B. Musical Theatre and the Opera Privilege

COMPETITION WITH THE ACADÉMIE ROYALE D’OPÉRA (1669–1673)

After the success of his Pastorale d’Issy (1659), Perrin envisaged the foundation of a national lyric theatre modelled after the Italian academies. Eager to prove the viability of opera in the French language, he immediately wrote two more opera librettos in the comic and tragic genres: Ariane, ou le Mariage de Bacchus and La Mort d’Adonis. According to the frères Parfait, Perrin and Cambert formed a partnership with the Marquis de Sourdéac and, assured of Mazarin’s protection, they petitioned for a privilège to produce operas in French; meanwhile, they gave several rehearsals of Ariane at the Hôtel de Nevers. 'Finally, everything was ready to open a new theatre in Paris, when the death of Cardinal Mazarin, which occurred at Vincennes on 9 March 1661, postponed the projects of these associates.'1 Despite his solicitations to the King and Colbert, eight years were to pass before Perrin finally acquired the royal opera privilège.

For the musical setting of his tragédie en musique, La Mort d’Adonis, Perrin turned to the court composer Jean-Baptiste Boësset. For nearly twenty years Boësset had been maître de musique to Anne of Austria—until he relinquished his position to Cambert in 1662 and became maître de musique to Queen Maria-Theresa. It is therefore likely that Boësset composed La Mort d’Adonis at this turning-point in his career. In the avant-propos to his Diverses Paroles de Musique, Perrin states that 'His Majesty has heard several detached fragments [of Boësset’s score] at his petit coucher, and showed “many signs of satisfaction”'; but he also refers to 'the cabale of the petit coucher who, by private motives of interest and passion, tried to disparage it'. At this time Boësset also shared the position of surintendant de la musique de la chambre with Lully who, according to Perrault, was scornful of Perrin’s operas.2 While Perrin announced plans to publish ‘the first acts’ of the

---

1 The frères Parfait, Histoire de l’Académie Royale de Musique, 5. This important account is unfortunately marred by some factual errors, esp. with regard to the singers engaged by Perrin’s academy.

score (as he did later for *Pomone*), Boisset’s music for *La Mort d’Adonis* has not survived.\(^3\)

On 28 June 1669 Perrin was awarded the opera *privilege*,\(^4\) and preparations began for the inauguration of the Académie Royale des Opéras with a production of *Ariane, ou le Mariage de Bacchus*.\(^5\) For the next five months rehearsals were held in private three times per week, either at the home of the Abbé Brousse in the cloisters of Saint-Honoré, or at Cambert’s home.\(^6\) Some public dress rehearsals took place at the Hôtel de Nevers\(^7\) where, according to one of the singers, they were attended by some two thousand people.\(^8\) Then, at the beginning of December, all rehearsals of *Ariane* ceased; instead, Perrin and Cambert began composing a new opera, *Pomone*. In his foreword to *Pomone* Perrin explains his reasons for this change of plans:\(^9\)

> for the reasons that I have stated in the preface of the *argument* printed above, I deemed it more appropriate to inaugurate the theatre with a pastoral play, even though I had three heroic ones already written; and it is necessary to judge of it from that point of view, and to consider that it is composed of diversities and rustic characters, and that it involves at one and the same time comic and rustic styles, dramatic action, continuous vocal and instrumental music, machinery, and dance.

Considering that none of the principal singers had ever acted before on-stage, Perrin may have realized that a new, non-dramatic type of work was more in order.\(^10\) Whatever the case, Perrin and Cambert formed a partnership with the Marquis de Sourdéac and Laurent Berdus, Sieur de Champeron, in mid-December. Sourdéac and Champeron were to fund the project, while Cambert and Perrin (as holder of the opera *privilege*) contributed ‘solely their knowledge and legal authority’.\(^11\)

Preliminary rehearsals for *Pomone* took place in Sourdéac’s country home at Sèvres, which the Marquis had equipped with a theatre. Cambert had the difficult task of teaching the music to the male singers from Languedoc ‘who scarcely understood the language’, and to the female singers ‘who knew not one note of music’.\(^12\) On 13 May 1670, Perrin leased a tennis-court on the rue Vaugirard, the Jeu de paume de Béquet (also known as ‘le Bel-Air’), while Sourdéac and Champeron began to convert it into a theatre.\(^13\) While construction was under way, Perrin and Cambert rehearsed *Pomone* in secret, for fear of losing more of their singers to the *musique du roi* (as they had Morel and Gillet). Finally, on 12 June 1670, a full rehearsal of *Pomone* was given at Sèvres, followed by another rehearsal twelve days later at the completed Béquet theatre in Paris.

A series of calamities soon befell the academy. Several of the singers filed lawsuits against Perrin and his associates, while Cambert, cut out of the partnership, became a salaried employee of Sourdéac and Champeron. Then because Perrin had neglected to receive legal authorization from La Reyne, Lieutenant of Police of Paris, the academy was forced to abandon the Jeu de paume de Béquet and seek a new location.\(^14\) This unfortunate turn of events put the opening of Perrin’s opera academy five months behind schedule. On 8 October 1670 Sourdéac and Champeron leased another tennis-court, the Jeu de paume de la Bouteille located on the rue des Fossés de Neles (now rue Mazarine).\(^15\) They contracted Henry Guichard, Superintendent of Buildings to Philippe d’Orléans, to build a stage, a graded amphitheatre, and boxes; to raise the existing edifice by several feet; to excavate more than 20 feet below the stage level to accommodate the workings of the machines; and to adjust everything to the scenery.\(^16\)

While the Académie Royale des Opéras struggled to cope with these setbacks, Molèire and Lully entertained the court and the public with their *comédies-ballets*. In August 1669 the Troupe du Roy performed *La Princesse d’Élide* four times at Saint-Germain for the King, and received a total of 30,389 livres.\(^17\) The company followed the court to Chambord that autumn, where on 6 October it premiered

---

\(^{3}\) Perrin’s dedication to Colbert of his *Réseaux de paroles de musique*, fol. 10; reprinted in Auld, *The Lyric Art of Pierre Perrin*, vol. iii, p. xiv.


\(^{5}\) C. Bashford (*Perrin and Cambert’s Ariane, or le Mariage de Bacchus Re-examined*, *Music & Letters*, 72 (1991), 1–26 (at 20–1)) speculates that around 1671–2 Perrin and Cambert reroared and revised Ariane ‘with the resources of the theatre at the Jeu de Paume (de la Bouteille) in mind; the libretto of this lost source (I), according to Bashford, subsequently served as the basis for the 1674 production given at the Theatre Royal in London. While it is conceivable that some of the additions and changes may have been introduced as early as the 1669 public rehearsals, Bashford provides cogent reasons for believing that this production was essentially that of the 1659 *comédie en musique*.


\(^{8}\) Catherine Suppléante, who sang the role of Ariane, informs us that that many ‘personnes de qualités’ attended these performances: ‘the Governor of Paris, accompanied by the Prior, the Count and Chevalier de Sossins, M. de Lyonne and M. de Nef, first valé of the Roi du Côté, not to mention another 2,000 persons whose names I do not know’ (*Mémoire de Cachetonne Suppléante*, cited in Nuinier and Thoinon, *Origines de l’opéra français*, 125–6).


\(^{10}\) This is suggested in Auld, *Lyric Art of Pierre Perrin*, i. 46 n.


\(^{12}\) Nuinier and Thoinon, *Origines de l’opéra français*, 137.

\(^{13}\) Perrin’s lease for this tennis-court is reproduced ibid. 130–2.

\(^{14}\) Sourdéac and Champeron had already begun constructing ‘some boxes, a stage, an amphitheatre, and other things which have been in vain due to the cease and desist order presented to them on behalf of M. de la Reyne that prevented them from completing these works and pursing the performance of operas in the aforementioned Jeu de paume de Béquet, and has obliged them to vacate’ (cited ibid. 140). Sourdéac and Champeron lost their deposit of 800 livres, and were forced to pay a fine of 1,100 livres.

\(^{15}\) According to Castille-Blaze, ‘nombreuses répétitions’ of *Pomone* were given at the Hôtel de Nevers ‘while awaiting the transformation of the Jeu de paume of the Bouteille, rue Mazarine’. See Blaze, *Académie impériale de musique*, i. 28.


\(^{17}\) See Montgredien, *Recueil des textes relatifs à Molèire*, i. 345.
Monsieur de Pourceaugnac; the next month this comédie-ballet opened at the Palais-Royal on a double bill with Le Sicilien, and its first run of twenty performances lasted through the new year.18

For Carnival 1670 the Troupe du Roy returned to entertain the court at Saint-Germain. The King wished to re-enact the spectacles of antiquity in a grand ballet royal, and as a subject he proposed the rivalry between two princes in the surroundings of the Pythian games. Louis XIV danced alongside his courtiers for the last time in Le Divertissement Royal.19 Tradition has it that he had been disturbed by some lines from Racine's Britannicus, which reproached Nero for exhibiting base talents unworthy of an emperor.20 Or perhaps the Petite Académie felt that the royal image would be best served if Louis refrained from performing in court divertissements.21 Whatever the case, Molière's spoken comedy, Les Amants magnifiques, served as dramatic intermédes to Lully's ballet entrées, which included vers for Louis XIV (who was to have danced the roles of Neptune and Apollo). That the King ordered Le Divertissement Royal from Molière marked an important event, for it meant that Molière was to succeed Benserade as author of the King's ballets.

Despite the current wave of interest in machine plays, Molière did not transfer Les Amants magnifiques to the Palais-Royal. Public performances of its operatic intermédes would have violated Perrin's privilège, which specifically forbade 'opéra or musical performances in French verse'; and Molière may have also felt that his play was too slight to give by itself.22 At any rate, this neoclassical entertainment suited the changing tastes of Louis XIV, who summoned the Troupe du Roy back the next month to repeat Le Divertissement Royal three more times.

Meanwhile, the Théâtre du Marais premiered on 2 March 1670 Les Amours de Vénus et d'Adonis—the first in a trilogy of pièces à grand spectacle by Donneau de Visé, with visually stunning sets and complex machine effects devised by Denis Bufflequin. Except for horn-calls and trumpet fanfares, the play called for no significant use of music (perhaps in compliance with Perrin's privilège). However, in his preface of Visé mentions that Les Amours de Vénus et d'Adonis played at the Marais for over three months, and he expresses his hope that if the court were to come to Paris the following winter, they would see his play 'with all its ornaments'.23 Since the term ornements usually refers to music and dance, it is possible that de Visé envisaged performing a semi-operatic version of Les Amours de Vénus et d'Adonis before the King.

For the autumn hunting season at Chambord, the King requested a new comédie-ballet from Molière and Lully. The tales told by Laurent d'Arvieux about his trips to the Middle East, followed by the visit of a Turkish envoy that spring, had made les turqueries fashionable at court, and so Louis ordered Molière, Lully, and Chevalier d'Arvieux to plan a Turkish divertissement.24 The three met at Molière's villa in Auteuil to collaborate on what would become the musical climax to Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme. After the King approved their plans, Chevalier d'Arvieux and Jean Barraillon, tailleur ordinaire des ballets du Roy, began designing the Turkish costumes and turbans.25 It would appear that Molière and Lully worked independently on the play and the ballet until the first rehearsals at Chambord.26

A wholly professional comédie-ballet, Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme was the first large-scale court entertainment in which the King and his courtiers did not take part. More than two dozen singers from the Royal Chapel and as many baladin performed in the intermédes, the 'Cérémonie Turque', and the concluding 'Ballet des Nations'. According to the royal accounts, these performances cost a staggering 49,405 livres.27 Vigaran oversaw the construction of a temporary stage and amphitheatre in the great hall of the keep at Chambord, while dressing-rooms were built for the actors, dancers, and musicians—who were outfitted with expensive costumes.28 According to the Registre de La Grange, the Troupe du Roy had left Paris on 3 October,29 which would have given Molière and Lully less than ten days to put the final touches to their comédie-ballet, and rehearse for the 13 October première.30 Afterwards, everyone packed up and travelled to

---

18 This was a special revival of Le Sicilien, which had not been performed at the Palais-Royal for over two years. Ten years later the Troupe de Guigné regularly performed these two comédie-ballets on a double bill.
19 The printed livret included verses for the King, who was to portray Neptune in the first intermède and Apollo in the sixth intermède. The account in the Gazette, 18 (7 Feb. 1670), 143 and Robinet's Lettre of 8 Feb. 1670 praised the King's graceful dancing, but it would appear that the authors were aware that their reviews were in advance, embellishing upon the descriptions in the livret. In his following letter of 15 Feb. 1670, Robinet recounted ('Notre augure Sicé | Pari danse et ne danse point'). The Gazette, 21 (14 Feb. 1670), 168 explained that 'Le Comte d'Armagnac, & le Marquis de Villeroi, représentant Neptune, & Apollo, en la place du Roy, qui n'y danse pas.'
21 This theory is proposed in M. Couvreur, Jean-Baptiste Lully: Musique et dramaturgie au service du Prince (Briandif, 1992), 188-90.
22 However, the Comédie-Française did perform Les Amants magnifiques in Oct. 1688.
23 Les Amours de Vénus et d'Adonis, Tragédie (Paris: Guillaume de Luyres, 1670); repr. in C. Delmas (ed.), Recueil de tragédies à machines.
24 M. Couvreur shows that most M. Laisné (perhaps the poet Alexandre Laisné), who had been sent by Colletot to Constantinople to assist in the purchase of Turkish arms and for the purchase of Turkish arms, but may have also acted as an advisor on Turkish language and costume; see Notes sur Alexandre Laisné: Ses Réunions du Levant et le privilège, op. cit., 187 (1990), 221-5.
25 Laurent d'Arvieux, Mémoires (1735), i. 237-4, quoted in Monégard, Revue de l'histoire relatif à Molière, i. 357-8.
26 Lancaster suggests that Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme began as a 1-act play, commencing with Act 3 (of the 5-act version)—to which other acts were later added along with the Turkish material; see Lancaster, A History of French Dramatic Literature, ii. 724-5.
28 The tailors Barraillon and Forrier furnished a total of 100 costumes, not including those for Molière's actors, for Lully, or for Mlle Hilaire.
29 Registre de La Grange, i. 118.
30 According to the Gazette, 125 (14 Oct. 1670), 1603-4, the King and Queen arrived at Chambord on the evening of 9 Oct. and 'yesterday' [13 Oct.] they saw for the first time a ballet with six entrées accompanied by comedy, whose overture was played by a marvellous symphony followed by the most enjoyable dialogue en musique'. This account therefore contradicts the commonly accepted date of 14 Oct. for the première of Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme.
Saint-Germain-en-Laye for repeat performances on 9, 11, and 13 November. Ten days after the Troupe du Roy returned to Paris, Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme opened at the Palais-Royal and enjoyed immediate popular success.

The ballet royal planned for Carnival 1671—and scheduled for the Salle des Machines of the Tulleries Palace—posed an even greater threat to Perrin's opera monopoly. Colbert and the Petite Académie may have wished to elevate the tone of court entertainments and, as Lagrange-Chancel later claimed, he therefore solicited proposals from the leading playwrights of the day.27 Racine proposed the subject of Orpheus; Quinault the abduction of Persephone, which he made subsequently into one of his loveliest operas; and Molière, with the great Corneille's help, held out for the subject of Psyché, which was preferred over the other two.28 In the event, Psyché was the result of a unique collaboration between Molière (who wrote the play), Corneille (who completed the versification), and Quinault (who provided the sung lyrics).29 Lully must have composed his score well in advance of the 17 January 1671 première, for Ballard published vocal selections in 1670.30 With its récits, sung airs, ensembles, and choruses, together with Vigarani’s magnificent décor and machine effects, Psyché was semi-opera. The sets that Vigarani created nine years earlier for Cavalli’s École amante were still stored in the Salle des Machines, and some may have been used in this production.31 Perrin’s Académie Royale des Opéra had not yet opened, and so Lully engaged some of its singers for the court performances of Psyché. Given that Perrin had held the opera privilège for eighteen months without any tangible results, it seems reasonable to assume that Molière and Lully began lobbying for the opera privilège at this time.

De Vitè’s second machine play, Les Amours du Soleil, opened at the Théâtre du Marais three weeks after the première of Psyché. The printed sujet contends that Andromède, La Toison d’or, and La Semèlé (probably Boyer’s Les Amours de Jupiter et de Sémélé) were the last legitimate pièces à spectacle to have appeared on the stage of the Théâtre du Marais, whereas ‘for the past several years one might have seen some works in this same place that were given the name of machine plays, even though they did not deserve it’.32 The livre du sujet also informs us that Monsieur Prat painted the sets (‘one of the most skilled men in France, and who has the most skilled hand for painting in distemper’), and that an engineer named

33 According to Grémaist, Molière had been working on a machine play based on the Psyché legend a year and a half earlier; see J. L. Le Gallou, Le Gémeau, Le Vie de Molière (1701), ed. G. Monfrédin (Paris, 1935), repr. Geneva, 1973, 118–19. Courvreur shows that Grémaist was mistaken, and that Molière had in fact been at work on Psyché only since Aug. 1670; see Jean-Baptiste Lully, 214.
34 Sujet des Amours du Soleil, tragédie en machines représentée sur le Théâtre Royal du Marais, le cinquième de Fevrier 1671 (Paris: Pierre Pommé, 1671); repr. in Delmas (ed.), Recueil de tragédies à machines.

31 According to Perrault, ‘Lully, who until that time had been successful in their music, upon seeing the great gain they were making from it, asked the King to grant them the sole right of creating operas, and to receive all the profit’ (Mémoires de ma vie, ed. Bonnefond, 127–8). Sourdéac and Champion are themselves reported to have solicited admission to the door, bare-headed and in shantoveves, and armed with little scales to verify the weight of the louis d’or that they put in their pockets; see Nuiter and Thouin, Origines de l’opéra français, 174.
acted as an usher and supervised the running of the stage machinery) had abused and mistreated the female singers. In his letter of 20 June 1671 Robinet pungently described the growing scandal as follows:

	Le grand Opera plus n’opère,
	Dont Maint, ici, se désespère.
	La Discorde aux pois couleuvins,
	Qui se nourrit de noirs Chagrin,
	Et, des Plaisirs, est l’Ennemie,
	En a troublé l’Académie,
	Les Intendants, & les Autheurs,
	Les Musiciens, & les Acteurs,
	Tous, sont tombés en Guerre atroce,
	En Guerre incivile, et féroce:
	Et Pomone, à ce que l’on dit,
	S’est vue, en ce cruel Conflit,
	De Main sacrilège, outragée,
	C’est-à-dire de coups, chargée,
	Sans respect (quelle indiguité!)
	De théâtrale Déité.
	Or ils ont eu, sur leur Grabuge,
	Chez Dame Thémis, Jeur Refuge,
	Et c’est elle qui doit régler
	Leur Querelle; & bref, démoner
	(Ce qui n’est pas affaire aise)
	Une si plaisante Fusée.

The great opera is no longer in operation, of which many here despair.
Discord, with her serpentine locks, who feeds on blackest Grief and is the enemy of Pleasure, has troubled the Academy; the administrators and the authors, the musicians and the singers, all have fallen into atrocious fighting, into fierce and uncivil war: and Pomona, they say, found herself in this cruel conflict, with a sacrilegious hand, maltreated — that is to say, beaten without respect (what indigitude!) of theatrical divinity.
Now they have taken refuge from their squabbling at the court of Dame Themis, and it is she who must settle their dispute; and, in short, disarm (which is no easy affair) so amusing a bomb.

By the spring of 1671 Molière evidently felt confident that Perrin would be unable to enforce his opera monopoly, for during the Lenten break the Troupe du Roy decided to equip its theatre with a transformation stage, machinery, and a permanent orchestra. The first run of Psyché, performed with ‘machines, decorations, music, ballet, and generally all the ornaments necessary for this grand spectacle’, lasted from July to October 1671. This tragédie-ballet must have seemed even more like opera when the company hired professional singers ‘to sing on-stage, unmasked, and dressed like the actors’. While Pomone was in production, Perrin found himself twice incarcerated for debt — first from 5 June until 27 August and then from 29 August until early September — and on 8 August 1671 he sold a portion of his opera privilege to Jean Granouillet de Sablières, intendant de la musique à Philippe d’Orléans (Monsieur). Monsieur had come on several occasions to see Pomone in the company of his 9-year-old daughter Louise. To celebrate his forthcoming marriage to Princess Elizabeth Charlotte of Bavaria, Monsieur commanded an opéra en musique from Sablières and Henry Guichard — an amateur librettist and Monsieur’s intendant et ordonnateur des bâtiments. At two weeks’ notice, Sablières and Guichard hurriedly composed Les Amours de Diane et d’Édénymon for a performance at Versailles on 3 November 1671. The leading roles were sung by Marie Aubry and her brother-in-law, Pierre Le Vié (both former members of Perrin’s academy), and Mlle Turpin (who sang in Psyché at the Palais-Royal until the end of October). The Gazette reported that this opera ‘was performed on a magnificent stage in the new apartment of the Queen, in the presence of Their Majesties and the entire court, [who were] marvellously surprised with this pleasant gallery which had been prepared in fifteen days’. Three weeks later, Perrin drew up a new agreement dividing his opera privilège equally among himself, Guichard, and Sablières. Louis XIV thereupon requested another opera from Sablières and Guichard for Carnival. Lacking the necessary time to compose an original work, they revised and expanded their earlier opera, gave it a new title (Le Triomphe de l’Amour), and performed it twice in February 1672 for the King and his court at Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

To add to Monsieur’s wedding celebrations, the King commanded a new entertainment from Molière and Lully that would incorporate some of his favourite excerpts from comédies-ballets given in previous years. Molière wrote a short comedy, La Comtesse d’Escarbigans, to serve as a literary frame for this ballet pastiche (called Le Ballet des ballets), and the Troupe du Roy performed it twice at Saint-Germain during the first week of December. On 15 January 1672 the company began their second performance of Psyché at the Palais-Royal, which became interrupted when the King summoned them to Saint-Germain to perform La Comtesse d’Escarbigans three more times in February 1672. For Molière and Lully, this would be their last official collaboration.

annulled (and died soon thereafter), his creditor Bérigone Bruno demanded repayment. While La Barrière’s son honoured her part of the debt, Perrin was unable to make good on his, and so was placed in debtors’ prison on numerous occasions in 1639, 1660, 1665–6, and 1671; see Ascol, Lyric Art of Pierre Perrin, p. 26–7.


44 Guichard’s account of these arrangements is given in Nutter and Thoinant, Origines de l’opéra français, 199–200. See also J. de la Guerre, Un opéra français représenté à la cour de Louis XIV en 1671 et 1672: Les Amours de Diane et d’Édénymon, posthuma mise en musique par Sablières, voir suite, 142 (Jan.–Mar. 1984), 34–46.

45 Eleanor Peller mistakenly believed that this was an adaptation of Gabriel Gilbert’s 1656 mythological pastoral Les Amours de Diane et d’Édénymon; see A Forgotten French Dramatist, Gabriel Gilbert (1600–1680) (Baltimore, 1931), 125.

46 See Nutter and Thoinant, Origines de l’opéra français, 301.

47 Gazette, 133 (13 Nov. 1672), 1099.

48 Nutter and Thoinant, Origines de l’opéra français, 303.

49 See the factum by Soudiac and Champeron, quoted ibid. 206.

50 The Gazette, 145 (4 Dec. 1671), 1169 states that the ballet was first given on the evening of the 2nd, and ibid. 148 (11 Dec. 1671), 1191 reported that it had been danced three more times; some of these performances must have omitted Molière’s framing play, since the Troupe du Roy returned to Paris on 7 Dec. (Registre de La Grange, i. 130).

Donneau de Visé’s *Le Mariage de Bacchus et d’Ariane* (also known as *Les Amours de Bacchus et d’Ariane*) premiered at the Théâtre du Marais on 7 January 1672, and played every Monday and Thursday afternoon during Carnival. This multi-genre spectacle, completed de Visé’s trilogy of mythological machine plays, and it rivaled Psyché in its combination of orchestral and vocal music, ballet, and scenic effects. The printed *livre du sujet* (presumably written by de Visé) states that ‘the author of *Les Amours du Soleil* . . . wished this year to give a play in which music and entrées might have something as special as the machines of his last work’. Ignoring Perrin’s opera monopoly, the Marais hired an unprecedented number of singers, dancers, and instrumentalists for this production, including an orchestra of instruments champeùtes (flutes, hautboys, saquebout, nazaris, cornets à bouquin, chalumeaux, musettes, flageolets, tambours, cornets à airin, cimbales, and nyacres). According to the *sujet*, nearly eighty people appeared onstage in the third act. The *sujet* provides further information: the décor was by a ‘Monsieur Simon’ (i.e. Jean Simon, who would later work for Lully’s Académie Royale de Musique), and the choreography was by *Le Sieur Desbrosses* (i.e. Anthoine des Brosses, who had left Perrin’s academy to serve as maître de danse to the Marais). While here the composer is referred to only as ‘un grand Maître’, de Visé later stated in the *Mercure galant* that ‘the airs are by Mr of Molière [i.e. Louis de Mollière], who for many years composed airs for the King’s ballets’.

While Perrin languished in prison, Sourdëac and Champeron took over the operations of the Académie Royale des Opéras. For the next opera, *Les Peines et les plaisirs de l’Amour*, they engaged Gabriel Gilbert to write the libretto, for which Robert Cambert, their salaried musical director, would compose the score. As usual, the Marquis de Sourdëac designed the sets and machines. Cambert’s score must have been completed by the autumn of 1672, for the music was in rehearsal when Beauchamps took over as maître de danse—probably sometime in December. The première of *Les Peines et les plaisirs de l’Amour* probably took place sometime in February or early March 1672. Marie Aubry, who had performed the leading role in *Les Amours de Diane et d’Endymion*, sang the role of Phyllis, while Marie-Madeleine Brigogne, a newcomer to the Académie Royale des Opéras, was cast in the role of Clitème.

Gilbert prefaced his libretto with a lengthy dedication to Colbert. Praising the minister’s efforts to promote the arts and sciences, Gilbert credits him with having the idea of establishing an ‘Académie de l’Opéra’. Gilbert then predicts that a new Académie de la Musique will bring as much international recognition to Colbert as the Académie-Française did to Richelieu.

The inventors of opera have expanded upon the Greeks, and have set all the parts of the poem to music to make it more perfect, and to give a new soul to the verse. If these ingenious minds have deserved a general approbation, it is to you, Monsieur, that the principal glory for it is due, since you have designed to encourage them, and nothing is undertaken except on the assurance of your support. It is only right that the public learn of this new debt of thanks that it owes you, so that it might recognize by this example, as well as by so many others infinitely more important, that you do even more praiseworthy things quietly and without ostentation.

That Gilbert dedicated his libretto to the King’s minister is telling, for it was Colbert—playing Maccenas to Louis’s Augustus—who oversaw royal patronage of the arts. No doubt to Gilbert’s disappointment, Colbert instead selected Lully to head this new opera academy. Indeed, the title ‘Académie Royale de Musique’ broke with a tradition that extended back to the Académie de Poésie et de Musique, founded by the poet Jean-Antoine de Baiff. Mazarin had also put a poet, Francesco Buti, in charge of Italian operas, and Colbert followed suit by entrusting the ‘Académie Royale des Opéras’ to the poet Pierre Perrin. One would reasonably have expected a literary figure—either Gilbert, de Visé, or Molière—to be chosen as Perrin’s successor.

However, there is evidence that Colbert had been grooming Lully to assume the directorship of the opera academy for some time. In a letter that he wrote to Colbert on 3 June 1672, when Sourdëac and Champeron attempted to block the
registration of his opera privilège with the Parlement, Lully reminded Colbert that he had only been following the minister’s advice.\textsuperscript{43}

Since the time you granted me the honour of directing the Académie Royale de Musique, I have been faced daily with new chicaneries—of which I make so bold as to send you the last one, by which you will realize, Monsieur, that they lay false claim to everything: in the first place when they say that they have obtained letters patent from the King under Perrin’s name; and in the second place by claiming that I caught the King unawares—those who presented several petitions to His Majesty and who knew better than I his intentions. You know, Monsieur, that I have taken no course in this matter other than the one you have prescribed to me, and that in the beginning I believed that they would take the same one. However, they were far from following your good judgement—knowing full well that you would not tolerate any deception of the sort alleged by them, and which they intend to present to the Parlement, and about which you know more than anyone else.

Lully also had the support of Françoise-Athénais, Marquise de Montespan (the King’s mistress from 1667 to c.1673), who may have helped Lully to purchase the opera privilege from Perrin.\textsuperscript{44}

In his Mémoires, Charles Perrault recalled quite a different version of this event.\textsuperscript{45}

Lully, who until that time had been scornful of their music, upon seeing the great gain they were making from it, asked the King to grant him the sole right of creating operas, and to receive all the profit. Perrin and Cambert were opposed to this, and M. Colbert himself, who did not think it fair to dispossess the inventors, or, at least, the first promoters, of this form of entertainment in Paris, was not at all in agreement. Furthermore, he found it more suitable, in order for the French to perfect their music studies, to allow everyone the freedom to compose operas, the lyrics as well as the music—in the same way as with comedies and tragedies, whereby each person may write them however he likes, and offer them to actors to be performed. Lully went to the King to demand this grant, and did so with so much force and daring that the King, fearing that Lully might abandon everything out of spite, said to M. Colbert that he could not do without that man for his entertainments, and that it was necessary to accede to what he sought. This was done on the very next day, to the great astonishment of many people, and especially me, because I knew that M. Colbert was against it.

Although Méléze gives credence to Perrault’s account, it does not have the ring of truth.\textsuperscript{46} The scene of the imperious Lully, going over Colbert’s head to appeal
directly to the King, and the King’s immediate and complete capitulation to
Lully, is enacted with the comic pacing of a Molière farce. Rather than opposing Lully, Colbert had been instrumental in promoting his career from the beginning, when he helped Lully secure the position of Surintendant de la musique et compositeur de la musique de la chambre in 1661. Moreover, beyond signing the legal documents, which probably had been drafted by Colbert, there is little evidence that Louis XIV played an active role in the opera academy’s formation.\textsuperscript{47} If the above scene so vividly described by Perrault did indeed take place, then it might well have been staged so as to leave no doubt that Lully had the full and unwavering support of the King.\textsuperscript{48}

At any rate, the new opera privilège revoked ‘all permissions and privileges that we might have previously given and granted, even the one of the aforesaid Perrin’.\textsuperscript{49} This was probably the only possible solution to the opera débâcle, given that Perrin had sold partial rights to his privilege on two separate occasions. The King (via Colbert) ordered La Reynie, Lieutenant of Police, to close down Perrin’s theatre as of 1 April ‘in order to put a stop to the performances which have continued to be given of the said opera [Les Peines et les plaisirs de l’Amour]’.\textsuperscript{50}

Meanwhile, Lully was seeking a suitable theatre for his Académie Royale de Musique. Perrin’s theatre would have been the obvious choice, since it was already equipped for operatic performances. Lully, however, refused to have dealings with Sourdéac and Champeron, who still held the lease to the Jeu de paume de la Bouteille, and instead he requested the Salle du Louvre, the hall where twelve years earlier Cavalli’s opera Xerxes had been performed.\textsuperscript{51} However, when the King declined on the grounds that the Louvre were inappropriate for public performances,\textsuperscript{52} Lully then leased the Jeu de paume de Béquet (also known as ‘le Bel-Air’), the first site of Perrin’s academy. This evidently was initial objection to awarding the privilege to Lully”: see Isherwood, Music in the Service of the King: France in the Seventeenth Century (New York, 1972), 181.

\textsuperscript{43} Indeed, Colbert’s signature appears together with the King’s on both Perrin’s 1668 privilege and Lully’s 1672 privilege (Bibliothèque de l’Opéra, Ms. anonyme C.994).

\textsuperscript{44} From an early age Louis XIV enjoyed seeing his orders carried out with a certain dramatic flair. See e.g. the account of the arrest of Cardinal de Retz on 19 Dec. 1625 as related by Charles Paulin, father-confessor to the 14-year-old king: given in Blaise, Louis XIV, trans. Greenberg, 81.

\textsuperscript{45} “Établissement d’une Académie Royale de musique en faveur du Sieur de Lully”, reproduced in Benoît, Musiques de royaume, 37-8. The text of the new privilege acknowledged Perrin’s ingenuity while it extolled Lully’s capabilities (‘but having since been informed that the trouble and care that the said Sieur Perrin took for this establishment has not been able to support fully our purpose and to raise music to the point that we have promised, we have been persuaded that in order to make it succeed better, it would be appropriate to give its direction to a person whose experience and ability have come to our attention, and who had enough capability to train some students to sing and to act on the stage, and to prepare some ensembles of violins, flutes, and other instruments’).


\textsuperscript{48} Louis’s letter to Colbert, dated 3 June 1672, is reproduced in René des documents historiques: Suites de pièces curieuses et inédites, ed. É. Chauvrey (Paris, 1874-5), ii. 112.
to have been but a temporary measure, for Lully leased the playhouse only for the remainder of the 1672–3 theatrical season. He retained many of the singers hired and trained by Perrin and Cambert, and engaged Anthoine des Brosses to serve as its maître de danse. To help finance his opera venture, Lully went into partnership with the set-designer Carlo Vigarani.

News of Lully’s coup caused a general uproar in the Parisian theatres, for the initial draft of the privilège prohibited performances ‘de plus de deux airs et de deux instruments’. When the Troupe du Roy learned of this, Molière and his actors formally protested against Lully’s restrictions. Evidently this objectionable clause was struck from the final version of the privilège, which carried only a general prohibition against ‘having performed any piece entirely to music, either in French verse or other languages, without the written permission of Sieur de Lully, upon penalty of 10,000 livres fine and confiscation of the sets, machines, decorations, costumes, and other things’.

Perrin’s 1669 opera privilège had carried similar musical restrictions to safeguard his monopoly, but they proved to have little actual effect when Molière’s troupe, the Marais company, and even the Italian commedia dell’arte actors continued to produce their repertory of musical comedies, comédies-ballets, and semioratoric machine plays. By May 1672 Molière had begun testing the efficacy of Lully’s monopoly by increasing the amount of music and dance in his productions. He revived several of the comédies-ballets (Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme, Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, Les Fâcheux, L’Amour médecin), and furnished several of his non-musical plays (L’Avaro, L’École des maris, Le Coup imaginaire, L’Étourdi) with ‘augmentation de symphonie’. He also teamed up with Charpentier and Beauchamps for the public première of La Comtesse d’Escarbiages, and introduced a new comédie-ballet version of Le Mariage forcé, for which they replaced Lully’s music with Charpentier’s. Parisians flocked to this musical production, even though the Troupe du Roy charged twice the normal admission for the first four performances; when the 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. Soon thereafter, Lully imposed his first set of specific restrictions on music. His ordinance of 12 August 1672 forbade any company from leasing Lully’s play-

house, limited theatres to a maximum of six singers and twelve instrumentalists, and prohibited the hiring of singers and instrumentalists engaged by Lully or of dancers on the royal payroll.

Lully’s Académie Royale de Musique opened on 15 November 1672 with Les Festes de l’Amour et de Bacchus. Ironically, Molière had a stake in Lully’s first opera, which consisted of a pastiche of pastoral scenes culled from La Pastorale comique, Les Amants magnifiques, and George Dandin, and tied together by Quinault’s libretto. Four days before its première, the Troupe du Roy commenced its third run of Psyché at the Palais-Royal. To replace those singers and dancers who had left to join the Académie Royale de Musique, Molière hired seven new singers, while Pierre Beauchamps returned to train a new corps de ballet. However, these preparations were not solely for Psyché, but also for a new pièce à spectacle scheduled for the following Carnival season: Le Malade imaginaire.

85 The ‘Ordonnance portant défences à toutes les troupes de comédiens francçois et étrangers de louer la salle qui a servy aux représentations des ouvrages de théâtre en musique’, dated 12 Aug. 1672, is reprod. in Benoît, Musiques de cœur, 38–9.

86 See Nuttier and Thoïna, Origines de l’opéra français, 272–3.

87 Among them were François Beaumariéville and Marie-Madeleine Bréguier.

88 See the testimonies of Guichard and Sablettes and of Souréde and Champuron, quoted in Nuttier and Thoïna, Origines de l’opéra français, 234–6. Souréde and Champuron later petitioned the Parlement (on 30 May 1672) in an attempt to block the registration of Lully’s opera privilège (fbd. 252–4).

89 The ‘Plaine de Molière et des comédiens contre Lully’ (dated 29 Mar. 1672) is reproduced in Jurgena and Mushfield-Müller, Contes de recherches sur Molière, 108–10.

90 See Benoît, Musiques de cœur, 37–8.

91 These performances are documented in André Hubert’s Registre; see S. Chevalley (ed.), Le “Registre d’Hubert” 1672–1673: Étude critique, Revue d’histoire de l’opéra, 25 (1975), 12–67.