

Scintillating baroque ...

Andrew Lawrence-King
Conductor from the continuo



... *Serious fun*

Chorégraphie

Music for Louis XIV's dancing-masters

Andrew Lawrence-King

Baroque triple harp

Music by Jean Baptiste Lully
preserved in the first baroque dance-book:
Raoul Auger Feuillet's "*Chorégraphie*" (Paris 1700)

Preludes by Jean Henri D'Anglebert
Overtures & dances by D'Anglebert, Lully & Campra

CHOREGRAPHIE
OU
L'ART DE DÉCRIRE
LA DANSE,

PAR CARACTÈRES, FIGURES
ET SIGNES DÉMONSTRATIFS,

Avec lesquels on apprend facilement de soy-même toutes
fortes de Dances.

Ouvrage tres-utile aux Maîtres à Dancer & à toutes les personnes qui
s'appliquent à la Dance.

Par M. FEUILLET, Maître de Dance.



A PARIS,

Chez l'Auteur, rue de Buffi, Faubourg S. Germain, à la Coui Imperiale.

Et chez MICHEL BRUNET, dans la grande Salle du Palais,
au Mercure galant.

M. DCC.

AVEC PRIVILEGE DU ROY.

From the beginning of his reign, Louis XIV adopted Apollo - the Sun-God dispelling darkness, the Patron of the Muses defeating barbarism, the handsome Hero defending against evil – as a metaphor for his own godlike royalty. In the *Ballet of the Night*, 15-year-old Louis appeared on stage many times, first in the role of one of the Hours, "*Here is the most beautiful Hour... concerning which they say that to make your fortune, you only need one Hour at court*". Finally Aurora proclaims, "*The Sun who follows me is the young LOUIS*", and the Sun-King reveals his new persona. "*Now I alone guide the chariot of light. A divine hand has given me the reins, and a great goddess sustains my rights. I am the Star among Kings!*"

Indeed, the king appeared amongst stars, for alongside him danced the dramatist, Molière, the composer Lully, and Pierre Beauchamps, dancer, *Composer of the King's Ballets*, director of the *Académie Royale de Danse*, choreographer to the Lully's Academy of Music, and the king's favourite partner in the *danse a deux*. Allegories of hours, seasons and months seen in his dances were echoed in statuary in the Versailles gardens. Beauchamps' *Night* was no mere *divertissement*: here shone that constellation of artistic power and patronage that was to establish French literature, French music, and French dance as *le bon gout*, the good taste to which all Europe, even France's political enemies, aspired.

Renowned as performer *full of vigour and fire*, Beauchamps gave the king daily dancing classes for 22 years and established many of the technical elements (including a new system of notation) for the noble style of 17th century French dance. Dance became one of the principal entertainments for Louis' court, newly established at Versailles, with aristocrats taking part in staged performances and formal Grand Balls. *After supper, everyone danced passepieds, menuets and courantes – "those current traverses/That on a triple dactyl foot do run/Close to the ground with sliding passages/Wherein the dancer greatest praise hath won."* Three times a week, there was *Appartement*: "*At six o'clock, everyone goes in procession to the drawing-room. Next to it there is a large room, where fiddles play for those who want to dance.*"

Louis' marriage to the dour Mme de Maintenon, Lully's fall from favour, and the Nine Years War led to a decline in the 1680s. But 1697 brought peace and an enthusiastic renewal of cultural activity at court, celebrating the arrival of Princess Marie-Adelaide of Savoy, and her marriage to Louis' grandson. *From new year to carnival, the court just danced and partied.* and the younger generation was *looking out all the old ballets to discover how music used to sound.*

In 1700, at the height of these celebrations, Raoul Auger Feuillet published his *Choregraphie*, a landmark in the history of dance. It is the first book to depict movement using symbols or *characters*, rather than descriptive words. Feuillet's pages show the sweeping line of each dancer's track across the stage, tracing out elegant geometrical figures aligned towards the *Presence*: the audience at the opera, the King at court, the assembled nobility in the ballroom. Along this line, Feuillet's *characters* show the movement of the feet, with musical timing indicated by bar-lines corresponding to the melody printed above. "*The Dance and Musick must so nicely meet/Each note must seem an Eccho to your Feet.*"

Bound together with Feuillet's instructions and dances were 9 more dances notated in the new system, choreographed by Louis Pécour, dancing-master at the Académie Royale. Throughout the collection, *Chorégraphie* draws on a common repertoire of popular ballet and opera airs anthologized in collections for all kinds of instruments. In *L'Harmonie Universelle*, Mersenne states that the triple harp was invented in Naples by 'Luc Anthoine Eustache', improved by the Roman composer 'Horace Mihi' and played by Jean le Felle 'en perfection': its repertoire was identical to that of the lute and harpsichord. Harpists played for Queen Henrietta in London, for the exiled Charles II in Amiens, and at Versailles. Louis particularly admired the harp-playing of Charles Burette, whose mother was also "an outstanding player of the harp and keyboard". (Burette's 1695 collection of *Pieces de Clavecin et de Harpe* is now lost). Robert De Visée, Louis' guitar-master, and Jean Henry D'Anglebert, *musician in ordinary for the harpsichord* made solo settings of Lully's orchestral music, as well as transcribing theorbo, lute and guitar pieces for keyboard (or harp).

Dance melodies were as popular on the streets as at court, sung by all *from the princess to the serving-maid in the tavern*. Lully transformed street music into noble *airs de ballet*, just as dancer Jacques Cordier made an elegant *courante* from the folksong *La Vignonne*. English country-dances (*contre-danses*) and Spanish *canaries* were imported to represent pastoral fetes. With the succession to the Spanish throne an ever-present political concern, Iberian dances were in vogue throughout Louis' reign.

Musicians and dancers alike composed or improvised variations on *Les Folies d'Espagne*. Feuillet's and Pécour's contributions were published in *Chorégraphie*, as were Pécour's choreographies for Campra's *entrées espagnoles*. Alongside these freshly-composed airs by Campra we also find music that had remained in vogue for almost half a century; dances from Lully's first ballets, reworked into several different operas and revived in countless productions. Pride of place is given to the operas of Lully's final years, dramas in which the King's twin obsessions, Love and Glory, vie for supremacy.

Together with Moliere's dramas, operas by Lully and Campra, and dances by Beauchamps, Pécour and L'Abbé, Feuillet's *Chorégraphie* is one of the crowning achievements of the reign of the Sun-King.

II International Harp Festival – Rio de Janeiro

Chorégraphie

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Andrew Lawrence-King: Baroque harp



ENTREE

Prélude in C
Entrée Espagnole (Pécour 1704)
Le Louvre (Pécour 1700)
La Mariée de Rollant (Pécour 1700)
Sarabande pour une femme (Pécour 1700)
Bouree pour les Basques
Chaconne du Vieux Gautier
La Contredance (Pécour 1700)

Jean Henri D'Anglebert
André Campra *L'Europe Galante*
Campra *Hésionne*
Lully *Une Nopce de Village*
Lully *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*
Lully *Xerses* / D'Anglebert
Gautier / D'Anglebert
Lully

SUITE

Air d'Apollon (Feuillet 1700)
Suite La Bourgoigne: (Pécour 1700)
Courante – Gavotte – Sarabande - Passepied
Gigues: (Feuillet 1700)
Gigue a deux - Gigue pour homme

Lully *Le Triomphe d'Amour* / D'Anglebert
Anon / Antoine Pointel 1700
Lully Roland - Anon

PASSACAILLE

Overture: *Le Retour des Plaisirs*
Courante: La Bocanes (Jaques Cordier c1625)
Sarabande
La Vignonne
Passacaille d'Armide (Pécour 1713)

Lully *Alceste*
Marin Mersenne *Harmonie Universelle* 1636
Lully *Une nopce de village*
Wilhelm Braide *Neue Lustige Volten* 1621
Lully *Armide* / D'Anglebert



INTERVAL



PAVANE & GALLIARDE

Pavane des saisons (Pécour 1700)
Galliarde

Lully *Pieces de Symphonie*
Jean Henri D'Anglebert

A L'ESPAGNOLE

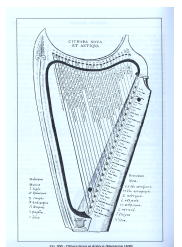
Prélude in D minor
Entrée Espagnole (Pécour 1704)
Les Folies D'Espagne (Feuillet 1700)

Jean Henri D'Anglebert
André Campra *L'Europe Galante*
Improvised

CHACONNE

Entrée pour les Paysans a l'Espagnole
Chaconne d'Amadis (L'Abbée 1725)

Lully *Xerses*
Lully *Amadis*



Dancing-masters

Jacques Cordier (fl 1625)
Pierre Beauchamps (+1705)
Raoul Auger Feuillet (c1650-c1709)
Louis Pécour (1653-1729)
Anthony L'Abbé (c1680-1737)

Composers

Jean Baptiste Lully (1632-1687)
Jean Henri D'Anglebert (1629-1691)
André Campra (1660-1744)

The Sun King: Louis XIV (1638-1715)

Chorégraphie

Music for Louis XIV's dancing-masters

Raoul Auger Feuillet published a book that would forever change the history of dance. Earlier treatises described dances in words, but Feuillet's 1700 *Chorégraphie* uses a carefully defined notation to indicate movements, floor patterns and rhythmic phrasing. Bound together with this volume were two collections of dances notated in the new system, 15 by Feuillet himself and 9 by Louis Pécour, dancing master at the Académie Royale, set to music from Lully's operas and ballets.

Feuillet's book preserves in glorious detail the noble style of French dance from the court of Louis XIV, the "Sun King" who himself appeared in countless masques and ballets, dancing both in elegant heroic roles and in witty grotesques. Some scenes are set in the imaginary landscape of a pastoral idyll, others depict great cities, dark prisons, or exotic foreign lands; Harlequins and acrobats tumble across the stage.

Feuillet's choreographies demand the highest levels of technical skill and artistic sensitivity. Dance signified to fashionable French taste what coloratura arias were for Italian opera: dazzling virtuoso display, breathtaking skill, glittering ornamentation and exquisite control. Nevertheless, noble amateurs at Louis' court were so highly accomplished that the most popular theatre choreographies were taken up as ballroom dances. Following on from the success of *Chorégraphie*, Feuillet and his disciples published a fresh collection, *Recueil de dances*, every year for the next quarter-century.

Similarly, harpsichordist Jean Henri D'Anglebert re-arranged for solo instrument some of Lully's grandest orchestral dance-music, including the famous *Passacaille* from *Armide*, choreographed by Pécour. Many of the dances chosen by D'Anglebert and other instrumental arrangers were also picked by Feuillet for his *Recueils*; clearly this was the music that most pleased Louis XIV himself, the chief arbiter of *le bon gout*, courtly good taste. *Bon gout* is crucial to French baroque style – all too often composers admitted that they had not written down the most important elements of their music, since these depended on the inexpressible subtleties of *le bon gout*.

D'Anglebert presents Lully's original treble and bass parts, adding a continuo realization and precise indications of the elaborate ornamentation of the Lullian violin style. In Lully's own scores, there are only sketchy indications of this ornamentation, but the complex rules of his style are comprehensively explained in a contemporary treatise by Georg Muffat. With francophile taste and teutonic thoroughness, Muffat codifies each bow-stroke, each *tremblement* (trill), *pincé* (mordent) and *port de voix* (appoggiatura), and every tiny detail is borne out by the ornaments notated in D'Anglebert's transcriptions.

Some dance-tunes were transformed as they passed between dancing-masters and musicians, spreading the elegant French style across the whole of Europe. A popular French melody, *La Vignonne*, is found in Mersenne's *Harmonie Universelle* as a courtly *Courante*, ascribed to the dancing-master Jaques Cordier, whose nickname was Bocane. This tune was also set by William Brade, an Englishman working alongside Dowland at the court of Christian IV of Denmark, but in the robust rhythms of an English masque dance. Many composers wrote variations on the Spanish *folia*, and these variation sets were then re-arranged for other instrumental combinations. The improvised *Folies* heard in this concert take inspiration from variations by D'Anglebert, Marais and Corbetta.

Many French ballets depict the national characteristics and musical styles of foreign countries: Campra's *L'Europe Galante* contrasts the noble French with the passionate Italians, proud Spaniards and exotic Turks. Other French operas have plots drawn from classical mythology, but the Muses often descend to walk the banks of the Seine, gods and goddesses take their pleasure in a French courtly garden. For Louis and his courtiers, Paris and Versailles were Parnassus and Olympus enough: if the divine King of France deigned to be present, then why exclude any lesser deity?

Louis associated himself with Apollo, God of Music, the epitome of moderation (*le bon gout* again), ardent lover, and personification of the Sun. Both D'Anglebert and Feuillet include in their collections settings of Lully's grandiose *Air d'Apollon*, performed in a ballet dedicated to the Triumph of Love. There are also many settings of popular tunes and character dances: *bourées*, *contredances* (country dances) and *La Mariée*, a peasant's dance for a village wedding. For this ballet, Lully made the comic role of the *vieillard* (old man) his own, employing his talents as singer, dancer and acrobat in a stage appearance that "*being known all the world over, may be justly termed one of the finest dances ever seen*", according to the dancing-master, Rameau. Many years later, Lully was brought back out of retirement to perform this role again, by Royal command.

There was a particular fashion for scenes *a l'Espagnole*, with fiery rhythms derived from the festive *Canaries* dance or the wild madness of the *Folies*. Feuillet choreographs dances in both these genres, as well as delicate *Sarabandes* and powerful *Gigues*. Many dances are called *Entrée*, an opportunity for a theatrical character or a courtly *beau* to make a grand entrance and display his particular qualities. *Passacailles* and *Chaconnes*, derived from Spanish ground basses *pasacalles* and *chaconas*, are the high point of many theatrical scenes, and most French operas end with a grand *Chaconne*. Over the simple pattern of a descending bass-line, composer and dancing-master weave elaborate patterns of variation and ornamentation, contrasting delicate solos with the massed (and highly drilled) forces of Lully's orchestra.

Dance was at the centre of the French performing arts, and was an essential accomplishment for any person of quality. Mersenne wrote that "God is the greatest dancing-master, who makes all creation dance to steps and patterns that are so full of happiness". French taste was haughtily dismissive of music that did not dance to the elegant metres of their own *bon gout*: "*Sonate, que veux-tu?*". French composers cast their music in the forms of fashionable dances, inspired by the grace and agility of the finest dancing-masters. Soame Jenkins wrote in his *Art of Dancing* that "*The Dance and Musick must so nicely meet, / Each note must seem an Echo to your Feet;*" praising Feuillet and his notation for rescuing from oblivion dancing's ephemeral beauty. Together with Moliere's dramas, operas by Lully and Campra, and dances by Beauchamps, Pécour and L'Abbé, Feuillet's *Chorégraphie* is one of the crowning achievements of the French Baroque.