenetic sense of ‘Fagotons, à tort et à travers, de méchants vers’ (‘Let us rattle off haphazardly some wretched verse’). A shift to longer note-values and minor mode accompanies the change to elegiac verses (m. 3), followed by the scurrying sixteenth-note rhythms and the major mode of
the short verses—which cadence in C (m. 4), and immediately ('point de rime, et point de raison') modulate to B flat (m. 5). Quick changes of metre and key mimic this linguistic anarchy ('tout bruit forme mélodie'), while a short point of imitation in mechanical rhythms (mm. 12–20) accompanies the nonsense polyglot of French, Latin, and galimatias. Later on, passages of cloying chromaticism underscore the saccharine irony of 'Oh, the lovely concert, and the sweet harmony!'

Compared with the moral truisms of 'Les Beminiens, Sarabande' (with

Ex. 16.4
Molière, Le Mariage forcé (rev. 1672)
Marc-Antoine Charpentier
(after F-Pn, Ms. Rés. VmI 259, XVI)

Footnote:
Maizser ('Molière et Marc-Antoine Charpentier', 154–5) provides an excellent analysis of the 'La la la la bonne' trio, in which he shows how its comic musical language (featuring parodic repetitions by the lowest voice, scouring through certain words after passages in regular rhythm, canonic entries, echo effects, metric changes, rhythmic oppositions) derives stylistically from the 'Trio grotesque'.
ALLUSION AND PARODY IN LULLY’S AND CHARPENTIER’S MUSIC TO LE SICILIEN

When the Queen Mother died in January 1666, Louis XIV cancelled the royal fêtes for that year. Temporarily set free from its usual Carnival obligations at court, the Troupe du Roy closed the Théâtre du Palais-Royal until 21 February 1666. During this hiatus, Molière wrote two of his finest comedies: Le Misanthrope and Le Médecin malgré lui. By December the period of official mourning at court had ended, and Louis XIV commanded Berserade, Molière, and Lully to prepare a grand divertissement for that winter. The Troupe du Roy travelled to Saint-Germain-en-Laye, where it remained with the court for nearly three months (from 1 December 1666 until 20 February 1667), during which time the actors repeatedly performed in the Ballet des Muses.

Le Sicilien, ou l’Amour peindre was the fourteenth and final entrée that was added to the Ballet des Muses toward the end of these performances. It seems to have evolved out of an exotic ‘Scene of the Moors’ that Robinet tells us was first introduced on 5 February 1667. Judging by the following account in the Gazette, it was expanded for the next two performances to include ‘two new entrées of Turks and Moors, which were set to music; the latter was accompanied by the most entertaining French comedy’. The former entrée ‘no doubt refers to the dances of the Turkish slaves found in scene 6 of Le Sicilien, while the original Moorish scene became the concluding mascarade danced by Maures and Mauresques of qualité’ (that is, Louis XIV and his couriers).

32 Marrou (‘Molière et Marc-Antoine Charpentier’, 149) suggests that this trio replaced Lully’s ‘Cherubini grotesque’ and was indeed performed for Sganarelle’s wedding celebration.
33 Registre de La Grente, 1: 81.
34 Based on the five different versions of the ballet livre printed by Ballard, Anthony has traced no fewer than six different versions of the divertissement as it evolved during the three months of performances; see Anthony, ‘More facts than Poetics’, 356-44. Silin (Berserade and his Balles de Cour, 359-79) provides much of the documentation from the Gazette and from Robinet’s Lettres. Other important studies of the Ballet des Muses include that of Fournel, Contemporanea de Moliera, ii; Drope and Meurant in their edn. of Ouvres de Moliera, vi; Guibert, Bibliographie des Ouvres de Moliera, ii, 496-502; and Chrestien, Le Ballet du cour de Louis XIV, 113-14.
35 ‘Le grand Balles s’yan danse encorees, | Avec une Scene de Mores, | Scene nouvelle & qui vraiment | Plait, dit on, merveilleusement’ (Robinet, Letter of 13 Feb. 1667; quoted in Silin, Berserade and his Balles de Cour, 567).
36 Gazette, 21 (18 Feb. 1667), 172-6.

The livret printed for the final court performances of Le Ballet des Muses includes a summary of the action for each scene of Le Sicilien, the text of the sung lyrics (see Table 16.3), and the names of the cast and the noble participants. As mentioned earlier (Chapter 11, pp. 203-4), the serenade sung by three ‘musiciens turcs’ playing lovesick shepherds (‘Si du triste récit’) was most likely a parody of Perrin’s Pastoral d’Issy. On the other hand, the inspiration for the Turkish interlude of scene 6 was very likely the final intermède of Montfeuille’s exotic musical comedy Le Mary sans femme (1663). This musical finale features an accompanied bass song (‘O Giornata fortunata’) which may have served as Molière’s model for the ‘Chiribirida ouch allal’ refrain (see Exx. 7.5 and 7.6). The Sabir lyrics of both songs consist of short, irregular lines, repeated words and phrases, and masculine
rhymes. However, even more striking are the musical similarities, for both are double continuo *airs de mouvement* for bass voice, accompanied by two obligato instruments. The drooping melodic phrases, circular sequential progressions, and syllabic patter-singing endow the music settings with a pseudo-Turkish flavour (for further discussion of Turkish musical exoticism, see Chapter 7, pp. 91–7).

After the première of *Le Sicilien* at court, Molière waited four months before he transferred it to the Palais-Royal. There seem to have been several causes for this delay: the six-week Lenten break, the company’s première of Corneille’s *Attila* and de Visé’s *La Veuve à la mode*, and interruptions in the performing schedule that may have been due to Molière’s illness. When *Le Sicilien* finally appeared on a double bill with *Attila* on 10 June 1667, the daily receipts were disappointing: the first six performances brought in from 95 to 188 livres, barely enough to pay the daily *frais ordinaires* and *extraordinaires* (see Fig. 16.2). The receipts improved somewhat on 17 June when the company performed *Le Sicilien* with Corneille’s *Rodogune*, and then later on a double bill with another comedies by Molière: *L’Amour médecin*, *Le Médecin malgré lui*, or *Le Coucher de soleil*. Abraharn seems certain that *Le Sicilien* was given in Paris stripped of all its ‘ornaments’ of music and dance, and he implies that this was the reason for its lukewarm reception; but Robinet confirms in his letter of 12 June 1667 that he saw *Le Sicilien* performed at the Palais-Royal with its ballet entrées (‘which were highly regarded’). At any rate, that the first run of *Le Sicilien* lasted for seventeen performances points to a measure of its success on the public stage that has not been sufficiently acknowledged.

The following November Molière published *Le Sicilien* as a one-act play—retaining its one-act format, but assigning separate scene numbers to the interludes of song and dance. Moreover, we can see that Molière reduced the Turkish element in the first edition. The pastoral serenade (‘Si du triste récit’) is now performed by Adraste’s lackeys; the lovesong to Isidore (‘D’un coeur ardent’), previously sung by an unnamed Turkish slave, is now sung by Hali; and Adraste’s pretended wife Zaide (who we might presume was Turkish) is now played by his sister Clémence. As Molière’s first edition reproduced all the sung lyrics and rubrics referring to the dances, it would appear that the Paris production retained more or less all of Lully’s original music.

After the initial 1667 performance-run, the Troupe du Roy performed *Le Sicilien* only intermittently during the following decade. On 15 November 1669 it appeared on a double bill with another short *comédie-ballet*, *Monsieur de Pourcareugnac*, and on 24–6 May 1671 the Troupe du Roy paired it with Molière’s latest comedy, *Les Fourberies de Scapin*. Thereafter, *Le Sicilien* was not revived until 1679, when the reorganized Troupe du Roy performed it eleven times at the Hôtel de Guénégaud, first with Racine’s *Mithridate* (9 and 13 June 1679) and then with Racine’s *Phèdre* (16, 18, and 20 June 1679), and lastly with Molière’s *Monstre de Pourcareugnac*. This latter required similar musical and balletic resources, and so the two *comédies-ballets* could share the same singers and dancers.

For this 1679 revival, the actors seem to have commissioned Charpentier to compose a new musical score. Charpentier’s music is found in his ‘Mélanges autographes’, where it carries the title *Serenade pour Le Sicilien*. This title, however, gives a false impression of the amount of music actually included in the composer’s manuscripts: namely, a French overture, two songs, an accompanied duet, a ritornello, and a dance. Another source for the vocal numbers alone is a printed volume entitled *Recueil complet de vaudevilles et airs choisis qui ont été chantés à la Comédie-Française depuis l’année 1659* (Paris: aux adresses ordinaires, 376 MUSIC AND THE THEATRE OF MOÎLÈRE

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**Fig. 16.2. The First Run of *Le Sicilien* (10 June to 24 July 1667)**

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37 *Depuis hier, par excellence, on en a pour divertissement* | *Le Sicilien, que Molière, à sa charmante manière* | *meilleur danse du Ballet du Roy* | *et qu’on admirera, sur ma foi* | *Il y furent aussi des entrées* qui furent considérables | *dans ledit ravissant Ballet* (Robinet, letter of 12 June 1667, in Rochuschild (ed.), *Les Contemporains de Lully*, ii. 878).
39 *This is confirmed by the accounts for the 1679 performance run—where the combined ‘frais extraordinaires des deux pièces’ (Le Sicilien and *Monsieur de Pourcareugnac*) amounted to 45 livres 10 sols.*
40 Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Ms. Réserve* Vm°* 239, XVII, fols. 92r–32r. Charpentier’s music for *Le Sicilien* appears in modern edn. in this author’s *Marc-Antoine Charpentier: Music for Molière’s Comedies*. 
1753), where on p. 4 appears the title 'Air ajouté au Sicilien en 1695, Charpentier'. I believed initially that this heading disproved the 1679 date that Hitchcock assigned to Charpentier's music for Le Sicilien, particularly when further investigation in the XXII Registre des Comédiens du Roy (19 April 1694–19 March 1695) confirmed that an eleven-performance revival of Le Sicilien took place at the Comédie-Française during January and February 1695. Moreover, a second account kept by the Comédie-Française for the 1694–5 season (Le Petit Registre) lists payments made to 9 dancers, 1 singer, and 1 harpsichordist. Nevertheless, Patricia Runam's recent research on paper-brands and watermarks proves that Charpentier copied the Sérénade pour le Sicilien into his 'Mélanges autographes' around the time of the 1679 summer revival at the Théâtre de Guénégaud.44

As mentioned earlier, Charpentier's music includes a French-style overture, two vocal solos (separated by an instrumental ritornello), a sung duet, and a dance. The placement of the numbers can be deduced to an extent from the dramatic context: the two airs ('Beauté, dont la rigueur' and 'Voulez-vous, beauté bizarre') and the duet ('Heureux, matous! que votre sort est doux!') evidently replaced Lully's original pastoral serenade, while the dance 'Esclaves du Sicilien' no doubt substituted for Lully's dance 'Les Esclaves'. However, Charpentier's score fails to supply music in three places where Molière's play requires it. Hali's song 'D'un coeur ardent' is integral to the plot, for this is the means by which the valet informs Isidore d'Adraste's plans to see her; and Dom Pétrœ's comic response 'Savez-vous, mes dores' also lacks music. Lastly, Charpentier's score provides no music for the concluding Moorsish masquade.

The replacement numbers provided by Charpentier expand on themes inherent in the play's text, and offer a parodic antithesis of Lully's original musical numbers. Unlike Lully's serenade (described by Hali as a 'scène d'une petite comédie'), the first three vocal numbers in Charpentier's score comprise an actual serenade. Whereas Lully's pastoral drama is set in a wood in broad daylight, Charpentier's burlesque serenade takes place in the city streets at night. In Lully's serenade the lady is deaf to her lover's entreaties due to indifference, while in Charpentier's the lady is asleep, and is therefore deaf to the plaints of the singers (to which her snores 'form the base-continue'). Lully's 'oiseaux réjouis' who sing in the forest at daybreak become Charpentier's 'triste rossignol' who sings in minor at nightfall ('Voulez-vous, beauté bizarre'). The lyrics for both serenades describe a harsh mistress as a 'tigresse'. However, while Lully's third shepherd can also become a tiger when crossed ('Pauvres amans, quelle erreur'), Charpentier's unhappy lovers enviously compare their sorry lots to that of the feisty but fortunate tomacat, who would never consider singing his 'joyous miasus' in the minor mode ('Heureux, matous! que votre sort est doux'). Unlike Lully's shepherds, who remain inconsolable to the end, Charpentier's serenaders resolve that love is not worth the humiliation when the lady vents her spleen by overturning a chamber-pot onto their heads.

Charpentier's music also seems to parody Lully's original 'scène de comédie chanâée'. The parallels between Lully's duet ('Heureux, heureux, hélas! qui peut aimer ainsi') and Charpentier's duet ('Heureux, heureux matous, que votre sort est doux') extend beyond similarities of verse-structure and word-repetition. Not only is the rhythm of the vocal lines identical, but both upper parts span a melodic descent from e' to a (albeit with different harmonizations and ornamentation). The quotation of Lully's vocal duet in Charpentier's ritournelle is even more striking, where the melodic contour of the desus and haute-contre instrumental parts move in parallel thirds with similar harmonization during the last three measures (see Ex. 16.f-a-e). Likewise, Charpentier's 'Esclaves du Sicilien' resembles Lully's 'Les Esclaves' in both length (twenty-four measures) and in rhythmical character.

The 1679 revival of Le Sicilien at the Hôtel de Guénégaud presented in effect a comic transformation of Lully's original music for the comédie-ballet. One need not look far for the reason why Charpentier and Molière's former actors would wish to satirize Lully. Charpentier was a friend of Molière's brother-in-law, André Boudet, who helped the Troupe du Rohy acquire the Guénégaud theatre after Lully forced them out of the Palais-Royal. Charpentier was a protégé of Mme de Guise, who had seen to it that Perrin's debts were paid so that the hapless poet could stay out of prison. He evidently was a distant cousin of Robert Cambert, who became persona non grata after Lully took over the opera privilege. Lastly, he was also a relative of Henri Guichard, who together with Sablères had purchased two-thirds of Perrin's opera privilege, which became null and void when Lully
took it over. Charpentier and the Troupe de Guénégaud therefore clearly enjoyed making fun of Lully, on behalf of all these people whom Lully had thwarted over the years.

I am indebted to Patricia Ranum for pointing out these many connections to me in a private letter, dated 14 Feb. 1992.