MUSIC IN THE EARLY MYTHOLOGICAL PASTORALE

The adventures of the gods, demigods, and legendary heroes of classical mythology constitute a separate tradition from that of the Arcadian pastorale, with its own theatrical and musical conventions. To begin, the Aristotelian unities—first introduced in Mairiet's Silvanire (1630) and consciously applied to later French drama—in general do not obtain here. As regular tragedy became increasingly more psychological, more strict in its observance of the unities, and hence more vraisemblable, it dispensed with the spectacular and the marvellous aspects. These elements of the supernatural, of miraculous movements through the air of chariots, clouds, and gods, of elaborate scenery and frequent scene-changes, of magical feats and Ovidian metamorphoses, were all banished from serious drama. A void was left, to be filled by the mythological pastorale.

Whereas the Arcadian pastorale dealt with the adventures of shepherds and shepherdesses in a bucolic setting, in which the gods of mythology would occasionally intervene as décex machina, the mythological pastorale took a less realistic level as its point of departure. These classical fables lent themselves to visual and musical embellishment, without undue concern for dramatic verisimilitude. The sensuous effects of music, dance, and décor combined in re-creating a pre-Christian fantasy-world, where scenes of Ovidian transformation, divine epiphany, and apotheosis become part of everyday reality. On the practical level, music accompanies supernatural events in order to disguise the mechanical noise of winches and pulleys. However, the association of music with the merveilleux also has a philosophical basis, for it reflects the Platonic ideal that music originates in the heavens, and is representative of universal concord and cosmic order. Hence, different styles of song and dance would aid in delineating a pastoral social order comprised of gods and demigods, divinities of the forests and streams, and nymphs and shepherds.

While the gods and goddesses of the mythological pastorale often converse in song, mortal music-making would generally be reserved for those occasions in which ordinary people sing and dance in real-life. Choral music in the mythological pastorale, reserved for communal expression, frequently assumes a theurgic function. The mortal inhabitants of the pastoral landscape would join their voices in song to invoke the gods, to attract their benign influence or to appease their wrath, to sing their praises, to practice their sacrificial rites, or to perform musical celebrations in their honour.

Nicolas de Montreux's L'Arnème, ou le Berger désespéré marked a significant development in the dramatic pastorale in France at the turn of the seventeenth century. The plot revolves around a standard chain of lovers (Cloridane loves Clorice, who loves Arnimé, who loves Alphize, who is beloved both by Floridor and by the magician Cicirmente), an attempted suicide, a sleep-scene, and a recognition scene. Montreux places special importance on the merveilleux—enchanted fountains, apparitions, magic potions, and sudden transformations. First produced at great expense (4,000 écus) at the château of the Duc de Mercœur, near Nantes, L'Arnème was clearly inspired by Italian pastorales with intermedii, which were becoming known in France through the performances of the Gelosi, the Accesi, and other visiting commedia dell'arte companies.

Montreux's preface provides many important details with regard to the lavish staging of the original production. A perspective stage was erected in the main hall of the château, and featured four central pentagons with a different view painted on each of the five sides. Rotation of the pentagons by means of a connecting screw under the stage revealed to the audience five different scenes, corresponding to the single setting of the pastoral and its four intermèdes. On either side of the pentagons were represented fixed locales: a magician's cave from which evil spirits would be summoned; and a rock, from which the magician would conjure flames, water, flowers, and living beings at the touch of his wand. Above the stage was shown a starry sky, which would open up to allow for the descent or ascent of a god. In the tradition of the intermedii non apparenti, the

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1 Monstrier (Des Representations en musique, 6-7) lists some of these occasions in which ordinary people might sing in real-life: 'mauvet, when they are alone to soothe the fatigue of the road; laboratories in the middle of the fields, sailors on the sea, shepherds while watching their flocks, artisans in their studios, and by these means all seek to dispel from themselves part of the boredom that the continuation of a single task brings on. This use of song that nature seems to have introduced into the world in order to soothe the trivial and tribulations of life became imperceptibly a sign of celebration among the first peoples. We sing at the birth of princes, at their weddings, at their solemn entries into cities, for festivities and in temples, at triumphs and at funerals, and there is no notion nor movement of the spirit that music might not serve to express or oppose by the diversity of song, or even to express them for pleasure—as in the other arts that imitate nature.\^\n
2 L'Arnème ou le Berger désespéré, pastoral. Par Olivier de Mont-Serrat Grellet homme du Maine (Paris: Abraham Saugrain et Guillaume des Rieux, 1697). In addition to this edn., another was published in Nantes by Pierre Desrousseaux, which provides a slightly different description of the staging. For a comparison of the two eds., see Lawrence, 'Mise en scène dans L'Arnème de Nicolas de Montreux', 246-90.

3 See the discussion in Marson, Pastorales dramatiques en France, p. 4 ('Formation de la pastorale française'), passim.

4 The rotating pentagons were derived from the triangular wooden pinions (pinèdes) used on the classical stage, and described in Vitruvius' De architecture (5.8); see The Ten Books on Architecture, trans. M. H. Morgan (Cambridge, Mass., 1914), 190.

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1 At P. Gérard points out, 'The playwrights were eager to try out new dramatic possibilities, but at the same time they were not prepared to abandon all the elements of the doctrine classicque. In most cases they made an effort to fashion well-crafted plots, to make their characters believable, to maintain clarity and elegance of diction, to observe the proprieties, and to keep theoraéikon within certain limits.' See 'On the Use of Music and Dance in the Machine Tragedies', Papers on French Seventeenth-Century Literature, 29 (1988), 463-76 (at 463-4).
orchestra and chorus ('composed of all kinds of diverse voices and instruments') performed from behind the pentagons, out of sight of the audience. At both sides of the stage several rows of oil-lamps illuminated the set with different colours. Following the practice of Italian intermedii, those of Arimène used olfactory effects: 'the lamps that lit the stage were filled with "odiferous oils", and the smoke that accompanied the defeat of the giants smelled "sweet for having mixed some fragrances among the gunpowder".'

Of particular interest are the mythological intermedes, which consist of short machine plays derived from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In the first *intermède*, 'The Assault on Olympus by the Titans', the sky opens up to reveal Jupiter seated on a globe between Pallas and Mercury. Jupiter sends Mercury to acquire thunderbolts from Vulcan, which would be represented by fireworks and 'the noise of drums above the sky'. Jupiter later casts these thunderbolts at the giants, who are sent hurtling to hell surrounded by flames. For the second *intermède*, 'The Abduction of Helen', the pentagons rotate to reveal the city of Mycenae, painted in perspective 'with its ports, turrets, palaces, and superb edifices... on stage appears the sea, and on that the ships of Paris, which come to shore at the port of Mycenae'. This *intermède* depicts a naval battle on-stage, at the end of which 'the defeated navies, after several fireworks, sink beneath the waves'. For the third *intermède*, 'The Rescue of Andromeda', the pentagons rotate to reveal a landscape of 'groves, deserts, and rocks'. Andromeda, bound to a rock, awaits the sea-monster, when Perseus arrives riding his flying horse Pegasus, whose wings beat as he descends to earth. Perseus battles the sea-monster, who discharges 'an abundance of water' during the struggle. Victorious, Perseus unites Andromeda, places her on the back of his steed, and flies away.

In the fourth *intermède*, 'The Death of Argus', Jupiter appears in a halo and commands Mercury to kill Argus and thus liberate his beloved Io, who had been transformed by Juno into a cow. Mercury descends to earth on a cloud, and puts Argus to sleep by singing and playing his flageolet. Once Argus is asleep, Mercury decapitates him, liberates Io, and brings back Argus's head to Jupiter. The fifth and final *intermède* is the fable of Orpheus and Eurydice, for which the pentagons rotate to show the flaming jaws of hell. Orpheus appears with his lute and laments the death of Eurydice, when he encounters Cerberus, a three-headed dog with flames shooting out of his mouths. Orpheus puts the beast to sleep, and then he convinces Pluto in song to release his beloved Eurydice ('Esprits d'embas, d'Orphée l'insensé'); but as Orpheus leads Eurydice out, she looks back toward Hades and is compelled to return. With the emphasis placed on spectacular staging, the *intermèdes* of L'Arimène mark the beginning of the mythological machine play in France.

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* Le Ravissement de Céfale, a translation of a Florentine *festa teatrale* by Nicolas Chretien, Sieur des Croix, demonstrates many of the defining characteristics of the mythological pastoral. As with the musical dramas of Giambattista Andreini, the 'Ordre de la representation du Ravissement de Céfale' that precedes the play's text provides a complete description of the sets, the staging, and the musical embellishments. This separation of the spoken text from the aspects of production reflects Angelo Ingegneri's theoretical division of a dramatic performance into three component parts: *apparato* (sets and staging), *azione* (dramatic action), and *musica*. The prologue to *Le Ravissement de Céfale* is a case in point, for the printed text consists solely of lyrics assigned to the allegorical figures Poetry. However, the *ordre* refers to several additional characters, as well as scenic effects and music. There we are informed that Poetry emerges from the peak of Mount Parnassus seated upon a mechanical fountain, sings some verses, and then is joined by a chorus of Muses; the latter's music is heard coming from within the mountain, accompanied by a consort of instruments. After this *intermedio non apparente*, Poetry descends to sing the prologue, telling of how she brings divine furor to earth and gives various guises to the gods through music. As she reascends to the top of the mountain, 'the Muses respond with a celestial harmony while the mountain gradually disappears'.

Apart from the dichotomy between the play's spoken verses and the elaborate staging descriptions found in the *ordre*, other aspects of the prologue are equally noteworthy. For example, it takes place on a more abstract level than the play that follows. Set at the summit of Mount Parnassus, a loftier realm than the bucolic locale of the fable, its landscape is inhabited by allegorical figures. Moreover, Poetry's sung verses, composed of alexandrines in *rites embrassés*, represent a kind of divine discourse that contrasts with the play's spoken decasyllabic couplets.

After this metaphysical prologue, the scene changes to a verdant grove of trees where Cephalus lies asleep with his hunters. Aurora announces her own epiphany as she descends from the heavens on a cloud ('Du Ciel serein, demeures éternelles'). The hunters arise and wake Cephalus, after which Aurora confesses her love to him. However, Cephalus distrusts her, and takes flight into the forests with the goddess in hot pursuit, and the first act concludes with a chorus of hunters ('Dans les forêts, & parmi les Montagnes'). The second act features a succession of spectacular machine effects and miraculous set-transformations. Aurora's husband Titon descends on a cloud and morns his wife's departure.

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* While the play's text does not specify singing here, the *ordre* states that 'L'Aurore descend du Ciel en une roêt qui touche à terre, en chantant doucement, éveille les Chasseurs'.

* Purkis, 'Intermedes', 296–309 (at 303).
Then the clouds vanish to reveal a sea filled with lilies, and Ocean arrives mounted on a dolphin to inquire why the Sun has not yet ascended. Phoebus appears in his chariot, and Cupid descends from the heavens seated on a cloud, flanked by a chorus of four singing Amours. Cupid explains that Aurora will not be coming, for he has wounded her with one of his arrows. The second act ends with a spectacular scene in which the dolphin and Ocean plunge under the water, the Sun sets, and Cupid ascends to the heavens, leaving the Amours on earth to sing the praises of Cupid’s power (‘Que de nos traits ou l’amour doux vainqueur’).

In Act 3, Night emerges, rebukes Aurora for her delay, and calls upon the Celestial Signs to bring her to her senses, and the act ends with the chorus of Celestial Signs (‘Ce n’est ici, ce n’est le premier jour’). Mercury informs Cupid in Act 4 that Jupiter, troubled by these quarrels, has summoned him to the heavens to answer to a council of the gods. As Cupid ascends, the sky opens up to reveal forty-eight deities, who perform a most admirable concert of music (‘En ce Royaume, en cet alme pourpris’). In the final act, Jupiter descends on his eagle and dispatches Cupid to bring Aurora back: but before he fulfills his commission, Cupid commands the gods to sing his praises in chorus (‘Si l’Amour n’est esté dès la saison première’). Cupid then descends to earth and wounds the indifferent Cephalus with one of his arrows, whereupon Cephalus gives Aurora his hand as a pledge of his devotion. While the lovers are transported to the heavens, a chorus of hunters sings of the power of divine love (‘Ardeur divine qui rapelles’).

In Le Ravissement de Céfale music is shown to originate in the heavens, and an aura of astral harmony surrounds the epiphany of its divine emissaries. Celestial music flows earthward with Aurora’s descent, while this divine gift is offered back up to the heavens by a chorus of mortal singers in the final apotheosis. On another, metatheatrical level, the arts join together at the conclusion of the performance to glorify the royal family. Thereupon the scene returns to the celestial realm of the prologue—where allegorical figures praise Henri IV and Marie de’ Medici:

Afterwards, [Mount] Parnassus is shown with Fame seated on high, and near her an orator declaims the praises of the Grand Duke (‘Puis que tout l’univers, ô Henry magnanime’). On each side eight characters represent the form and the arms of the cities which are his subjects. Then the mountain gradually disappears. While descending from above, these sixteen characters perform triumphant jubilations to the Queen. Fame flies into the heavens, and the mountain, becoming low, approaches the Queen, presenting her with a very large lily that had just sprouted, and above which is suspended a gold crown—the meaning of which is explained by the blessed birth of Monseigneur le Dauphin, for whom the crown is destined by human and divine right.

By means of allegory, the mythological pastorale would serve to extol the virtues of the monarch and to promote the idea of the king as demiogod, thereby providing the grand siècle with one of its most effective dramatic tools of political propaganda.

Charles de l’Espine’s La Descente d’Orphée aux enfers (1614)11 was the first play-length dramatization of the Orpheus legend to appear in France. This pièce à grand spectacle seems to have enjoyed a measure of success, for a second and third edition appeared in 1622 and 1627.12 In his dedication to the Queen of England (wife of James I),13 L’Espine cites books 10 and 11 of Ovid’s Metamorphoses as his main source.14 Each of the three parts of the legend (‘the marriage of Orpheus, his descent into Hades, his death by the Bacchantes’) is built around spectacular tableaux of contrasting settings, other-worldly characters, and machine effects. The presence of a variety of colourful secondary characters (the Olympian gods, the magician, Charon, the spirit, Cerberus, the gods of the underworld, and the Bacchantes) suggest the influence of ballet de cour, just as Orpheus’s strophic chansons accompanied by lyre (or perhaps lute) may well have been inspired by the contemporary air de cour.

The set-changes correspond to the three parts of the Orpheus fable. The first three acts take place in a pastoral landscape, and feature mythological gods along with nymphs and shepherds; L’Espine includes a scene in the woods, where a magician (a pastoral commonplace) shows Orpheus the path to the underworld after giving him some charms. Act 4 changes to the underworld, where the stage décor represents the river Acheron, the portals of Hades, and the palace of Pluto and Persephone. The final act takes place in a ‘desert tout sauvage & rustique’, where Orpheus becomes the victim of a ritual sacrifice by the Bacchantes.

As in the Italian settings of the fable, Orpheus uses the rhetorical power of song to influence and move the passions of the gods and demigods of the underworld. His first subject is the ferryman Charon, whom he persuades to row him across the Acheron. In a decasyllabic quatrain, Orpheus poses a rhetorical argument: if the gods cannot avoid Cupid’s power, how can a mere mortal resist it? He then makes an emotional appeal in the final couplet:

11 La Descente d’Orphée aux Enfers, Par C. de L., Parisien (Louvain: Philippe Doosmans, 1614).
13 Lancaster, History of French Dramatic Literature, i. 99 n. 2.
14 According to the ordre, five of the Celestial Signs speak this chorus (‘Cinq des signes celestes ly syant parle, fisissent l’Acte’).
Amphrysite finally agrees to marry Neptune, the gods assemble in Neptune's grotto for the nuptials and are greeted by a concert sung by sirens and Tritons ('O miracle des cieux'). However, in a spectacular denouement the Sun, scorched by Amphrysite, sets fire to the land and sea by hurling flames from the heaven, which is followed by cries and darkness. Jupiter then intervenes and restores peace, after which the setting returns to a beautiful pastoral landscape.

After L'Amphrysite, the dramatic structure of the mythological pastorale becomes increasingly dictated by the aspects of contemporary stagecraft. That many of these multigeneric plays were conceived of as a succession of tableaux vivants is strikingly illustrated by Jean-Gilbert Durval's Les Travaux d'Ulysse (1631). In fact, Durval's primary source was not Homer's Odyssey (as he claimed on his title-page), but rather a series of well-known paintings of Ulysses' adventures that once hung in the palace of Fontainebleau—where the play was first performed for Louis XIII. In the first scene, Aeolus (god of the winds) refuses to come and rescue Ulysses, who is shown at sea on his vessel. The scene shifts to the island of the Laestrygonian cannibals, where King Antiphates tells his subjects of the impending arrival of the Greek sailors; there Ulysses is forced to abandon his comrades to their fate and set sail. In Act 2 Ulysses arrives at the palace of Circe, where the enchantress has summoned the sirens to her school of magic; Eurylochius informs Ulysses of the disappearance of his men, whom Circe has transformed into swine. Mercury descends to flashes of lightning and claps of thunder, and gives Ulysses the moly-flower to counteract her spells. Circe entertains Ulysses and, finding that her magic has no effect on him, she is forced to restore his men to their true shape. Act 3 takes place in the underworld, where Ulysses encounters Charon and forces him to row him across the river Styx. He arrives in Hades, which is flanked by the Garden of Hesperides and the rock of Sisyphus, and meets Pluto. In Act 4 Tiresias explains to Ulysses that his hardships are due to his treatment of the cyclops Polyphemus, and the ghosts of Anticlea (his mother) and Elpenor (one of his former companions) appear before Ulysses. Act 5 depicts Ulysses' ship sailing on the sea and his encounter with the sirens. When his men arrive at the island of the Sun and decide to feast on the god's sheep, the Sun appears 'in his chariot of light' and Jupiter 'on his throne of glory'. When Ulysses and his men put to sea again, Jupiter casts thunderbolts, killing all but Ulysses.

As Durval's play provides no rubrics for staging or use of incidental music, this information must be gleaned from the spoken dialogue and dramatic action. For example, in Act 5, scene 1 the three sirens boast of their exceptional performing
abilities, which allow them to attract ships with their music: from their dialogue we learn that not only do the sirens sing, but that the sirens Liggée plays the flute and Leucosie the lute.4 As Ulysses' ship approaches them, he commands his men to stop up their ears with bits of leather and to tie him to the mast, so that he alone may listen to the 'beau concert d'instruments & de voix' performed by the sirens. Judging by Ulysses' verbal description of the sound of numerous flutes and lutes, we might speculate that this music was performed from off-stage by some of the King's musicians.5 Although no further clues are provided by the play's text, other supernatural scenes—such as the appearance of gods, the transformation of Ulysses' men into swine, and the play's spectacular denouement—would also have offered occasions for musical accompaniment.19

When the Troupe Royale subsequently performed Durval's Les Travaux d'Ulysses at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, the notes and drawings preserved in the Mémoire de Mahelot provide further information on the staging. The stage-designer's sketch of the scene (reproduced in Plate 5) shows the simultaneous décor of the old multi-level mystère stage, with seven different locales represented on three levels.20 Mahelot also lists the stage properties required by this production: 'three helmets with pig-like visors' (used in Act 2, scene 2 where Ulysses meets up with his transformed comrades); six tails for the sirens, six mirrors (required for the sirens (5. 1)); some wings for Aegaus (1. 1); a wand of silver and a wand of gold (for Circe (2. 1)); a jar of preservatives, a napkin, a fork, a glass, some wine (probably given to entertain Ulysses (2. 2)); four garlands of cypress, two floral garlands (worn by the sirens (5. 1)); a moly-flower (brought by Mercury (2. 1)); a helmet for Mercury, caduceus (Mercury's winged staff), and some heel-wings; a thunderbolt (for Jupiter (5. 5)); a sceptre for Pluto (3. 2), a crown, a gilded tree in the garden (of Hesperides (4. 2)); winds, thunder, flames, and noise (created by Jupiter in (5. 5)); a stone for Sisyphus (3. 3); and some fireworks attached to the mast of Ulysses' vessel (5. 5). From this we may surmise that the Troupe Royale's production featured a chorus of six costumed sirens, and that sound effects accompanied Jupiter's display of pyrotechnic thunderbolts.

In later mythological pastorales, the spectacular elements are distributed in such a way as to build toward a final climax of scenic, musical, and choreographic splendour. For example, in the conclusion of Sallebray's Le Jugement de Paris et le ravissement d'Hélène (1639)21 the arts unite in the operatic enlèvement of the hero.

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19 In 2. 1, Burylodeus describes to Ulysses how his men came upon Circe's palace, where they 'heard a concert of instruments and singers'; possibly music was also performed during Ulysses' reception there in 2. 2. Lancaster finds Durval's play to be 'a highly spectacular performance, almost a sort of opera without music'; and he later suggests that its elaborate and expensive staging was influenced by that of ballet de cour, see History of French Dramatic Literature, 1. ii. 512 and 515.

20 Id. (ed.), Mémoire de Mahelot, 83-3; for further discussion see Ch. 3, p. 18.

21 Le jugement de Paris et le ravissement d'Hélène. Tragique comédie (Paris: Toussaint Quinet, 1639).

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inc. Charged with the task of awarding a golden apple inscribed 'pour la plus belle' to one of three goddesses, Paris decides in favour of Venus, who has in exchange offered him Helen, wife of King Menelaus of Sparta. He is received hospitably at the Spartan court; but when Menelaus is called away, Paris informs his wife that she has been promised to him by Venus. At first, Helen resists, but finally agrees at least to visit Paris' ship—where she is given a musical welcome. Paris secretly orders his men to prepare for departure, and meanwhile he distracts Helen with a chanson. She is so enraptured that she pays little attention to the meaning of his Baudelairian lyrics, which foretell what is to become her fate:

Prenés corcé de ce rivage
Beauté le chef-œuvre des cieux
Et venés respirer un air plus gracieux,
Dedans un climat moins sauvage;
Où vous auraïs autant d'Auteurs
Que le plus grand des immortels.
C'est le plus beau lieu de l'Asie
Dont mes parens sont possesseurs,
Où l'on goûte à longs traits les divines douceurs
Du nectar & de l'ambroisie:
Enfin les hommes sont des Dieux
Dans ce pais semblable aux cieux.
Si quelque mortel y soupire,
C'est un mal qui charme son coeur,
Et quoy qu'il soit tout prest à mourir de langueur,
Il syme encore ce doux martyr:
Venés donc, espoir de ma couyr,
Venés dans ce trône d'amour.

Take leave of this shore,
beauty, heavens' masterwork,
and come and breathe an air more gracious,
in a land less savage;
where you will have as many arts
as the greatest of the immortals.
It is the loveliest place in Asia
over which my parents rule,
where people will drink in long draughts the
divine sweetness of nectar and ambrosia:
after all, men are gods
in this land that is so like the heavens.
If some mortal sighs there,
it is a pain that charms his heart,
and although he might be ready to die of
languor,
he still loves this sweet torture:
come then, object of my courship,
come into this throne of love.

Indeed, Helen's puns on 'rivar' and 'transport' suggest that she had become a willing participant in this abduction. At any rate, the metaphysical journey described in Paris' chanson becomes reality, as their ship sets sail for Asia and a new life.22

When the Hôtel de Bourgogne revived Le Jugement de Paris et le ravissement d'Hélène in 1657, the gazetteer Loret praised the numerous additions made to the musical and scenic spectacle:23

The Grand Comedians of the King have found in their superb theatre the means to make the whole audience enamoured with the great many things that are seen there on all sides: namely seas and shores; temples, rocks, and wooded groves; concerts, dances, ballets; dragons, demons, bogoblins; several changes of perspective; more than twenty

22 Loret, Musc historique, ii. 418-20; letter of 22 Dec. 1657.
flying machines; admirable vistas; fires and conflagrations. And finally, this majestic scene in which the lovely Helen is abducted.

Clearly, the dramatic text alone gives an incomplete impression of the amount of music and dance employed in seventeenth-century productions of a pièce à grand spectacle. By extension, we might conjecture that stage-directors gave free rein to their creative imaginations. A case in point is the seemingly anti-climactic conclusion to Jean Clavert’s Le Raviissement de Proserpine (1639).25 Judging by the play’s spoken dialogue, the most striking stage effects occur with Persephone’s enlèvement in Act 3, scene 2. Persephone describes how the earth splits open and disgorges steam, lightning flashes through the skies, and the stars in the heavens ‘changent leur mouvement’: Pluto then emerges from the bowels of the earth driving a fiery chariot and abducts her. While the final scene of Act 5 implies that what ensues is Persephone’s apotheosis and her Olympian wedding to Pluto, the spoken text by itself provides an abrupt and unsatisfying ending to this pièce à grand spectacle. No doubt the stage-director took his cue from Jupiter’s final words (‘She will soon be fully resigned to it, when they have sung these lovely wedding songs, and when the celestial court has followed its charming concerts with a thousand diverse pleasures’), and followed the play with an operatic divertissement of music, ballet, and spectacle.

This first generation of French mythological plays culminates in Chaponot’s La Descente d’Orphée aux enfers (1640).24 Like L’Espine, Chaponot dramatized all three parts of the Orpheus legend, and his combination of scenic tableaux interspersed with lyrical and musical interludes prefigures the dramatic structure of later opera libretti.27 These kinds of lyric compositions—stances, plaintes, a prière, and numerous chansons sung by the singer of legend—would later allow for operatic expansion. That La Descente d’Orphée aux enfers is constructed around a series of spectacular machine effects suggests that French stagecraft was considerably developed before the arrival of Torelli. The play begins with the sound of thunder, lightning, and wind: the sky opens up, and Juno appears on her chariot. She descends to Hades in the midst of a gale, stirs up Envy, and then ascends to heaven. The gloomy depiction of Hades stands in stark contrast to the pastoral setting of the following scenes, which feature brooks, flowers, rocks, a ruined palace, and the miraculous appearance of the Sun in his fiery chariot.

While the pastoral scenes do not explicitly call for music, Chaponot’s text abounds with lyric elements that would lend themselves to musical elaboration. In Act 1, scene 4, Eurydice confides in Orpheus her apprehensions regarding their forthcoming wedding. While she awaits his return beside a brook surrounded by flowering myrtles, Eurydice complains in stances about the misfortunes of love.28 Another operatic moment occurs when Eurydice lies dying from the bite of a poisonous asp; Orpheus soon arrives, and they declaim in shared alexandrine couplets a lovers’ duet.29 Thereafter Orpheus vents his grief in a lament (‘Plainte d’Orphée’), and prays in strophic stances to the Sun (‘Prière d’Orphée au Soleil’).

Most of the music called for in Chaponot’s play occurs in the following acts. When he arrives at the threshold of the underworld, Orpheus charms the stubborn ferryman Charon with a chanson.30 In fact, it is possible that Chaponot was familiar with L’Espine’s earlier play—for both chansons consist of a seestet stanza consisting of a quatrains and a final rhyming couplet:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chanson (from L’Espine’s La Descente d’Orphée aux enfers (1641))</th>
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<tr>
<td>Puis que l’amour de vous a pris l’aimable,</td>
<td>Puis que les Dieux ressentent ses attrayants,</td>
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<td>Puis que les Dieux ressentent ses attrayants,</td>
<td>Pourquoi nous prendrons-nous des ailes pour nous envoler?</td>
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<td>Estant blessé de ses amoureux tristes?</td>
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<td>Estant blessé de ses amoureux tristes?</td>
<td>Ne le pouvant, Caron,</td>
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<td>Ne le pouvant, Caron,</td>
<td>Passe-moi l’Acheron,</td>
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<td>Passe-moi l’Acheron,</td>
<td>Ou bien de vous parler,</td>
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<td>Ou bien de vous parler,</td>
<td>La douleur et la mort vont faire leur devoir.</td>
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Orpheus first addresses Pluto in a spoken plea (‘Harangue d’Orphée’); but when the god remains unmoved, he calls upon his musical and rhetorical powers (‘Grand Dieu si jamais votre cœur’). Having failed to retrieve Eurydice from the world of the dead, Orpheus returns to the pastoral world to sing a series of strophic plaintes to the rocks (‘Fideles témoins de mes peines’), the forests (‘Ma disgrâce n’est pas commune’), and the animals (‘Le desespoir passe en mes veines’). The Bachantes, angered that Orpheus rejected their god, attack and kill him; Bacchus then arrives with Pan and Silenus to avenge Orpheus’s death by changing the Bachantes into trees.

Eight years later the Théâtre du Marais would revive Chaponot’s pièce à grand spectacle in an attempt to capitalize on the recent performances at court of Rossi’s Orfeo. Its new title, La Grande journée des machines, ou le Mariage d’Orphée et d’Euridice, emphasized the importance of the scenic effects designed by Denis Buffequin. For this new production the Marais company engaged Charles Coyepe (dit Dassoucy) to compose the musical score—including a new song for the Sun in Act 2, scene 5 (‘Je suis l’Astre qui fais le jour’). This semi-operatic machine play became so successful that fourteen years later the Théâtre du
Marais would mount another revival, this time in response to the court performances of Cavalli's *Erode amante*.

Chapoton's play was also performed in Brussels during March of 1661 by the company of Mlle d'Orléans. This troupe had given several performances of Corneille's *Andromaque* the previous month. When on 5 Mar. the Gazette announced that: 'Carnival concluded with the usual entertainments, primarily that of theatrical presentations; the actors of Mademoiselle d'Orléans had excelled especially in the performance of *Le Drame d'Orphée aux enfers*—wondrous for its unusual machines and magnificent set-changers, which delighted and perfectly satisfied the entire court and the other spectators.' (Quoted in Driekaruf-Holshoer, *Théâtre du Marais*, II, 140.)