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The relationship between gesture, affect and rhythmic freedom in the performance of French tragic opera from Lully to Rameau

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Citation

Wentz, J. A. (2010, December 9). *The relationship between gesture, affect and rhythmic freedom in the performance of French tragic opera from Lully to Rameau*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/16226>

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The Relationship between
**Gesture, Affect and Rhythmic
Freedom in the Performance**
of French Tragic Opera from Lully to Rameau



by
Jed Wentz

**The relationship between gesture, affect and
rhythmic freedom in the performance of
French tragic opera from
Lully to Rameau**

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van
de graad van Doctor aan de Universiteit Leiden,
op gezag van Rector Magnificus prof.mr. P.F. van der Heijden,
volgens besluit van het College voor Promoties
te verdedigen op donderdag 9 december 2010
klokke 11:15 uur

DOOR
JED WENTZ,
GEBOREN TE BEAVER FALLS, PA. U. S. A.
IN 1960

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Introduction

The research topic and the questions investigated

The title of this dissertation ('The Relationship between Gesture, Affect, and Rhythmic Freedom in the Performance of French Tragic Opera from Lully to Rameau'), is indicative of the genre to which my research has been applied, the *tragédie en musique*. My intent, in looking at this repertoire, has been to examine how expressive modifications of the basic rhythmic pulse could have been related to the use of gesture on stage and to the theory of the affects that was prevalent in the medical philosophy of the time.

My topic has not sprung, Athena-like, from a researcher's maggoty brain: in fact, there are a number of sources from the 18th century that indicate that the affective acting style *en vogue* at the Opéra exerted no small degree of influence on the flow of the musical beat. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, for instance, in a rare kindly mood towards French music, wrote in his *Dictionnaire de musique* (1768):

C'est peu de lire la Musique exactement sur la Note; il faut entrer dans toutes les idées du Compositeur, sentir & rendre le feu de l'expression, avoir surtout l'oreille juste & toujours attentive pour écouter & suivre l'Ensemble. Il faut, en particulier dans la Musique Française, que la Partie principale sache presser ou ralentir le mouvement, selon que l'exigent le goût du Chant, le volume de Voix & le développement des bras du Chanteur; il faut, par conséquent, que toutes les autres Parties soient sans relâche, attentives à bien suivre celle-là. Aussi l'Ensemble de l'Opéra de Paris, où la Musique n'a point d'autre Mesure que celle du geste, seroit-il, à mon avis, ce qu'il y a de plus admirable en fait d'*Exécution*.¹

Here Rousseau remarkably asserts that the performance style of the Paris opera was one in which 'la Musique n'a point d'autre Mesure que celle du geste', which, coming on the heels of a remark about 'le développement des bras du Chanteur' certainly refers to the gestures used by the singers on stage. Rousseau, of course, does not have the reputation of being a friend to French music, so one might be tempted to take this entry as a tongue-in-cheek criticism of the performance style associated with the *tragédie en musique*; numerous other sources, however, corroborate Rousseau's statement. Many of these will be examined in the course of this dissertation, therefore I give but one such here, taken from Blainville's hostile response to Rousseau's *Lettre sur la musique française* entitled *L'Esprit de l'art musical* (1754):

Dira-t'on que nos morceaux de chant ne répondent pas à l'exactitude du rythme? Il est à la vérité des situations où le chanteur, pour l'intérêt du geste, ou de certains tours de chant, presse ou ralentit la mesure, mais ce sont de ces situations dont il n'appartient qu'aux gens de goût de sentir tout le mérite.²

These quotations, and others like them, have strongly moulded and informed the double-pronged hypothesis of this dissertation, which is that *in the 17th and 18th centuries the musical timing at the Opéra was determined by the acting techniques, and, most particularly, the gestures, used on stage to a degree that exceeds our expectations today; and that it was the singer's task to transmit the passions of both music and text to the audience during performance in a manner consistent with a contemporary, pan-European theory of affect that was founded on the bedrock of the Galenist medical tradition*.³

The wording of the title of my dissertation demands further clarification: let me begin with a qualification of my chosen musical terminology. The vocabulary associated with musical timing has been—and still is—notoriously vague and subject to inconsistent usage. The appearance of the term *rhythmic freedom* in my title is the result of a desire to create a precise and uniform terminology to suit the particular needs of this dissertation. Fluctuations in the musical pulse took various forms during the period in question, all of which will here fall under the broadly comprehensive term *rhythmic freedom*.

I have limited my use of the word *rubato* to apply to one specific aspect of such musical performance practices. Indeed, I at first tried to avoid its use entirely, as it is an anachronistic and potentially confusing term. However, no elegant descriptor from the period could be found to express concisely that which the word *rubato* currently conveys: a consciously-made, short-term modification of the tempo for expressive purposes in which the vertical alignment of the parts is generally conserved. So, to be clear at the outset, let me state

1. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Dictionnaire de musique* (Amsterdam: 1768), tome premier, 328.

2. Charles Henri de Blainville, *L'Esprit de l'art musical, ou réflexions sur la musique, et ses différentes parties* (Geneva: 1754), 21.

3. Henceforth to be referred to as *Galenist affect theory*. For a fuller explanation see Chapter 2.

that the rhythmic freedoms of my title are all-inclusive, covering any and all deviations in performance from a strictly metrical realization of the notated score; in using the word *rubato* I shall indicate a fleeting alteration of the basic musical beat made in all parts of a piece simultaneously. On the other hand, I shall refer to disturbances of the vertical alignment (for instance, one in which the bass plays in time while the upper part does not) as *tempo rubato*. However, while both of these varieties of rhythmic freedom will be mentioned in my work, I admit that I am most intrigued by the concurrent tempo modifications which will be denoted here by the word *rubato*. Indeed, I propose that such alterations of the basic pulse could go very far: in fact, I believe that there are moments in certain airs, like ‘Venez, venez’ from Act 2 of Lully’s *Armide*, which demand, from the performer, a continually shifting pulse that corresponds to the affect of the words.⁴

Having discussed my chosen musical terminology, I shall now further qualify what I mean when using the word *gesture*: by *gesture* I mean any physical movement on the part of a stage performer that was intended to convey thought or emotion. The sources of the period make clear that a broader variety of motion was associated with the term *gesture* than those movements of hand and arm that we usually associate with the word today. Therefore the reader should bear in mind that the word *gesture*, when used here, can as easily denote a roll of the eye, a frowning of the brow or a subtle shifting of body weight as the assumption of striking, grand and complex attitudes.

Gestures, however, would have been used in a variety of musical contexts in the *tragédie en musique*. The bulk of the opera would have consisted of musical settings of text, and such passages, with, perhaps, the exception of choruses, would have required the singers on stage to act, and thus to make gestures. Moreover, French opera contains a considerable amount of dance music, and the dancers too would have sometimes used gestures. To these types of gesture-prone music can be added those textless passages unrelated to dance which were composed to accommodate stage action of some kind, such as the ritornellos of airs or the music composed for performers to enter and exit the stage. Finally, it is clear from the Rousseau/Rameau controversy concerning ‘Enfin il est en ma puissance’ from Lully’s *Armide* that even pauses in the score could be filled by the actor/singer’s gestures. This was, I felt, all too ample a basin in which to cast an academic fishhook—a dissertation is not a trawling expedition—and since the primary sources offered sufficient evidence to justify a study devoted solely to texted music, I chose to limit myself to the examination of those sections of the *tragédie en musique* with sung text. This means that non-texted preludes, dance music, pantomimes, *ritournelles* etc. have been excluded from my research, (as indeed has been the entire, and enticing, genre of the *mélodrame*). Though rejected here, I can fully imagine that such pieces could have been performed freely in certain cases. Indeed, in an earlier phase of my research, Baroque dancer/scholar Jennifer Thorp and I experimented with the introduction of rubato into certain choreographies from the Opéra repertoire that are preserved in Beauchamps-Feuillet notation. However, none of these musical genres has been included here.

If my general subject is the texted portion of *tragédie* scores, then the specific focal point has been recitatives and monologue airs, types of vocal music that are singled out in contemporary sources as being particularly relevant to the topic of rhythmic freedom on the part of the performer. Indeed, Mary Cyr had remarked on one particular example of this already in 1980, in discussing Lecuyer’s *Principes de l’art du chant* (1769):

Lecuyer’s inclusion of the monologue [...] in the category of pieces whose meter is less strict is worth noting.⁵

By choosing to study the genres (i.e. recitative and monologue) most commonly associated with rhythmic freedom in the musical sources of the period, I hoped to facilitate the direct application of such primary source material to my case studies (see Chapter 5). These sources sometimes refer to scenes that require only a small group of accompanying musicians (for instance, Jean-Léonor Le Gallois de Grimarest’s discussion of ‘Que l’incertitude’ from *Phaëton* by Jean-Baptiste Lully, to be discussed in Chapter 3), and sometimes to larger, orchestral accompaniments (for instance, Rousseau’s definition of ‘Exécution’, discussed above), without, however, making any distinctions between the two in terms of rhythmically free performance. This should not surprise us, for in general the sources lay more emphasis on the dramatic nature of the scene than on its orchestration. Charles Dill, in discussing different types of recitative, air and monologue, has shown that it can often be more useful to examine French opera using literary, rather than purely musical, criteria.⁶

4. As a performer I can testify that *rubato* and *tempo rubato* are not mutually exclusive terms. Indeed, these very different forms of rhythmic freedom can occur simultaneously, if the players understand one another well: the basic pulse can slow down or speed up equally in all parts while one player bends the rhythms either for expressive purposes or to create new dissonances. This ‘double whammy’ is, for me personally, one of the great beauties, and perhaps the greatest of delights, in performance. It is, however, a singularly rare occurrence.

5. Mary Cyr, ‘Eighteenth-Century French and Italian Singing: Rameau’s Writing for the Voice’, *Music and Letters*, vol. 61, no. 3/4 (Jul.-Oct., 1980), 318-337, 336.

6. See: Charles Dill, ‘Eighteenth-century Models of French Recitative’, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, vol.120, no. 2 (1995), 232-250, 248.

I therefore have not concerned myself here with the hypothetical difficulties of performing French music in a rhythmically free manner when a large orchestral accompaniment is involved; after all, I cannot know what 17th- and 18th-century ears might have found desirable or even acceptable in terms of ensemble playing. I shall therefore restrict myself to an examination of the sources themselves, without speculating as to whether or not the orchestra at the Opéra performed to 21st-century standards, or indeed, whether 21st-century ears would have been pleased by its performances. What I consider to be of greater importance is the association that is made in contemporary sources between freedom of tempo and scenes of strong emotional expression without regard to their designation as air, recitative, monologue etc. or to the size of the accompanying body. Strong emotions, I will argue, required commensurate gestures and muscle tension in the bodies of the singers: if gesture did influence timing on stage as I believe the sources suggest it did, then it will have done so no matter what the size of the accompanying body of musicians may have been.

The time frame of this study, the span of years implicit in the phrase *from Lully to Rameau* in my dissertation title, is a long one, and the choice of its perimeters requires some justification here.

My main interest has been in certain kinds of rhythmic distortions considered both emotionally expressive and aesthetically desirable in 17th- and 18th-century performances of the *tragédie en musique*. Although most of the sources that I have used date from the 18th century, in exploring the roots of later practice 17th-century sources have been consulted as well. My conclusion is that there would have been sufficient continuity in the use of rubato within the French operatic style to justify my examination of such an extensive period of time. I hasten to stress, however, that, although I am convinced that the basic links between rubato and gesture were stable from the creation of the *tragédie en musique* onwards (mainly because the underlying medical/philosophical theories supporting the expression of the passions were basically the same throughout this period, and because the expression of text remained a primary aesthetic goal), I am aware that specific aspects of stage performance and the use of gestures may have changed. Even within a given period divergent personal acting styles among singers could (and, I personally feel, would) have resulted in differently *rubato'd* performances.

I do not, however, see this as a problem. I am not presenting my work here as a precise reconstruction of any specific performance nor even as representative of the style of any particular decade, but rather as providing access to the basic underlying principles themselves, the *links*; and as I have said, I believe these links to have been relatively stable throughout the period. The reader therefore must be disappointed should s/he expect to expect to find, among the case studies, anything claiming to be a reconstruction of a monologue as it was performed at the Opéra in any given year. I hope only to expose possible relationships between acting, singing and rubato in the *tragédie en musique* based on medical, philosophical and aesthetic theories of the day. So while every attempt has been made to get as close as possible to what the gestures would have looked like within the given temporal and geographical contexts, I lay no claim to having researched any actor-specific gestures. I have not, for instance, tried to reconstruct the personal acting style of Jélyotte or Fel. It is up to someone else to do an exact, detailed and specific reconstruction: my work aims to serve as a basis for such future research.

To sum up these reflections on my choice of temporal perimeters, I believe that gesture-generated rhythmic freedom in performance dating from the entire period of the natural lifespan of the *tragédie en musique* (that is to say the age in which it was created and first performed) is the legitimate object of my study. I therefore, in choosing my dissertation title, originally settled on a designated period of 1673-1779, from the premiere of Lully's first *tragédie* entitled *Cadmus et Hermione* to the final 18th-century performance of his *Thésee*. Upon reflection, however, I was convinced of the imprudence of extending the period of my study so far as to overlap with Gluck's 1777 setting of Quinault's *Armide* text, as this was a very different kind of *tragédie*. I therefore finally chose to concentrate on the period up through and just beyond the *Querelle des Bouffons*: hence the phrase, *from Lully to Rameau*.

It is, however, far from my intention, in thus summing up my motivations for examining the phenomenon of French tragic opera in its various 17th- and 18th-century forms, to thereby imply that I have invented a new model for studying the genre. Indeed, by stressing the continuity of certain aspects of the *tragédie en musique* I but make happy use of paradigms and perimeters created by musicologists who have gone before me. Charles Dill, Lois Rosow, Antonia Banducci, and Belinda Cannone have all noted the continuity of the genre, while remaining keenly aware of its evolution through the course of the 17th and 18th centuries. For instance Dill, in his article 'Eighteenth-century Models of French Recitative', justifies his use of 18th-

century sources to throw light on the larger genre of the *tragédie* by falling back on Rosow's work on Lully.⁷ I therefore have not attempted to reinvent the wheel here, but rather to build on the solid foundations laid by noted scholars working in this field.

Finally, it is neither rhythmic freedom *an sich*, nor gesture in and of itself that is the focus of this work, but rather the nature of the *relationship* between the two. At first glance this relationship might seem very straightforward: the singer-actor made a gesture on stage and the accompanying instruments changed the underlying musical pulse in order to accommodate it. However, a problem arises when the question is considered from a performer's point of view; nothing that we know about historical, gesture-rich stage techniques would imply that the links between rubato and acting were simply those of distance travelled. That is to say, it was not the mere length, width, breadth or depth of movement that compelled the musical performer to destabilise the pulse. The amplitude of the gestures that were common in this period would not have forced the performer to break the musical time in order to accomplish them, for, except perhaps for some very exceptional cases, even the broadest sweep of the arm could have been timed to fit the unaltered beat of the music. Instead, we read of the music being adjusted to the gesture. Why?

I have sought to answer this question through both traditional academic study and a newer kind of inquiry known as *research in and through performance*. Such a marriage between divergent methods of scholarship is, indeed, the very cornerstone of the docARTES programme, through which my study has been carried out. This intertwining of academic and performance-based research has resulted in a particular style of writing and presentation for this thesis: the use of the first person, and the inclusion of much experimental video material, for instance, are both the direct result of the place given to performance in the research project, while more conventional scholarly methods are represented in traditionally researched and argued sections like Chapter 3. The following section of this introduction will clarify certain aspects my methodology and its application.

The interdisciplinary reach of this dissertation: primary sources, secondary sources and *research in and through performance*

A variety of disciplines are united to create that complex work of stage art known as opera, making the study of this form one ideally suited to a multifaceted approach: music, acting and dance as well as the scenic and costume arts spring easily to mind, but for my research a basic understanding of 17th- and 18th-century philosophy as it related to the physical manifestations of the passions also proved to be essential. Therefore the following enumeration of sources and disciplines is perhaps more extensive than might seem, at first sight, to be necessary. I shall begin by addressing the primary and secondary sources that were used. I have not attempted to plumb them all to their depths, as that would have taken me far beyond the reasonable boundaries of any dissertation. I have striven, however, to understand, as fully as possible, these sources as they directly relate to my hypothesis.

Furthermore, as mentioned above, this docARTES project has involved a substantial amount of performance-based research, only a small part of which will be documented in the case studies in Chapter 5. I have chosen not to subject the reader to documentary evidence (by means of video) of my Baroque dance lessons, or my early attempts at reconstructing the notation from Gilbert Austin's *Chironomia*, or of my first fumbling performances of spoken texts with gestures that were devised entirely by myself: it has not been my intention to map out in detail the earliest stages of the performance-based part of this research. Instead, I shall supply a written summary of how I endeavoured to create, through much practice, a reservoir of physical skills, of incorporated knowledge, on which I subsequently was able to draw during the course of researching this thesis.

The form of this dissertation, then, will reflect both kinds of research. Chapter 1 will be devoted to reflections on the especially tricky question of subjectivity as it relates to the *research in and through performance* model. Chapters 2 through 4 will explore the primary and secondary sources used to prepare Chapter 5, which will contain videos of my experiments in (re)creating, through performance, links between gesture and rubato in the *tragédie en musique*. More detailed information on the content of each chapter will follow below.

7. See: Dill, 'Eighteenth-century Models of French Recitative', 232-3.

Primary sources

Oratorical and acting methods from 17th-, 18th- and 19th-century France, Italy, England, Germany and Holland

I have relied mainly on French oratorical and acting sources to determine the style of the gestures used in the case studies. However, I felt it was essential, in order to help me to situate these texts in a larger European theatrical context, to get a general overview of the extant treatises from the period in which gesture is discussed. I decided that a number of these non-French sources, interesting as they are in themselves, were unsuited to my work: for instance, neither Lang's *Dissertatio de actione scenica* (1727) (which reflects Jesuit traditions and decorum)⁸, Engel's *Ideen zu einer Mimik* (1785) (which I feel is too specific to the Early Romantic German stage), nor the anonymous Italian treatise *Il Corago* (ca. 1630) have exerted any significant influence on this research. Johannes Jelgerhuis' *Theoretische lessen over gesticulatie en mimiek* (1827) and John Bulwer's *Chirologia* and *Chironomia* (1644) were read with interest but treated with circumspection. Those treatises which have been influential, including some which might seem, at first glance, essentially unsuitable (like Gilbert Austin's *Chironomia*, published in 1806) will be reviewed in some detail in Chapter 4. My main source for French oratorical and acting treatises, a recent work edited by Sabine Chaouche entitled *Sept Traités sur le jeu du comédien et autres textes: de l'action oratoire à l'art dramatique (1657-1750)* (2001), will be discussed, together with other secondary sources, later on in this section.

Philosophical works on the passions

A number of philosophical texts were examined in order to help me to clarify my understanding of important and pervasive notions about the body and emotion which were broadly held in the period studied: I felt that, in order to be useful, my research had to rest on a firm knowledge of the nature of the passions as they were then generally understood. Of the philosophical treatises which I examined, Descartes' *De Passionibus animae* (1649) is the best known: however, other, less well-known works such as Culpeper's *Galen's Art of Physick* (1652), Coeffeteau's *Tableau des passions humaines, de leurs causes et de leurs effets* (1620) and Thomas Wright's *The Passions of the Minde in Generall* (first published in 1601 and revised in 1604) have been at least as influential to my understanding of the topic as Descartes' more famous treatise.

However, one book must be mentioned here as particularly significant: Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet's *L'Introduction à la philosophie ou de la connaissance de dieu et de soi-même* (first published in 1722, but written before 1704), has been especially important to my work. It is representative of Catholic, post-Cartesian French thought on the topic of the body and its emotions, and thus illustrates what might have been believed about the passions by a broad, conservative public during the period in question. This generality of belief was deemed an important qualification because it is not the specific theory of the passions of any one philosopher that has interested me here, but rather the more widely disseminated received wisdom of the time. Composers and performers are more likely to have drawn on a somewhat vague set of shared beliefs, on a group of ideas that were simply 'in the air', when creating, performing and communicating their art to their audience than on any specific philosophy. Evidence of this can be found in Le Brun's famous *Conférences sur l'expression des passions* (presented as a lecture in 1668, but published posthumously), where Descartes' *De Passionibus animae* is plagiarized even though its theories are not fully endorsed. Le Brun intermingles the philosopher's ideas among older, Scholastic conceptions of the passions.⁹ We shall also see, in examining the theoretical works of Aaron Hill (in Chapter 4), that Descartes' book was used to support ideas of acting and emotion that ultimately can be traced back to Quintilian: in short, Descartes' system was sometimes seen by writers on music and acting as a convenient tool to promote styles of performance that could have existed just as well without it (this will be discussed more fully in Chapter 2).

Therefore, as far as the passions are concerned, I feel that it is sufficient, indeed, preferable, to proceed from a global, rather than from a specific, understanding of the topic. Differentiating exquisitely here between the ideas of the passions in the works of Descartes, Leibnitz, Kircher, Mattheson, Hume and Addison &c.

8. I have, however, used a plate from Lang's book in Chapter 1, because it shows an actor's stance that would have been acceptable on the French stage.

9. See: Stephanie Ross, 'Painting the Passions: Charles LeBrun's *Conférence sur l'expression*', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 45, no. 1 (Jan.-Mar., 1984), 25-47, 29.

would probably not reflect the opera singer's daily experience on the stage, and therefore would be of little use in the context of this dissertation.

French 17th- and 18th-century musical tutors

I have been strongly influenced by French vocal and instrumental tutors; the most important of these will be discussed later on in the thesis proper. Special attention will be paid to Jean-Antoine Bérard's *L'Art du chant* (1755) and the closely related *L'Art ou les principes philosophiques du chant* by Jean Blanchet (1756). These two works contain essential information not only on the basics of vocal technique in France during this period (which is very different from the standard technique taught at conservatories today), but also discuss expressive performative devices such as doubled consonants, ornaments and changes of vocal color. Furthermore, they contain extensive remarks on stage acting. Reflecting, as they both to a large extent do, the opinions of a singer (Bérard) who worked at the Opéra in the mid-18th century, they have proven to be invaluable to my research. However, Lois Rosow has shown, in her article 'French Baroque Recitative as an Expression of Tragic Declamation', that numerous sources from the period discourage the singer from beating time in recitative.¹⁰

18th-century annotated scores

A small number of 18th-century manuscripts and annotated printed scores have proven a source of inspiration to my work as a performer. The documents to which I here refer were prepared for revivals of pieces from the *tragédie en musique* repertoire at the *Académie royale de musique* and are now housed in the Bibliothèque de l'Opéra in Paris. Early in the research process I spent a week examining such revival materials, armed with Lois Rosow's indispensable 1987 article published in the *Journal of the American Musicological Society* entitled 'From Destouches to Berton: Editorial Responsibility at the Paris Opéra'.¹¹ I was looking, without attempting a systematic search of all the materials housed there, for annotations that might indicate rhythmic freedom in performance. Two scores were particularly inspirational in this regard. The first was a printed score of André Campra's *Idoménée* (the tempest scene of which contains the word 'lent' penciled in to indicate a surprising large-scale rubato as Neptune emerges from the sea), the other a heavily revised version of François Colin de Blamont's *Fêtes grecques et romaines* (which contains several startling editorial fermatas).

I will admit that my evaluation of the importance of such editorial evidence for my dissertation changed dramatically in the course of the research trajectory. Early on in the project I placed great emphasis on the evidence to be found in revival scores in general, and in that of *Fêtes grecques et romaines* in particular. The many fermatas penciled into the printed score of the prologue to this work at first seemed to me to be not only a gold-mine of information, but the very Eldorado for which I had been searching. I made a recording of one of these airs in a strongly rubato'd performance that took these editorial fermatas into account. I then presented the result in a paper given at the conference 'Music and Gesture II' at the Royal Northern College of Music in 2006. At that point I envisioned my dissertation being centered around a reconstruction of this prologue in a staged version with gestures.

Further reflection, however, tempered this initial euphoria: I realized that I hadn't a shred of evidence about what the motivations had been for placing these fermatas in the score. They might have been purely musical, or perhaps for the sake of gesture, or perhaps for some reason I could not imagine and which is now lost forever. Therefore, to attempt to reconstruct these airs and subsequently to draw useful, concrete conclusions from them seemed a foolhardy exercise. Secondly, any attempted reconstruction of a performance from a specific production would require the researcher/reconstructor to have a detailed knowledge of styles of gesture appropriate not only to the time frame of the revival, but to the particular singers themselves. It seemed audacious to me to hope to be so specific within the context of a subject that still is in its infancy in terms of research. Therefore a different route, the one presented here, was chosen in order to explore the research topic.

Because the above mentioned annotations frustratingly refer to musical freedoms on the part of performers without any specific reference to stage action, I was grateful to be able to consult Antonia Banducci's edition of Campra's *Tancrède* (published by Pendragon Press in 2006). This edition incorporates numerous annota-

10. See: Lois Rosow, 'French Baroque Recitative as an Expression of Tragic Declamation', *Early Music*, vol. 11, no. 4 (Oct. 1983), 468-479, 472.

11. See: Lois Rosow, 'From Destouches to Berton: Editorial Responsibility at the Paris Opéra', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, vol. 40, no. 2 (Summer, 1987), 285-309.

tions taken from a prompt book that had been prepared for a mid-18th-century performance of *Tancredi* at the French court. Without actually indicating gestures to be made on specific words, these annotations, which Banducci conveniently relates to specific passages of the score, give insight into stage movement in a broad sense. They helped me to set some general perimeters for stage action before I began my work on monologues from operas by Jean-Baptiste Lully and Jean-Baptiste Stuck (see the case studies in Chapter 5). More concretely useful still was an annotation for a gesture ('saisir') made in an 18th-century part of Sapho's air 'Bois chéris des amours' from Jean-Philippe Rameau's *Les Fêtes d'Hébé* (which had already been reproduced in Mary Cyr's 'Eighteenth-Century French and Italian Singing: Rameau's Writing for the Voice').¹² While none of these sources has anything like the detail of Austin's *Chironomia*, they have all nevertheless contributed to my understanding of stage practices at the Opéra.

Theoretical and aesthetic writings

I looked at numerous theoretical works, the most significant of which were those of Rameau. His *Observations sur notre instinct pour la musique* (1754), *Erreurs sur la musique dans l'Encyclopédie* (1755) and *Code de la musique* (1760) have all contributed to my understanding of the topic at hand. In addition to these, the work of Rameau's contemporary Pierre Estève was greatly helpful. Estève's *Nouvelle Découverte* (1752) is an example of a work which straddles the border between aesthetics and theory, and it has, along with Jean Baptiste Joseph Lallemand's *Essai sur le mécanisme des passions* (1751), been useful in supporting the validity of my application of what I here call *Galenist affect theory* (see Chapter 2) to French repertoire.

Also of special consequence are a number of writings published by various authors during the so-called *Querelle des Bouffons* (1752-ca. 1754). These pamphlets, as collected in Denise Launay's *La Querelle des Bouffons: Textes et pamphlets*, have formed a rich source of relevant material. They testify to the contentiousness which blighted this turning point in the history of the reception of the *tragédie en musique* in France. A close study of the vociferous *Querelle* pamphlets brings into focus issues of French taste, Italian vocal and compositional technique, and changing musical fashion. However, when I compared the hateful rhetoric of the anti-French troupe to less emotionally charged pro-French musical writings (as well as French singing treatises) I realized, with some surprise, that there was less pure polemic involved in this pamphlet war than at first had seemed to be the case. I have attempted, therefore, to extract reliable testimony about musical practice from these heated little essays, and then to verify it, where possible, with comparable information from more neutral sources (see Chapter 3). Several works related to the *Querelle* but not anthologized by Launay have also been consulted, for instance Blainville's *L'Esprit de l'art musical* (1754), which is only reprinted partially in *La Querelle des Bouffons*.

Encyclopedias and dictionnaires

I have been greatly aided in my research by reference materials from the period (some specifically musical, others more general in nature). Brossard's *Dictionnaire de musique* (1703), the *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* of Diderot and d'Alembert (1751-1772), Rousseau's *Dictionnaire de musique* (1768), Framery's musical contribution to the *Encyclopédie méthodique* (1791), as well as Panckoucke's *Dictionnaire des sciences médicale* (1812-1818) have been a source of information and inspiration, supporting both the academic and performance-based parts of this research.

Dance manuals from England, Germany and France

Finally, I learned much from various manuals written by dancing masters working in the French style known as *la belle danse* or *la danse noble*. I consulted Pierre Rameau's *Le Maître à danser* (1725), Kellom Tomlinson's *The Art of Dancing Explained* (1735) and Francis Nivelon's *The Rudiments of Genteel Behaviour* (1737) in order to learn about the posture, decorum and grace appropriate to the upper classes. These treatises were particularly useful for understanding the relationship between gender and movement in the period studied, and were invaluable to me while I was actually learning to dance. Indeed, theory and practice went hand in hand in this phase of my study: the important principle of *contraposto* (in which the dancer's raised arm is in opposition to the advanced leg: for example *left leg forward, right arm up*) was ingrained into me by my teachers during this period of dance training, while at the same time the study of the above mentioned treatises reinforced this basic rule in my mind. All of this was useful to me because the rules of

12. See: Cyr, 'Eighteenth-century French and Italian Singing', 332-3.

decorum, gender-specific movement and *contraposto* applied, in my chosen period, not only to dancing, but to acting and gesture as well.

I feel that this aspect of my research was particularly important because dance played a crucial role, during the 17th and 18th centuries, in the process of incorporating an aristocratic bearing into the bodies of the French nobility; and it was this bearing that the upper classes expected to find reflected in the stance and movements of tragic actors on stage. Children began regular dance lessons at an early age and learned graceful manners as well as etiquette from the dancing master. Indeed, even for adults, dance instruction was seen as a first step towards gaining nobility of carriage. For instance, on the 4th of November, 1776 George Bussy Villiers wrote to Lady Spencer:

You have no great loss in missing the operas at present; the first woman has I believe a fine Voice, & the Judges say in time she will make a great singer, but she does not know how to manage it to give it the least expression in the world, & her Figure is inconceivably awkward, tho' she is now learning to dance.¹³

Here is a report of a clumsy singer in London being given dance training—French dancing is undoubtedly what is referred to—in order to improve her appearance on stage. However, while I am convinced that dance was very important for developing an actor's general stance, various sources indicate that overtly Terpsichorean gestures would have been considered affected in a Thespian. Gilbert Austin, in his *Chironomia*, warns the actor against the 'affectation' of the dancer,¹⁴ an injunction supported to some extent by a much earlier statement, made to aspiring actors, by Charles Gildon, who noted in his *The Life of Mr. Thomas Betterton* (1710):

Being taught to dance will very much contribute in general to the graceful Motion of the whole Body, especially in Motions, that are not immediately embarrass'd with the Passions.¹⁵

Here Gildon implies that a successful performance of emotional or emotive gestures was not one that had been influenced or inspired by dance.¹⁶ From this I draw the conclusion that actors were sometimes willing to forgo the gracefulness demanded by *la belle danse* in order to portray the passions on stage. Yet a further essential difference between the arts of Terpsichore and Thespis was that actors were mainly concerned with the expression of text, while the gesture of dance was mute, and therefore more closely linked to the art of pantomime.¹⁷ To confuse these two genres of gesture, particularly in moments demanding passionate expression, was not considered an asset by writers on the art of acting. I have kept this in mind when preparing the gestures used in my case studies.

Secondary sources

Previous work on this topic: the musicological context

It is my intention, in this section, to sketch both the scholarly and the performance context in which this research is situated. I shall begin by looking at musicological work done on the topic and then examine important scholarly work on the art of gesture. I thereafter turn my attention to recent theatrical productions, and thus to the real-time sensual experience of French opera. It is a misnomer to speak of primary and secondary sources in the realm of performance, and yet I feel some reference must be made here to actors and musicians who are working on staged versions of *tragédies en musique* using historical acting techniques and gestures, as their work serves as a point of reference for my case studies. So my acknowledgment of the work of my musical colleagues will be found here, under the general heading of 'secondary sources'. To begin, however, with the secondary musicological sources is to note at the outset that surprisingly little work has been done that relates directly to my hypothesis that gesture and rhythmic freedom were linked at the Opéra. The only article that I have found directly addressing the topic of rhythmic freedom in this

13. Quoted in Ian Woodfield, *Opera and Drama in Eighteenth-century London: The King's Theatre, Garrick and the Business of Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 137.

14. See: Gilbert Austin, *Chironomia, or a Treatise on Rhetorical Delivery* (London: 1806), 378.

15. Charles Gildon, *The Life of Mr. Thomas Betterton* (London, 1710), 58.

16. This is why I have not based my work on that of the English dancing-master John Weaver, who incorporated the gestures of the pantomime into his ballets.

17. For those interested in an overview of dance sources from the period, I recommend: Christena L. Schlundt, 'Source Materials for the Study of French Dance (1643-1793)', *Dance Research Journal*, vol. 10, no. 1 (Autumn, 1977-Winter, 1978), 7-9. Even more extensive is: Schwartz, Judith L. and Christena L. Schlundt, *French Court Dance and Dance Music: A Guide to Primary Source Writings, 1643-1789* (Stuyvesant: Pen-dragon Press, 1987).

repertoire is Ulrich Siegele's 1974 contribution to *Studies in Renaissance and Baroque Music in Honor of Arthur Mende* entitled 'La cadence est une qualité de la bonne musique'. Having closely examined the *Dictionnaire de musique*, Siegele reached the same conclusions that I am proposing here (see Chapter 3) about Jean-Jacques Rousseau's attitude towards French and Italian rhythm:

In Frankreich reguliert der Sänger das Orchester, in Italien das Orchester den Sänger. In Frankreich führen die Oberstimmen den Baß, in Italien der Baß die oberstimmen.¹⁸

Siegele does not take his analysis any further than his chosen topic of Rousseau, nor is gesture mentioned, but he is at least concerned with rhythmic freedoms in French music and with Rousseau as a witness to them.

A more recent article, one which has been of great use to me in writing Chapter 2, is Clémence Monnier's 'Comment pense-t-on l'articulation du texte et de la musique au XVIIe siècle? Les théories de Perrin et Bacilly', published online in *Silène*. Monnier's article will be referred to more than once in my examination of Bacilly's *L'Art du chanter*.

If, however, very little work has been done that is directly related to my topic, a prodigious amount has been done all around it. I have been greatly aided by a large number of scholars who have looked at various aspects of the *tragédie en musique*: a number of the most salient of their books and articles can be found in my bibliography, and I therefore shall not mention them all by name here. However, I do wish clearly to acknowledge that I have been able to build on foundations of scholarship laid down in many areas important, though ultimately tangential, to my topic: the poetic structures of Quinault's lines, the place of dance in the operas, the cast members and the make-up of choir and orchestra; the list of related subjects is nearly inexhaustible. Though direct quotations from this supporting scholarship may be sparse, the influence of a host of musicologists who have worked on French opera is ubiquitous throughout this thesis.

Four major studies of gesture

If the musicological secondary literature which I consulted was rich and varied, the secondary sources on gesture have been no less so. Many scholarly articles on oratory and acting from Classical times into the 19th century have proven useful to me. However, I have relied most heavily on the following four books on historical acting: Angelica Goodden's *Actio and Persuasion: Dramatic Performance in Eighteenth-century France* (1986), Dene Barnett's *The Art of Gesture: The Practices and Principles of 18th-century Acting* (1987), Sabine Chaouche's *Sept Traités sur le jeu du comédien et autres textes: de l'action oratoire à l'art dramatique (1657-1750)* (2001), and the recent book of essays edited by Jacqueline Waeber entitled *Musique et geste en France de Lully à la Révolution: études sur la musique, le théâtre et la danse* (2009). The relationship between each of them and my work will be sketched briefly here.

1 *Actio and Persuasion*

Angelica Goodden's *Actio and Persuasion: Dramatic Performance in Eighteenth-century France* is a book of astonishing breadth, covering theatrical, operatic and balletic gesture, as well as that of pantomimes and the fairground theatres. Goodden seems to have read everything on her subject, and her work displays the advantages and flaws of any such comprehensive overview. In covering too much ground she can make generalizations where a more nuanced dissection would be of use, and her theoretical understanding could, from time to time, have been aided by practical application (as I hope to demonstrate in Chapter 1); but, a pioneering work, it remains a wonderful source of information for the scholar and of inspiration for the performer.

2 *The Art of Gesture*

Dene Barnett's book entitled *The Art of Gesture: The Practices and Principles of 18th-century Acting* (1987)

18. Ulrich Siegele, 'La cadence est une qualité de la bonne musique' in *Studies in Renaissance and Baroque Music in Honor of Arthur Mendel*, ed. Robert L. Marshall (Kassel: Bärenreiter; Hackensack, New Jersey: Boonin, 1974), 124-135, 132.

needs little introduction here: it has become a classic text on historical gesture. Barnett's knowledge of the entire range of historical acting sources was enormous, and his significance as an advocate and teacher of gesture cannot be overestimated. *The Art of Gesture* was meant to be a practical source book, and therefore Barnett presents his readers with an array of quotations from various primary sources, arranged by topic. He thus has supplied access to many obscure and forgotten works, and all scholars of gesture can be grateful to him for it. There are, however, several aspects of Barnett's scholarship that I find problematic, most notably his bringing together of texts written in disparate time periods and in different cultural contexts (from Classical Rome to the 19th-century Holland) as evidence of an unaltered tradition of gestural performance. Barnett proposes that there was a greater continuity in the performance of gesture over a longer period of time than I personally find justified: I cannot help but feel that gesture and acting techniques must have evolved as styles of theatre changed. However, though I disagree with that aspect of his analysis of the primary material, his compendium of gestures is very useful and as a bibliographical tool *The Art of Gesture* is to be treasured.

It is perhaps worth briefly noting here that Barnett was not only a scholar/researcher: he was also involved in stage productions using historical gestures, including one of Rameau's *Hippolyte et Aricie* produced by the English Bach Festival in July of 1978. In this version Jean-Claude Malgloire conducted an orchestra playing on authentic instruments, while Barnett, Michael Holmes and Belinda Quirey arranged the Baroque staging and dance. No video material has come to light of this performance. However, a review written by Malcom Boyd that was published in *The Musical Times* gives an impression of it having had an emotionally cool tone:

For a modern audience the highly stylized movements and postures inevitably place the work's passionate and tragic scenes at a distance, but it is surprising how easily one's responses adapt to them. The eye movements I found more disconcerting. Often they seemed to suggest an incongruous circumspection [...].¹⁹

This suggests that Barnett's approach to the emotional content of the gestures was different from mine. I will argue, especially in Chapter 4, that passionate realism was considered to be essential to the *tragédie en musique*, and that this was expressed most clearly not in the hands, but first and foremost in the eyes and face of the actor of stage.

3 Sept Traités sur le Jeu du Comédien et autres textes

Sabine Chaouche's collection of important French primary sources entitled *Sept Traités sur le jeu du comédien et autres textes: de l'action oratoire à l'art dramatique (1657-1750)* (2001), taken together with the companion monograph *L'Art du comédien: déclamation et jeu scénique en France à l'âge classique (1629-1680)* (2001), have proven highly influential to this dissertation. In *L'Art du comédien* Chaouche argues that the acting gestures of the 17th century only gradually freed themselves from Classically inspired oratorical *actio*. The path she traces out in *L'Art du comédien* is clearly discernible in reading the treatises that she edited in full in *Sept Traités*. Also of great use are the individual introductory essays, copious notes and excerpts from related treatises with which she has decked out her primary texts. Chaouche's superb knowledge and clarity of thought make her rich work both accessible and easily digestible. I shall refer to a few reservations that I have about Chaouche's approach later in this dissertation, but my debt to her is immense.

The treatises which Chaouche edited in *Sept Traités* are organized under the following headings in her table of contents:

Première Période:
L'influence de la doctrine classique

1. Michel Le Faucheur, *Traité de l'action de l'orateur ou de la prononciation et du geste* (1657)
2. René Bary, *Méthode pour bien prononcer un discours et pour le bien animer* (1679)

Seconde Période:
Les années de transition

1. Jean Lénor Le Gallois sieur de Grimarest, *Traité du récitatif* (1707)
2. Jean Poisson, *Réflexions sur l'art de parler en public* (1717)

19. Malcom Boyd, 'Hippolyte et Aricie', *The Musical Times*, vol. 119, no. 1627 (Sep., 1978), 781.

3. Luigi Riccoboni, *Pensées sur la déclamation* (1738)

Troisième Période:
L'autonomie théorique

1. Pierre Rémond de Sainte-Albine, *Le Comédien* (1747)

2. Antoine-François Riccoboni, *L'Art du théâtre* (1750)

Of these treatises the *Méthode* by Bary and de Grimarest's *Traité* have been the most important: however, all of these texts have influenced to some extent the type and style of gestures used in the case studies in Chapter 5.

4 *Musique et geste en France de Lully à la Révolution: études sur la musique, le théâtre et la danse*

Musique et geste en France de Lully à la Révolution: études sur la musique, le théâtre et la danse is a collection of papers edited by Jacqueline Waeber, whose 2001 article on Rousseau²⁰ entitled ' 'Cette Horrible Innovation': The First Version of the Recitative Parts of Rousseau's 'Le devin du village' ' has been very important to Chapter 3 of this dissertation. *Musique et geste* appeared in 2009, making it the most up-to-date book on my subject. It contains contributions by leading scholars in the field, and I have found many of its articles profitable and interesting, particularly Laura Naudeix's 'Le Jeu du chanteur dans l'esthétique spectaculaire de l'opéra Lulliste' and Waeber's ' «Le Devin de la foire»? Revaluating the Pantomime in Rousseau's *Devin du village*'. None of the contributors to the book, however, touch upon the links between gesture and rhythmic freedom that I am examining here. In fact, having reviewed previous research into gesture on the French stage, it seems that my work is entirely new to the field.

Recent performances of *tragédies en musique* in historical stagings

There have been five relatively recent stage productions of works by Lully using Baroque gesture: two productions mounted by Opera Atelier, one of *Persée* (2004) and one of *Armide* (2005), two Boston Early Music Festival productions, one of *Thésée* (2001) and more recently one of *Psyché* (2007) and Le Poème Harmonique's *Cadmus et Hermione* (2008).²¹ All of these productions have attempted to recreate an authentic experience of 17th-century opera, and though they were very different in their approaches, they all used historically informed acting, costumes, dance, music and sets to evoke—within the much more restricted budgets of modern productions—the style of the 17th and 18th centuries. The Toronto production of *Persée*²², directed by dancers Marshall Pynkoski and Jeannette Zingg, betrayed the influence of historical acting pioneer Dene Barnett and was characterized by a highly choreographed use of singers and dancers—intermixed—on the stage. Stage director Gilbert Blin a Frenchman working in America, produced two shows for the Boston Early Music Festival that displayed an intellectual rigour and a visual elegance that seemed quintessentially French. In contrast, the French production by Le Poème Harmonique, directed by Benjamin Lazar, seemed more strongly influenced by the Asian-tinted theatrical ideas of Eugene Green, an ex-patriot American writer working in France. These stagings made strong cases for the works performed, and are to be lauded for bringing this repertoire to life before a live audience.

However, none of these productions shed light on the specific research question addressed here: the gestures of the singers were timed to the musical pulse, rather than themselves determining its flow. Therefore, no link between rubato in the orchestra and gesture in the bodies of the singers was discernible in any of these productions.

Research in and through performance: the docARTES program

As I have mentioned above, the particular program through which my dissertation work has been carried

20. See: Jacqueline Waeber, ' 'Cette Horrible Innovation': The First Version of the Recitative Parts of Rousseau's 'Le devin du village' ', *Music & Letters*, vol. 82, no. 2 (May, 2001), 177-213.

21. There also have been recent historically informed productions of Handel operas: The Händel-Festspiele in Göttingen has a tradition of mounting performances with Baroque staging under the baton of Nicolas McGegan. Also, Sigrid T'Hooft has recently directed a historical production of *Radamisto* (conducted by Peter van Heyghen) for the Händel Festspiele in Karlsruhe. And Juan Manuel Quintana and Ivan Aléxandre's beautiful production of *Rodelinda* was performed in Buenos Aires in 2007. As none these productions involve the *tragédie en musique* they will not be discussed here.

22. I cannot discuss the staging of the 2005 production of *Armide*, because I have not seen it, nor does it appear to be available on commercial DVD.

out is one that gives pride of place to the insights of the performer. DocARTES scholars are encouraged to combine practical and theoretical knowledge in exploring their hypotheses, and the resulting doctoral theses are meant to speak with a distinct personal voice. Since the *tragédie en musique* is an amalgam of music, dance and gesture, it was clear to me at the outset that the docARTES approach to the subject should be one in which I as a researcher would not only read and reflect, but also make music, dance and act myself. The following section will set out how I approached each of these disciplines as a performer: how this performance experience was applied to my research will become apparent in Chapter 5.

Having been a professional traverso-player for 20 years before beginning my doctorate was a great advantage to me as far as musical performance was concerned. I already knew, before I began my docARTES study, a great deal of French repertoire through playing, teaching and performing it, and, moreover, I had already developed a strong, physically incorporated, personal performance practice for various kinds of rhythmic freedom in this repertoire. I had already *felt* in my body, while performing, how long to hold the tension in a fermata: this physical instinct was much more useful than actually trying somehow to calculate the length of the pause in my mind. However, while I knew I could rely on my musical instincts as far as rubato was concerned, I was not interested in simply applying the performance practice I had developed over the years as a flutist to this operatic research project wholesale: I was determined to allow other factors (such as gesture, and the physical pronunciation of the words) contribute to the final result.

However, an admittedly regrettable and significant lacuna in my musical training and talent, as far as the current project is concerned, is my inability to sing well. I considered having vocal lessons at the outset, but felt that this would be too much to take on in addition to dancing and acting. Therefore, my performances in the videos presented in Chapter 5 are either of me gesturing as I speak a text or of me reciting in *sprechstimme* to a basso continuo accompaniment. Neither of these solutions is ideal, but I felt that the poor quality of my singing, had I presented a *video chantante*, would have distracted attention from the gestures and the musical timing, and perhaps have incited unsought mirth.

However, while I cannot myself perform an operatic role, I have worked extensively, both as a player and a conductor, with opera singers. Particularly fortuitous in this respect was the coincidence of this research project with a run of 13 staged performances of Jean-Philippe Rameau's *Hippolyte et Aricie* that I conducted for the Dutch travelling opera company (the Nationale Reisopera) in June of 2009. My participation in this production allowed me to confront many of the conductorial difficulties of the genre first hand: the coordination of chorus, orchestra, dancers and spectacular stage effects makes the *tragédie en musique* a far more daunting genre than the average *opera seria*. It was not possible, however, for me to test my doctoral hypothesis full-out during this Rameau run: Stephen Langridge, the stage director who was involved in the project was antipathetic to the idea of using historical gesture. So the rhythmical freedoms of this production were rarely the result of stage action: still, I performed the work very freely, with much rubato; and this experience certainly helped mould my later work in the case studies. It was interesting for me to note the reactions of veteran Rameau singers like Paul Agnew (Hippolyte), Eugénie Warnier (Aricie) and Sophie Daneman (Phèdre) to my free performance style, which ranged from outraged disbelief to a whole-hearted delight in the dramatic and expressive possibilities offered by this unconventional rhythmic approach.

If the musical segment of the *research in and through performance* model was carried out with no extra training on my part, this was not the case as far as dance and gesture were concerned: before entering the docARTES programme I had had no training of any kind in either discipline. I needed therefore to plan at the outset how I would prepare my body for the final research videos.

I decided to begin where the performers themselves would have begun in the period: with dance. I was able to profit from baroque dance advice and lessons from a range of dancer-scholars: of these, Maria Angad Gaur, Jennifer Thorp and Ken Pierce had the most profound influence on my dancing, and on my understanding of the Baroque dance style. I had regular lessons with Angad Gaur, did a summer workshop with Pierce and I worked closely with Thorp as an accompanist at a number of conferences. Playing for Jennifer Thorp as she danced was an extremely rewarding and enlightening experience. During the first two years of this research trajectory I also spent long hours practicing my steps in a studio arranged for me by the Amsterdam Conservatory for that purpose. In addition I underwent a very intensive 3 month course of one-on-one Pilates lessons with ex-dancer and Pilates teacher Aleida van Poelgeest, in order to help me stabilise my pelvis and gain core strength. The results of all of this work could not be called spectacular: although I learned to read Beauchamps-Feuillet notation and worked on realizing that notation in my dance lessons, I

never became even a decent Baroque dancer. My use of the arms is still extremely limited and there is not a single aspect of my dancing that I would dare to call stage worthy. However, to be honest, stage performance had never been my goal: it simply is not realistic to imagine that one can begin Baroque dance at the age of 45, having had no previous dance training, and reach a professional level in the space of a few years. Yet I feel that my dance studies were a success within the context of this research, because I do not believe that I as a researcher need to be equally proficient in all disciplines in order to approach the *tragédie en musique* following the docARTES model: an ingrained knowledge, a working basis on which to build, these were my goals, and I believe that I got close enough to have made the game worth the candle.

After two years of dancing instruction I turned my full attention to the art of the *déclamateur*. My gesture teacher was Javier López Piñón, an actor/stage director specialised in historical acting techniques. The first task I set for myself in this new research phase was to learn to read and write the gestural notation published in Gilbert Austin's *Chironomia*, the mastery of which was useful for several reasons: not only did it enable me to work through the invaluable, gestured examples of English poetry published in various places in his book, it further enabled me to notate my own gestures. The ability to document various stages of gestural work on a specific text has shaped the nature of the case studies in Chapter 5. I have, in the intervening years, often performed both Austin's gestures in classes at the Conservatory of Amsterdam, and have presented/performed them at conferences. While I once again would be loth to describe my gestural work as stage worthy, I feel that it is at a higher level than my dancing. In this discipline, at least, I have developed a personal take on how the gestures should be performed, on their timing, their force and their relationship to facial expression. All of this will be noted upon in the commentary to the videos in Chapter 5.

The content and order of the chapters

The thesis consists of the following chapters:

Chapter 1: *Utilia non subtilia*: a performer's perspective on the phenomenon of research in and through performance

This chapter, which looks critically at both the nature of my work and my personal involvement in the research process, is divided into two parts. The first of these is concerned with how performance has influenced my evaluation of information from the sources. The second part looks at some of the advantages and pitfalls of such overtly subjective research. It does so by examining certain aspects of the reconstruction of the Roerich/Stravinsky/Nijinsky *Le Sacre du printemps* made by Millicent Hodson and Geoffrey Archer.

Chapter 2: Galenist musical affect theory and its place in the reconstruction process

Here the medical/philosophical basis for my work is laid before the reader. As this basis is critical for understanding my conclusions, it has been deemed essential to go into the topic in some detail. A number of important philosophers from Aristotle to Descartes who wrote on the affects have been examined, and Mattheson's *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* is placed in a pan-European philosophical context. A source of inspiration for my work is also discussed (*The Passions of the Minde in Generall* (1601) by Thomas Wright). The final section of this chapter discusses the concept of *vérité* as it relates to French theatrical performance; the concept of *vérité* is at the very heart of my argument for a musical/gestural link in the *tragédie en musique*.

Chapter 3: Primary and secondary sources for and against the use of rhythmic freedom in the *tragédie en musique*

This chapter presents evidence from both primary and secondary sources for and against a rhythmically free operatic performance tradition in France during the *Ancien Régime*. In it I first examine three major groups of sources: writings on music dating from the period 1668-1736, writings on rhythmic freedom inspired by the invention, in 1732, of D'Onzembray's *métromètre*, and, finally, works—in the form of either pamphlet or book—that were written during the *Querelle des Bouffons*. The first group represents sources uninfected

by the specific polemic of the *Querelle* itself. What they have to say about rhythmic freedom provides an *uncontaminated* basis for comparison with later sources. The second group of sources, dealing both with practical and philosophical reactions to the invention of a metronome that ticked, embodies a specific, single strand within the larger tapestry of thought on rubato, a strand that I wished to follow quite closely here. The examination of the final group of sources, taken from the *Querelle* literature, shows that combatants from both sides argued that the *tragédie en musique* was meant to be performed out of time.

General resistance among scholars and performers to the idea of rhythmic freedom in French music has determined the level of detail in this chapter: my aspiration was to show pro- and anti-rubato sources in a rich and detailed context, and I therefore have made this chapter the longest of the entire dissertation. It finishes with an examination of two articles from the 1980s that deal directly with my topic: Mary Cyr's 'French and Italian Singing: Rameau's Writing for the Voice' (1980), and Patricia Ranum's 'Audible Rhetoric and Mute Rhetoric: The 17th-century French Sarabande' (1986). Of these articles, Ranum's argues directly in favor of rhythmic strictness as an essential element for the authentic performance of this repertoire, while Cyr's does little to actively oppose such a doctrine. I, on the other hand, hope to show that the very primary sources cited by both Cyr and Ranum in fact indicate that French music was intended to be performed freely.

My feeling is that these articles give voice to opinions more broadly held at the time of their creation about rhythmic freedom in the performance not only of French music, but of Early Music in general.²³ Such opinions were certainly being promoted during my years as a student at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague, from which I graduated in 1985. My concern here with the legacy of 1980s scholarship (and with its relationship to performance) stems from the realization that players and singers of my generation are now teaching a younger one, and passing on, in some cases, the unquestioned wisdoms of their student days. I cannot help but feel that basic assumptions about the steadiness of the beat in French repertoire have gone virtually unchallenged since Cyr and Ranum published their articles. My hope is that this study can help to stimulate, even though I here focus on France, a more general re-evaluation of the place of rhythmical freedom in Early Music performances.

Chapter 4: Affect, gesture and timing at the Opéra: contributory sources

This chapter prepares the reader for the case studies presented in Chapter 5 by evaluating the context and applicability of the acting sources that have been used in this research. The tricky question of the appropriateness of specific gestures, and of their further application to the texts of recitative and monologue airs, will here be addressed from an historical, as well as a practical, perspective.

Chapter 5: Case studies

This chapter provides written commentary to a number of video clips showing performances of repertoire from the *Académie royale de musique*. The excerpts experimented upon include two scenes from operas by Lully ('Que l'incertitude' from *Phaëton* and 'Enfin il est en ma puissance' from *Armide*) and two scenes ('Du plus charmant espoir' and 'Barbares, laissez-moi') from *Polidore* by Jean-Baptiste Stuck. These performances are various in nature, some including gesture, some without, some to music and some purely spoken. I myself am one of the performers, using my incorporated knowledge of music, dance and gesture as a research tool, but I was also aided in this endeavour by students, friends and colleagues. Most of the gestures used were designed by myself to test specific theories. However, I will also present a performance of gestures for 'Que l'incertitude' that were designed for me by historical acting specialist Sharon Weller. Finally, two clips taken from the première of the 2009 production of *Hippolyte et Aricie* which I conducted for the Nationale Reisopera will be commented upon. In thus presenting the varied fruits of my *research in and through performance*, I hope to be able to demonstrate the viability of my hypothesis. After presenting the practical results of my research, I shall draw the dissertation to a close by advancing a number of conclusions drawn from these experiments.

Appendices

There are two appendices: the first contains a powerpoint presentation, entitled 'Gilbert Austin's System of

23. To go into the history of the troubled relationship between performative rhythmic freedoms and the ideals of the Early Music movement is well beyond the scope of this dissertation: however, a perusal of Arnold Dolmetsch's *The Interpretation of the Music of the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries* (1915) shows that the debate about rubato is an old one.

Gesture Notation: A Step-by-Step Starter's Kit', which I prepared for the meeting in Nantes in 2009 of the Association pour un Centre de Recherche sur les Arts du Spectacle aux XVIIe et XVIIIe Siècles (ACRAS). This will be of use to those readers who have not yet mastered Austin notation, and who are interested in deciphering the gestures I will present throughout the dissertation using that system.

The second appendix contains texts (with gestures notated) and scores of the pieces used in Chapter 5 as case studies.

Research Questions

Although many questions were raised during the course of this research trajectory, the following three have been particularly significant:

1. What was the link, at the *Académie royale de musique*, between non-musical aspects of period stage craft (such as facial expressions, attitudes and gesture) and rhythmic freedoms in the performance of the music itself?
2. How might the reconstruction of such links in performance today influence the sound of the score?
3. The final research question deals with matters of style and stylization: it is clear from the acting sources of the period that absolute naturalism, as we expect it in our current theater, was considered undesirable—too lowly—for the stage. Instead actors working in the genre of the *tragédie*, were expected to ennoble nature rather than precisely imitate it. Yet, at the same time, great emphasis placed on a quality known as *vérité*, which term was used to indicate a naturalistic representation of the human passions. How might these two ideas be brought together in the acting style of opera singers today, and what would the effect be on the audience?

I shall return to these questions at the end of this thesis.

In closing

I hope, within the flow of the chapters indicated above, to convince the reader that the following conclusions are the valid outcome of my research:

1. that the texted sections of the *tragédie en musique*, specifically monologue airs and other passages of strong passion, were meant to be performed out of time, with the singer changing the beat according to the affect of the words and their accompanying gestures;
2. that all aspects of a singer's performance (tone color, tempo, gesture, pronunciation etc.) were meant to correspond in an integrated and holistic way (*vérité*) to the affect of the text as it manifested itself in the performer's body on stage;
3. that this integrated approach to performance, when combined with a theatrical *noblesse*, resulted in a fluid, natural and affective, rather than a static, stylized and affected, performance;
4. and finally, that *vérité* involved the intense and realistic representation of emotion in the eyes, facial expression, vocal color and quality of movement of the actor, while the attitudes, feet positions and general style of the body movement was *dessiné*, or *drawn*, on stage. The overall look was an artistic rather than a realistically representational one, but the *feeling* was real. The double goal was to ravish the senses and move the heart of the audience.



Chapter I

Utilia non subtilia: a performer's
perspective on the phenomenon of
research in and through performance

1.1 Introduction to Chapter 1

The docARTES doctoral program is specifically oriented towards exploiting a performing musician's insights, and towards utilizing, during the research process, the kind of embodied knowledge that comes from years of playing professionally on stage. Such a starting point differs radically from a purely musicological doctoral study and therefore will yield correspondingly different results. Because docARTES (and other *research in an through performance* programs like it) is relatively new, I will, in this first chapter, present my views on the advantages and the pitfalls of such research. I will do so by musing upon the subjective nature of all scholarship, whether carried out by academics or performers/composers. In order to do so I have divided this chapter into two main sections.

The academic perspective will be examined in section 1.2, which is entitled 'The place of subjectivity in the research process'. Here I will look at scholarly work done on gesture and speculate on how it might have profited from a performer's experience. I have specifically chosen to look at the work of two scholars, Angelica Goodden and Sabine Chaouche, whose stimulating and comprehensive publications have had an enormous influence on this thesis. The point of my critical remarks is therefore not that a performer's insights should replace the hard work of academics, but rather that the different kinds of insights which result from these two disciplines must be brought into synthesis in the body of the performer/researcher before she or he tackles the reconstructive task.

Section 1.3, entitled 'The performer-researcher as re-constructionist', examines the necessity for performers who are involved in reconstruction first to make scholarly choices when evaluating source material, and afterwards to follow their own intuitions and to perform with passion in order to truly convince their audience of the results of their labours. My proposed reading of the paradoxical nature of reconstruction in the performing arts—that the presentation of a reconstructed, historical and therefore relatively 'objective' performance of a lost work can only convince when material personal to the performer is inserted into the production—is highlighted here in a detailed examination of a major project carried out by choreographer Millicent Hodson and art historian Kenneth Archer on Nijinsky's *Le Sacre du printemps*. Critics of Hodson's work might argue that she betrayed her sources in following her own artistic intuitions. I, however, will argue that Hodson can never be Nijinsky himself, no matter how well she may have researched his work, and that she therefore must follow her own inspiration when she metamorphoses from scholar into re-constructive choreographer. Hodson has acted in good faith, doing her best to retrieve what she could of Nijinsky's steps; conscious of her own role in the production, she has published extensively on the subject. Hodson thus has fashioned not only a fascinating spectacle in performance, but also, through her careful and copious documentation of the process of reconstruction itself, a foundation for further work on the ballet.

1.2 The place of subjectivity in the research process

1.2a Introduction

A scholar engaged in practice-based research involving reconstruction must guard against allowing personal taste and prejudices to cloud analytical judgement. Of course, there is always the peril that research of any kind, whether academic or performance-based, will reveal more about the researcher than about that which he investigates; but reconstructing-by-doing, because it results in performance, is especially prone to such distortions.

However, if I begin my dissertation with a warning finger raised, it is because I feel that such an admonition goes a long way towards solving the problem: self-awareness is essential, and constant critical reference to the sources can keep personal flights of fancy in check. I strongly feel that practice-based reconstruction has real advantages that counterbalance the disadvantages of its inherent subjectivity. In the end, a performer knows that, even after the most meticulous study, he must 'make it work' when he gets up in front of an audience; of course this performance process can lead to distortions, but at its best it can produce insights that might elude scholars working purely through reading and reflecting on books. Indeed, in some cases a performer's insights could even aid scholars in the very assessment of their historical sources. A salient example of how

differently the same source material can be read by a scholar and a researcher-performer can be found in comparing my interpretation of 18th-century posture and stance with that of Angelica Goodden.

1.2b An example from *Actio and Persuasion*

Goodden's *Actio and Persuasion: Dramatic Performance in Eighteenth-century France* (1986) is a fact-packed overview of French acting styles in a variety of genres (including dance, spoken theatre and opera). I have expressed my admiration for her work already, and by no means wish to be overly-critical here. However, I am not always entirely in agreement with her interpretations of her primary sources. For example, in discussing a sketch by Watteau known as *Quack Doctor Selling his Wares in the Open Air*, Goodden provides the reader with the following exegesis:

The scene is set in a fairground, and shows a stage which a quack doctor has momentarily taken over from actors to sell his wares. His attitude and gesture are those of a skilled performer, and the monkeys sitting on the rope that holds up the stage curtain seem to admire his eloquence as much as the audience does.¹

Looking at this interesting sketch, I cannot help but draw a rather different conclusion about its meaning [see figure 1.1]: the mountebank is holding aloft a bottle in an attempt to direct the attention of his audience away from a pair of funambulistic monkeys. The attitude of the gentleman in question is, however, not that prescribed for skilled actors by the treatises of the period: though his feet are in an open fourth position, his knees are rigidly straight, and their angle suggests that his weight is distributed over both, rather than entirely on one, of his legs. In fact, a stance which divided the body's weight over both feet was used by artists and stage actors in this period to characterise lower-class people. One need only compare the posture of Sancho Panza to that of Don Quichotte in Charles Coypel's painted pendant pair, now in the possession of the Banque de France², to see what I mean. If we compare Watteau's drawing to a plate from Franciscus Lang's *Dissertatio de actione scenica* (1727) [see figure 1.2] we can see the difference such a subtle shift of weight can make: Lang's elegant actor seems light on his feet, and presents his right, unweighted leg with a clearly-bent knee. If we then return to the Watteau, we see that the Frenchman is far from presenting to us Goodden's elegant and skilled performer of oratory in mid-monologue, but rather captures the posture of a proud and confident salesman mid-pitch who, though perhaps aspiring to, has not yet not attained an elegance proper to the stage. He throws his weight back as his ware-laden arm swings up to divert his public's attention away from the monkeys who will soon meet in the middle of the curtain-rope, there undoubtedly to perform some simian sleight-of-paw. His heavier, more weighted stance reflects his solidity and lower social status.

Indeed, if we compare the stance in *Quack Doctor Selling his Wares in the Open Air* to that of the male actor in Watteau's oil painting entitled *Actors from the Comédie Française*, we can see that Watteau knew about conventional theatrical posture. Not only is the actor's left leg bent, enabling him to gesture in a perfect *contraposto* (the advanced left leg being in opposition to the gesturing right arm), but he displays the attendant displacement of the hips which the figure in *Quack doctor* entirely lacks (<http://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/html/w/watteau/antoine/2/18actors.html>).³

In fact, the stance of Watteau's mountebank reminds me of the rigid knees and backward weight shown in a satirical French print issued earlier in the century by Nicolas Guérard entitled *Le Cotillon*. [see fig. 1.3] The awkward, unbalanced posture of the hen-pecked gentleman in this print shows that he is, in fact, no longer a gentleman. He has lost his status, is being pulled by his nose, and has been shamefully crowned with a feminine headdress. He has become a comical figure. His rigid, locked knees, his body weight distributed over both feet, and his bent back are in pronounced contrast to the elegant upright posture and superb composure of his female companion. Even more striking is the gulf between his slouch and the ideals of 18th-century dancing: the print is entitled *Le Cotillon*, and wryly refers to men being led a merry dance by their wives. The background of the print indeed shows two couples in mid-dance. The men's postures are crooked and graceless, reflecting the bending of the masculine will. Thus posture and stance visually underscore the role-reversal against which the print warns its male viewers.

1. Angelica Goodden, *Actio and Persuasion: Dramatic Performance in Eighteenth-century France* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 144.

2. See: Thierry Lefrançois, *Charles Coypel, peintre du roi (1694-1752)* (Paris: Arthéna, 1994), 264-5.

3. Last accessed, 29-05-2010



Figure 1.1 *Quack Doctor Selling his Wares in the Open Air*. Ashmolean Museum.



Figure 1.2 An elegant stance from Lang's *Dissertatio de actione scenica*. British Library Board, 638.c.17.

Figure 1.3
Nicolas Guérard,
Le Cotillon,
Bibliothèque nationale de France.



Figure 1.4
Nicolas Guérard,
Le Preteur et l'emprunteur,
Bibliothèque nationale de France.



Yet another Nicolas Guérard print, entitled *Le Preteur et l'emprunteur*, shows gentlemanly and graceless postures next to each other. [see figure 1.4] Here we see two gentlemen, one elegantly offering yet another meaningless promise of payment to the friend who has come to reclaim his loan. The borrower retains his elegant, gentlemanly status, while the lender claps one hand to his forehead and inelegantly throws his weight back in shock. The warning is that the honest lender can be driven into financial trouble, may indeed even lose his status along with his money. He has been fooled by the upright appearance of his friend, whose noble posture falsely underscores his honour and who protests his good faith by gently laying one hand to his breast.

The point of these comparisons is that it seems highly unlikely that Watteau, who, as we have seen, was by no means unacquainted with actors, is presenting the mountebank of his sketch as a 'skilled performer', admired for his eloquence by man and monkey. I don't want to overstate my case: not every image from the 17th and 18th century shows the delicacy of wit exemplified by Watteau's *Quack Doctor*. I have, indeed seen prints and paintings of people of quality (and of tragic actors as well) from the period displaying less-than-ideal postures⁴, but I would argue that the 'bite' of *Quack doctor* lies in the very juxtaposition of the mountebank's lack of elegance and the impromptu country stage on which he finds himself. It seems that Goodden, an erudite scholar whose book shows she has read everything imaginable on her subject, was charmed by the Watteau scene into a misinterpretation; a misinterpretation that a more physically-oriented approach might have prevented: for just as the man whose childhood was largely spent on the football pitch will, in later life, watch a match with a vastly different eye, with intuitive, gut-reactions and twitching legs, and will thus understand the match in a different way than his non-playing companion; and just as an ex-ballerina will experience a performance of *Giselle* in a more visceral way, feeling the pirouettes as much as seeing them, and therefore will judge the ballet differently from her non-dancing companion; so too does a performer-researcher of 18th-century gesture experience visual depictions of such gestures in a more physical, practical way than someone who has merely read about them. How often have I not stood before a painting in a museum, or a statue in a Baroque garden, and tried to take on the posture myself, often to the amusement of passers-by? How many hours have I not spent with written descriptions from the period of actors and their gestures, trying them out physically, looking for the flow in a set of gestures, trying to *make it work* (an admittedly subjective process). I would propose that by doing so one can learn something objective about these sources, a truth that reading alone cannot supply. When I looked at the Watteau for the first time I was immediately surprised by the mountebank's knees. After having spent so much time on stance and having keenly felt the difference between a bent and a straight leg in my own body, I sensed Goodden's interpretation was questionable even before I could analyze why I thought so. If I am correct in my reading of this drawing, then it was not my brain that offered the initial insight, but my knees.

1.2c An example from *Sept Traités*

A more recent example of scholarly work that could benefit from a practitioner's insights can be found in Sabine Chaouche's *Sept Traités sur le jeu du comédien et autres textes: de l'action oratoire à l'art dramatique (1657-1750)* (2001). Even as astute and knowledgeable an author as Chaouche can struggle to read gesture and to understand precisely how it functioned; looking for deeper intellectual significance where a performer's practicality might have given sufficient explanation, she sometimes passes over simpler solutions in search of more complex ones. For instance, in her preface to René Bary's *Méthode pour bien prononcer un discours, & pour le bien animer* (1679), Chaouche censures Bary's approach as a dogmatic and prescriptive one, indeed, as one which at times leads him to the recommend the use of an arcane and obscure sign-language:

Les règles concernant la gestuelle ne laissent pas de place à une multiplicité de signes pour une même passion, pour une même fonction ou pour la même idée. L'exposé est péremptoire et le ton dogmatique. Quelques explications pourront paraître parfois aux lecteurs du XXe siècle assez déroutantes (parce que certaines significations rattachées au geste n'existent plus ou se sont perdues depuis) ou peu convaincantes. S'il est compréhensible que la tendresse exige de porter le doigt sur la poitrine puisque à cette époque on considère que celle-ci est le siège des passions (l'une des parties nobles du corps avec la tête), on ne voit pas pourquoi l'ironie exige de tourner le tête du côté

4. Mickaël Bouffard-Veilleux (University of Montreal), in his forthcoming dissertation, entitled 'Le bon air et la bonne grâce: Attitudes et gestes de la figure noble dans l'art européen (1660-1789)', distinguishes various stances available to the upperclass male, some of which involved straightening the knees. In so far as an actor could use one of these straight-kneed postures to represent an upperclass person (for instance, in comedies), they could be seen as applicable to the stage: this, however, does not negate the fact that the preferred, unaffected or neutral stance for tragic actors on stage was one in which the un-weighted leg was bent at the knee. See also: Michaël Bouffard-Veilleux, 'Aristocratic Standing and the Five Positions of French Noble Dance in Portraiture', forthcoming in *Artibus et Historiae*.

gauche seulement ou pourquoi étendre, élever et abaisser le bras serait «une marque» de «la solidité de la chose».⁵

In fact, the three gestures mentioned here require a very different approach in order to be made sense of in performance. The first, that of touching a finger to the breast when speaking of emotional things, is, as Chaouche points out, an example of a gesture whose significance is related to beliefs held at the time the treatise was written. In Bary's day, as we shall see in chapter 2, the heart was considered to be the seat of the passions; therefore, for a 17th-century orator to point to the breast on the word *tendresse* would have resonated with his audience's ideas about their bodies and emotions.

Chaouche is unsure, in discussing her second example, of the significance of looking *left* when speaking ironically. This is precisely where embodied knowledge could have helped, for I believe, based on my practical experience, that it is not looking to the *left*, but rather looking *away* that is important here. The orator will have been gesturing, almost certainly, with his right hand.⁶ His head will be turned in the general direction of that hand, so we can assume a basic position in which hand and face turn, to use nautical terminology, towards 2 o'clock (*hq*— in Gilbert Austin's notational system).⁷ Therefore, in order to turn slightly away from the space of gestural action, away from the spot where the proposed object of irony has been presented by the orator's right hand to the imagination of the hearer, the speaker would have no option but to turn his head to the left: to turn even farther to the right would be against the rules of *actio*, resulting not only in a cramped position of the neck, but presenting the speaker's profile to his public and sending his voice to the side, rather than directly to the audience. Thus, turning to the left is the most practical option when turning *away from* the object to be ridiculed, and comes much more naturally to the speaker than twisting into a constrained, and indeed, forbidden, position to the right.⁸

But why turn at all? I would propose that the intention here is to reinforce for the eye what the ear was hearing. The audible cue of a change in vocal tone (the orator's voice would also have to change in order to properly express irony) would thus be underlined by a visual cue.⁹ The speaker turns away from the imagined object of his irony, and distances himself from it. We can see this principal at work in Bary's description of *le geste du Résolu*:

Le Résolu veut qu'on tourne la tête vers le côté gauche, parce que ce tournement de tête marque qu'on est fort éloigné de faire ce que les autres désirent:

Example

Qu'on ne m'en parle plus, la pierre est jetée.¹⁰

Again, it is not turning left per se, but turning away from the place where the right hand had been active and towards which the head had formerly been turned, which gives this gesture its meaning.

The third of Chaouche's examples is worth an even closer look. Bary's prose description of a gesture he considers suitable to express the concept of solidity is taken by Chaouche as exemplary of the dogmatic and arbitrary nature of his text. She imagines the orator extending, raising and lowering his arm, and fears that the results would be 'déroutantes' or perhaps 'peu convaincantes'.

To the performer, however, the passage in question makes perfect sense. Here is what Bary writes:

Le Fondamental veut que le bras étendu s'élève & s'abaisse, parce que cette action marque la solidité de la chose.

Example

Cette doctrine, Messieurs, est incontestable, elle à été le fondement de tous les Pères.¹¹

5. Sabine Chaouche, ed., *Sept Traités sur le jeu du comédien et autres textes: de l'action oratoire à l'art dramatique (1657-1750)* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2001), 193.

6. La Faucheur writes, in his *Traité de l'action de l'orateur* (1657), 'Il faut faire tous les gestes de la main droite, & si on y emploi la gauche, que ce soit seulement pour accompagner la droite, & encor en s'élevant toujours moins haut qu'elle. Mais de faire ses Gestes de la gauche seule, c'est une chose que l'on doit éviter comme étant de mauvais grâce.' See: Chaouche, ed., *Sept Traités*, 132.

7. Bary quotes the following from Le Faucheur's *Traité de l'action de l'orateur*: '[...] la tête doit être toujours tournée du côté du geste.' See: Chaouche, ed., *Sept Traités*, 222. As was explained in the Introduction, I shall use Austin notation throughout this work. For a guide to reading this notation see Appendix 1.

8. Poisson, in his *Réflexions sur l'art de parler en public* (1717), corroborates my theory: 'le Méprisant & le Colère tourne les yeux du coté.' See: Chaouche, ed., *Sept Traités*, 416. Surely scorn and irony are related passions, and one could speak ironically to or of any person or thing which one holds in contempt?

9. Bary writes: 'L'Ironie veut qu'on tourne la tête du côté gauche, & qu'on parle d'un ton exclamatif & railleur.' See: Chaouche, ed., *Sept Traités*, 225.

10. Bary, 'Méthode' in *Sept Traités*, 226.

11. Bary, 'Méthode' in *Sept Traités*, 226.

The first attempt shows clearly how the timing of the word and the vocal inflection are influenced (and in this case undermined) by the gesture: the voice rises in an inappropriately friendly way on the first syllable of *fondemant*, while the gesture falls incorrectly on the final, rather than on the accented, syllable. My consequent facial expression of disbelief and embarrassment betray the sincerity of this first attempt. The results of the second attempt mirror those of the first, except that the entire energy level is higher, due to a certain grim determination on my part 'to make it work'. The first syllable of *fondement* rises very high, and the gesture falls mid-word. The consequent hilarity on my part came from the surprise I experienced at my inability to control my body and voice, despite my determination. After this attempt I realized that it was a hopeless effort. My final try is therefore less ambitious and somewhat more convincing, and I get to the end without laughing. However, the factors I found disturbing in the first two attempts are equally discernible here: the first syllable of 'fondement' rises very high and the gesture falls softly on the final, unaccented syllable of 'fondement'.

Of course, what I have presented here is subjective, the result of my personal interaction with Bary's text. I am consciously using my own experience as a source of information, perhaps not on an equal footing with Bary, but one nearly as important when it comes to performance. I have not taken scientific studies of the relationship between gesture and speech into account. I am aware that there is a vast psychological literature on affect display that I could have consulted, but I felt that the four videos presented here would suffice considering the specific *research in and through performance* method of this dissertation. The conclusion that I drew from these experiments was that not only reading 17th- and 18th-century sources about gesture, but actually trying to perform it, is essential in the reconstructive process.

1.3 The performer-researcher as re-constructionist

1.3a Introduction

As a researcher into gesture and as a re-constructionist of the historical stage, I find that I share concerns and have frustrations in common with scholars working on Baroque dance (or to be more accurate, *la belle danse*). Serious scholarly reconstructions of 17th- and 18th-century movement (whether Terpsichorean or Thespian) are so rare and of such limited audience appeal, especially in comparison to the ubiquitous and wild success of the Early Music movement, that re-constructionists like myself lack an important tool for our research: an ample body of work at which one can look, upon which one can reflect, and to which one can react. Moira Goff presents much the same argument in her article in *Preservation Politics* (2000) entitled 'Imitating the passions: reconstructing the meanings within the *Passaglia of Venüs & Adonis*':

A significant problem for those researching dance in the early eighteenth century is the difficulty of access to performances of reconstructions of the notated dances by dancers specializing in the style and technique of the period.¹⁴

Goff then develops her argument to show that the ability to experience performance *sensually* is essential to anyone engaged in the discourse which surrounds the performing arts of the past, and I would concur that the physical reality, the sensual experience, of that which is under discussion is crucial to a proper evaluation of the evidence.

To take an example from a later style of dance, Lesley-Anne Sayers felt that it was insufficient, in her study of the original decor, designed by Jukulov, for Diaghilev's Ballets Russes production of *Le Pas d'Acier*, just to *look* at the single surviving photograph of the set; in order fully to understand the interaction between choreography and decor she used the photograph to construct a working model. She wanted to be able to physically see and touch the set (in miniature form), and, indeed, to be able to play with it. The dancers in the original production hadn't moved through a static photograph during performance, but had manipulated, and had their movements inspired by, a lively, moving decor:

The black-and-white photograph of Jukulov's design looks very severe, but in rebuilding the model its playfulness becomes apparent. Everything moves, swivels, revolves, and requires human interaction to bring it to life.¹⁵

But if I here plead for the useful, even sometimes essential role of physical manifestations, of re-creativity,

14. Moira Goff, 'Imitating the Passions: Reconstructing the Meanings within the *Passaglia of Venüs & Adonis*' in *Preservation Politics: Dance Revived, Reconstructed, Remade*, Stephanie Jordan, ed. (London: Dance Books Ltd., 2000), 154.

15. Lesley-Anne Sayers, 'Diaghilev's 'Soviet Ballet': reconstructing Jukulov's set design for *Le Pas d'acier* (1927)' in *Preservation Politics*, 35.

in research in the performing arts, I do so fully aware of the dangers that are attached to such processes: it is very difficult, perhaps even impossible, for any researcher, no matter how purely cerebral his method, to strike a perfect balance between subject- and objectivity in research. Even when he (or she) has a clear view of the role of personal insight in the reconstruction process, he can sometimes choose to ignore aspects of the evidence which conflict with his artistic vision. A salient example of this can be found in the work of Millicent Hodson who, together with Kenneth Archer, has made a brilliant reconstruction of the original choreography and decor for the 1913 production of the Roerich/Stravinsky/Nijinsky *Le Sacre du printemps*.¹⁶ Hodson and Archer are dedicated scholars who have documented their meticulous search for this lost masterpiece in numerous publications. In many ways their work method has been a major inspiration for mine:

Basically each reconstruction progresses from scholarly efforts to artistic tasks. The first stage is research, and in this period we attempt to be as scientific as possible. We follow every lead in the same way as archeologists do, to be sure that we have complete documentation before we try to draw conclusions or attempt any synthesis. At this early stage we consciously practice the kind of objectivity that is the intention of scientists. We allow options and possibilities to accrue.

The second stage is the synthesis of what we have gathered and learned. That means the facts are now framed by the larger context of all we have discovered. For example, what we know about the original creative process can now directly affect our interpretation of facts. At this point we prepare the design dossiers and choreographic score, which are both records of the research and handbooks for execution.

The third stage is our work with ballet companies. We use the design dossiers to guide costume and decor ateliers and the choreographic score as the basis for our studio rehearsals.

Just as ballets do not make themselves, they do not reconstruct themselves—we must intervene. As reconstructors, we place ourselves in the middle of a historical process. From the time we start the dossiers and choreographic score until the time the ballet is premiered, we function as artists as much as scholars. We must construct the lost parts and incorporate them with what we have been able to retrieve of the original. We take responsibility for the intervention and never claim that the reconstruction is identical to the original work. A 100% likeness would be impossible to achieve, even if all the collaborators survived, because they themselves would now perceive their work differently.¹⁷

This manifesto, published in *Preservation Politics*, shows a healthy understanding of not only the limitations imposed upon, but also the freedoms enjoyed by, the performer-researcher. Hodson and Archer propose that re-creativity should be grounded on meticulous research. And yet, they make clear that in the final phase of their work they function as artists engaged in creating a performance. So it ought not to surprise us that the end of the Hodson/Archer reconstruction of *Le Sacre du printemps*, a labor of love which cost them years of painstaking research to complete, contains what would appear to be a wilful and glaring negation of the evidence so meticulously gathered. Somewhere in the final stages of the process, at the moment when researcher mutates into creative artist, Hodson took decisions as a choreographer which did not align perfectly with the evidence she had gathered as a scholar. It is this particular aspect of her recreation that I would like to explore in depth here.

Before proceeding however, I must briefly explain why I shall here devote a major portion of my thesis to the reconstruction of a work entirely unrelated to my chosen topic of the *tragédie en musique*. I seek no parallels of style in Hodson's *Le Sacre*, nor a source of inspiration for my reconstructed French Baroque gestures. Instead, I aim to examine the reconstruction process itself. It is therefore inconsequential to my argument whether the work to be revived dates from 1713 or 1913: the objects of my inquiry are the choice of philosophical guidelines and the 'mediating role' of the re-constructionist. Hodson's rich documentation of her progression from scholarly research to reconstruction, and finally to public performance has invited me to scrutinize her work on *Le Sacre* here.¹⁸

16. Premiered by the Joffrey Ballet in 1987.

17. Kenneth Archer and Millicent Hodson, 'Confronting Oblivion: Keynote Address and Lecture Demonstration on Reconstructing Ballets' in *Preservation Politics*, 4.

18. My access to performances of her ballet has been through two commercially available DVDs: the first is of the Joffrey Ballet version, which was filmed for television and broadcast as part of the documentary entitled *The Search for Nijinsky's Rite of Spring* (1989) which has been released by Classical Video Rarities; and the second is the Bel Air Classiques release of the Mariinsky Theatre production entitled *Stravinsky and the Ballet Russes* (2009). A copy of each has been included with this thesis.

1.3b Evidence and reconstruction

I am most concerned with the choreography for the very end of the ballet, the final bars of the famous ‘Danse sacr  le’. Here Hodson had two main sources to help her. The first was a four-hand piano score annotated by Stravinsky in 1913 with handwritten notes concerning the choreography.¹⁹ The second was a verbal description of the dance made years later by the choreographer’s sister, Nijinska. Here are the indications given by these sources for the end of the ballet:

Three bars before rehearsal number 201, Stravinsky wrote into his score ‘She [the Chosen One] falls down’.²⁰ One bar later he marked ‘She falls again’.²¹ Then, at rehearsal number 201, Stravinsky added ‘They [the Ancestors] approach, running to her’.²²

Nijinska, on the other hand, describes the end of the ballet thus:

The last jump, a high wave of the arms, and the old ones, who are guarding the Sacrifice, catch the unbreathing body in their arms so as not to let it touch the ground[.]²³

Here Hodson, in her role of reconstructor, had to evaluate the relative usefulness of two important sources: the first being the composer himself, and his markings made in a score during the ballet rehearsals, and the second being the memories of the choreographer’s sister, on whom the dance was originally set. Hodson sees the evidence from these sources as conflicting:

Nijinska’s description of movement for the ending differs slightly from critical accounts and Stravinsky’s notes [...] Stravinsky indicates two falls for the Chosen One—presumably to the ground—before the lift by the Ancestors in Bearskins. The reconstruction follows Stravinsky, allowing the Chosen One to fall onto the ground and reach up before she is lifted [...].²⁴

Faced with conflicting evidence, Hodson gives preference to the composer’s remarks, notated at the time of the creation of the ballet, above the testimony, given much later, by the original Chosen One. This is by no means an illogical choice: it seems safe to assume that evidence dating from the very year of the premiere would be more accurate than much later recollections. However, upon deeper reflection, it seems that Hodson had quite a difficult choice to make: after all, Nijinska was not just watching the dancers, as Stravinsky was, but had actually danced the role herself. She had felt it in her own body, and had participated in its creation. Indeed, it had been created on and for her.

Moreover, the specific choreographic moment which we are discussing is highly significant, something one would not be likely to forget: it is the climax of the entire work, and Nijinska’s testimony describes no minor detail thereof. Nor is she vague; in fact, she gives a clear and coherent account. Surely she would remember whether she fell to the ground or into the hands of her fellow dancers?

Faced with such a complex choice, Hodson casts her lot with the composer, but not whole-heartedly: she disregards Stravinsky’s specific cues, allowing her own aesthetic sense to take over as her research moves from scholarship to creative act. As she noted in her *Nijinsky’s Crime Against Grace*:

The reconstruction follows Stravinsky, allowing the Chosen One to fall onto the ground and reach up before she is lifted, but falls and lift are more effective when timed a few measures later than he indicates.²⁵

19. Stephanie Jordan, in *Stravinsky Dances: Re-visions Across a Century* (London: Dance Books Ltd., 2007) has put forward compelling arguments against the applicability of these annotations to any choreography related to Nijinsky. This is a sticky question, the resolution of which goes far beyond my purposes here: I shall, therefore, for the sake of my argument, assume that these markings refer to the 1913 performances *because Hodson thought they did at the time of her reconstruction*. But I am aware that the complex history of Stravinsky’s annotations has most likely been obscured by myth-making on the part of the composer himself.

20. Igor Stravinsky, *The Rite of Spring, Sketches 1911-1913: Facsimile Reproductions from the Autographs* (Nevers: Boosey & Hawkes, Music Publishers Ltd., 1969), appendix, 43.

21. Stravinsky, *The Rite*, appendix, 43.

22. Stravinsky, *The Rite*, appendix, 43.

23. This is taken from an unattributed typescript of a translation of passages from Vera Krasovskaya’s *The Russian Ballet Theater at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century* (1971) (the typescript cites pages 426-443) that is contained in the Howard D. Rothschild Collection on Ballets Russes of Serge Diaghilev, now housed at Houghton Library, Harvard University, (call number: BMS Thr 502 (116)). The same quotation appears word for word in Millicent Hodson, *Nijinsky’s Crime Against Grace: Reconstruction Score of the Original Choreography for Le Sacre du printemps* (Stuyvesant: Pendragon Press, 1996), 200.

24. Hodson, *Nijinsky’s Crime*, 200.

25. Hodson, *Nijinsky’s Crime*, 200.

So in the end, Hodson follows neither of her two sources to the letter, but rather makes her own artistic choice about the apotheosis that gives meaning to the whole work: the sacrificial offering of the Chosen One.

However, yet another description of the end of the ballet exists, one not directly cited in *Nijinsky's Crime Against Grace* (though it appears in the bibliography), which accords with Nijinska's account. It appears in a piece that was published in *Montjoie!, Organe de l'Impérialisme Artistique Français*, in 1913 and attributed to Stravinsky himself. This is the notorious 'Ce que j'ai voulu exprimer dans *Le Sacre du Printemps*', which the composer later attempted to disown. Here is the relevant passage:

Lorsqu'elle est sur le point de tomber épuisée, les Ancêtres l'aperçoivent, glissent vers elle comme des monstres rapaces, pour qu'elle ne touche pas le sol en tombant; et ils l'enlèvent et la tendent vers le ciel.²⁶

Stravinsky's later rejection of the authorship of this article has been shown to be disingenuous²⁷, but even if it had been published without his consent, the *Montjoie!* piece does show that Nijinska's much later account is in perfect agreement with one which was published in Paris just after the première. This means that the discrepancy Hodson sees between the various accounts of the Chosen One's falls could not be the result of a change of choreography occurring between the initial creation of the dance on Nijinska's body and the première, during which the dance was performed by Maria Piltz (this change of personnel was due to Nijinska's unexpected pregnancy).²⁸ It also means that both of the accounts of the final fall which Hodson finds irreconcilable are given in sources attributed to Stravinsky and dating from the year of the ballet's première. So the question must be asked: is this conflict which Hodson sees real?

I believe that the evidence points towards compatibility rather than conflict. Indeed, I would argue that even though the two falls notated in Stravinsky's piano score would seem to indicate the utter exhaustion of the Chosen One, they need not, consequently, have been falls to the ground: one can hardly imagine the Chosen One could have gotten off the floor quickly enough to fall again one bar later unless her falls were more like stumbles. Hodson's reconstruction, as she herself notes, maintains the first fall and transforms the second into a reaching upwards ('allowing the Chosen One to fall onto the ground and reach up before she is lifted'), a movement that would have required quite a different stage direction than Stravinsky's succinct 'She falls again'. However, if one imagines that these falls were more like staggers of fatigue than fainting fits one can quite easily combine both Nijinska's and Stravinsky's accounts into one coherent story-line. I would propose the following: at rehearsal number 200.3 the weakened Chosen One falls to her knees; she subsequently stands and falls again (on beat two of the next bar); she thereafter continues her dance until, at 201.1, the Ancestors, perceiving that death is near, rush forwards. One bar later there is ample time to realise Nijinska's description of a last jump, and the final fall into the waiting arms of the Ancestors, 'pour qu'elle ne touche pas le sol en tombant'.

This reading is further justified by Robert Craft's remark that '[...] at No. 201, the elders stand like witnesses at an execution, and extend their hands to the victim as she falls in time with the flute scale.'²⁹ Indeed, the sketches for *Le Sacre* show that Stravinsky had originally conceived of the bar after 201 as a very dramatic *ad libitum*, a fermata held long enough to accommodate a diminuendo followed by a crescendo that would lead to an upwards rushing scale, performed by winds and strings *colla parte* and further strengthened by a crescendo on the cymbal. [see figure 1.5]

All of this points towards Stravinsky's original conception of the passage as having been one meant to accommodate some important stage business, the timing of which would have had to have been dictated by events on stage. After all, we know from a letter written to Roerich in 1911 that Stravinsky keenly visualized the proposed stage action while composing *Le Sacre*:

26. Igor Stravinsky, 'Ce que j'ai voulu exprimer dans *Le Sacre du printemps*', originally published in *Montjoie!, Organe de l'Impérialisme Artistique Français*. Quoted in Truman Campbell Bullard, 'The first performance of Igor Stravinsky's *Sacre du printemps*' (PhD diss., The University of Rochester, Eastman School of Music, Ph. D., 1971), volume III, 6.

27. See: Richard Taruskin, 'Russian Folk Melodies in "The Rite of Spring"', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, vol. 33, no. 3 (Autumn, 1980), 501-543, 502.

28. Since Nijinsky's choreography was abandoned after the 1913 season, Nijinska never performed this dance on stage. It would appear, however, that she remembered it well. Indeed, Hodson herself recounts that Nijinska's account was sent to Piltz for confirmation and that the two dancers on whom this role was first set were in complete agreement. See: *Nijinsky's Crime*, xxiii.

29. See: Robert Craft, 'The Rite of Spring: Genesis of a Masterpiece', XXII, in Igor Stravinsky, *The Rite*. One can imagine, after repeatedly denying Hodson and Archer access to Stravinsky's annotated 1913 four-hand piano score and then proceeding publicly to chastise the pair for producing the ballet without having consulted said score, that the research team might be less than enthusiastic about believing any evidence presented to the public via the medium of Robert Craft. Richard Taruskin only too justly excoriated Craft's behavior as 'the height of hypocrisy.' See: Richard Taruskin, 'Stravinsky's Art and Craft', *The Musical Times*, vol. 129, no. 1746 (Aug., 1988), 385.

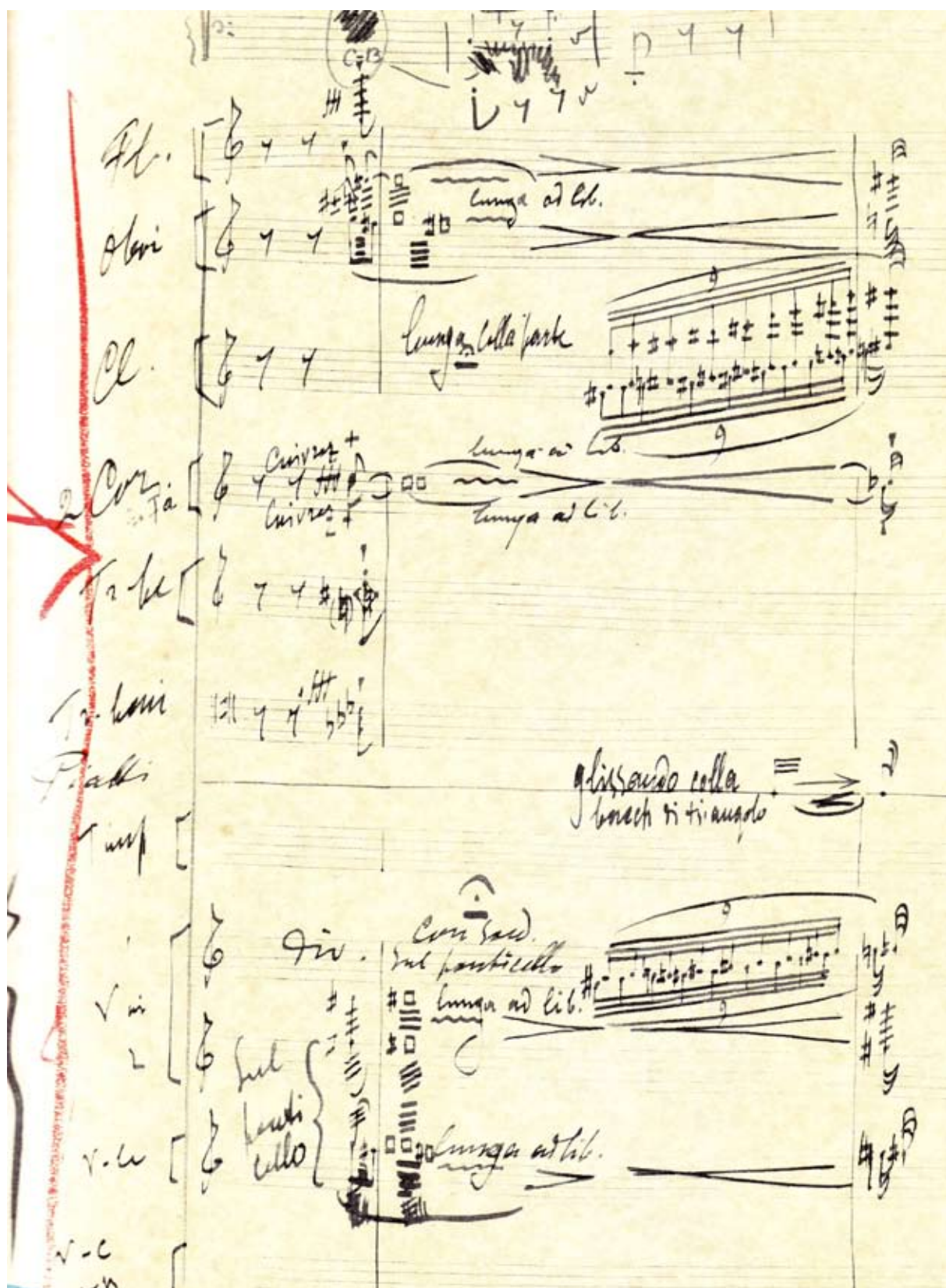


Figure 1.5 Stravinsky's sketch for the end of *Le Sacre*, Collection of M. André Meyer, Paris.

I have already begun to compose, and have sketched the Introduction for ‘dudki’, and the “Divination With Twigs” in a state of passion and excitement. The music is coming out very fresh and new. The picture of the old woman in a squirrel fur sticks in my mind. She is constantly before my eyes as I compose the “Divination With Twigs”: I see her running in front of the group, stopping them sometimes, and interrupting the rhythmic flow.³⁰

Robert Craft also noted that:

The sketches [of *Le Sacre*] manifest that he composed with choreographic action as vividly and precisely in mind as he did with the cinematographically synchronized story-ballet *Petrushka*.³¹

It seems certain, then, that the composer’s initial conception of the end of the ballet, with its decrescendo/crescendo and fermata ‘lunga ad lib.’, must have corresponded to a mental image of some significant stage action which required both theatrical expression and a timing dictated not by the composer’s score, but the performer’s movement.³² And what could have been more important to the whole ballet, more dramatic and more dependent on the vagaries of actual performance than the collapse of the Chosen One into the arms of those ‘rapacious monsters’, the Ancestors? The resulting sequence of movements would have been highly theatrical, and would have strongly accentuated the moment of the girl’s death: the Chosen One jumps a final time on beat one, hovers on the brink of death during the decrescendo/crescendo on the fermata ‘lunga ad lib.’, collapses into the arms of the elders on beat 3 (marked by an upwards scale in the flutes), and then is lifted to the sky on the final chords. To be fair, it is true that Stravinsky had modified his initial musical idea by the time of the premiere (judging from the autograph score now in the Paul Sacher Stiftung in Basel³³) to a form closer to the one we know today. In this 1913 score Stravinsky has done away with the decrescendo and the crescendo, while the upward scales, no longer *colla parte* but now only in the flutes, are marked *piano non crescendo*. But the fermata and the ‘lunga ad lib.’ are still there, perhaps bidding the conductor to watch the stage in order to time the flutes’ scales to Maria Piltz’s final fall?

So, faced as we are with this strong evidence for an alternative to the timing of the choreography for the end of the ballet as presented in both the 1987 Joffrey Ballet version of Hodson’s reconstruction and the much more recent Mariinsky Ballet version, we must ask what could have been the motivation for Hodson’s choices? It is certain that she was well aware of all of the sources mentioned here; they all appear in the bibliography for *Nijinsky’s Crime Against Grace*. So, what might have influenced her in making her decision?

I believe it has to do with the second stage of her work as an artist-scholar. It is to this idea that I will now turn, in an attempt to examine the role of artistic vision in the reconstruction process.

1.3c Researcher-Performer, Artist-Scholar: Hodson’s choice

Before discussing possible motivations for Hodson’s artistic choices, it will be useful to analyse how her actual choreography for the final bars of Stravinsky’s masterpiece looks, and perhaps even more importantly, what affect it projects.

The scenario I have proposed for the death of the sacrificial victim emphasizes the brutal, barbaric nature of *Le Sacre*’s plot by highlighting the Chosen One’s physical sufferings (her repeated falls, her struggle at the point of death to stay upright, her will to keep dancing—to live—despite her total enervation). The demand of the community upon her to die for their benefit, the absence of compassion in the tribal members who both witness and enforce the final outcome of the dance, indeed, all the horror of what Robert Fink has called *Le Sacre*’s ‘proto-fascist scenario’³⁴ would be thrown into disturbingly high relief by such a performance: after all, these are the very qualities that make Pina Bausch’s famous 1975 version of the ballet so gripping and emotionally exhausting to watch (see: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KXXVuVQuMvgA>

30. Igor Stravinsky, *The Rite of Spring*, appendix, 30.

31. Igor Stravinsky, *The Rite of Spring*, XXII.

32. A comparison of the 1913 autograph score in the Paul Sacher Stiftung with the earliest pocket score shows that Stravinsky eliminated several fermatas from the notation as his taste for performative freedoms diminished. For Stravinsky’s attempts to re-make *Le Sacre* as abstract music see: Richard Taruskin, ‘A Myth of the Twentieth Century: The Rite of Spring, the Tradition of the New, and ‘the Music Itself’’, *Modernism/modernity*, volume 2, number 1, January 1995. <http://muse.jhu.edu/login?uri=/journals/modernism-modernity/v002/2.1taruskin.html> (last accessed 29-05-2010).

33. I must thank Prof. Dr. Ulrich Mosch for his invaluable help in this matter.

34. Robert Fink, ‘‘Rigorous (Quarternote= 126)’’: ‘The Rite of Spring’ and the Forging of a Modernist Performing Style’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, vol. 52, no. 2 (Summer, 1999), 299-362, 302.

)³⁵. But though Bausch coordinates the Chosen One's final fall to the upwards scales in the flutes, without the Ancestors there to catch her, or the fermata to prepare the audience for impending death, her collapse is turned into a brutal, abrupt and shocking suicidal face-down fling. Bausch's finish here is powerfully blunt. On the other hand, a reconstruction of Nijinsky's ballet which included Stravinsky's 1913 fermata would end the ballet on a more pathetic, even Romantic, note. Indeed, in such a version the Chosen One would be but a primitivist version of the Suffering Female who had jerked tears from the eyes of a sensation hungry audience from Paisiello's *Nina* right up to *Le Sacre* and on to Murnau's 1922 *Nosferatu*. But whether raw like Bausch or Romantic, an ending to *Le Sacre* which emphasized the girl's physical sufferings would prove cathartic, and strongly stir the emotions of the audience.

The end of Hodson's reconstruction, however, is very different in feeling from either Bausch's brutality or my proposed, pathos-infused scenario. Her Chosen One neither falls nor catapults, but rather glides to the ground. She is still very much alive and alert, and performs an abdominal contraction from which she consciously offers her body to the Ancestors for the final upwards lift. Hodson's Chosen One is in control of her herself, and calmly shows her tribe that the time for the Great Sacrifice has come. There is no visible sign of enervation here, no loss of physical control, no last, vain struggle to live, but instead self-possessed resignation and courageous acceptance.

Hodson has made clear on many occasions that indeed such is her vision of the meaning of the entire ballet. For instance, she made the following remarks in the television documentary which aired in 1989 entitled *The Search for Nijinsky's Rite of Spring*:

The actual event of the ballet that gives meaning to the whole thing is this question of sacrifice; and the idea is that there is this marriage between a member of this ancient tribe and the sun god, that the young woman dances in order to save the earth. I don't see it as a primitive and brutal thing, that this woman dances herself to death; I see it as an expression of faith, that human activity can have that impact.³⁶

This elucidating statement is corroborated by Hodson in an article entitled 'Choreographic Puzzles':

In Act II when the Chosen One is trapped in the circles of the Amazons and then of the Ancestors, her reaction is to spin as though she could break the horizontal rings around her by winding up and taking off. Escape is one motive for her frantic jumping at the end, exaltation another. Terrified, she struggles for release from her ordeal. At the same time she strives, as the heroic figure, to liberate her community from their cosmological anxiety. Her paroxysms of motion are their peace and prosperity in the coming year.³⁷

Hodson would later sum this up in *Nijinsky's Crime Against Grace* as follows:

The solitary valor of the sacrificial solo, with its relentless jumps despite exhaustion, its unremitting effort toward perfection in the face of failure, was surely an interior portrait of himself that Nijinsky left to posterity. The solo he constructed is heroic, not pathetic. The Chosen One—isolated from the community by an act of destiny, not by the community itself—dances the solo as a demonstration of courage.³⁸

In trying to understand how Hodson arrived at this vision of the meaning of the sacrifice (and thus of *Le Sacre* as a whole) we stumble upon a striking incongruity in the ballet's story-line; for even though Roerich was an expert in Stone Age Slavic culture, the ballet's climax—a human sacrifice to propitiate the god of the sun—has in fact no basis in archeological evidence from the period. There are no indications, pictorial or otherwise, that the ancient Russian spring was ever consecrated by the death of a young girl.

Hodson was perfectly well aware of this. She knew that this most central moment of the ballet could not have been inspired, nor its creative process been influenced and shaped, by historical Slavic ritual or artefacts. As she noted in 'Nijinsky's choreographic method':

The Slavic scholar Simon Karlinsky has written about the pagan survivals in Stravinsky's music [...] Karlinsky noted, as few writers on *Sacre* have done, that there is no clear precedent in Slavic mythology for the sacrifice of the maiden. In Karlinsky's discussion about the authenticity of the rite, he suggests the sacrifice may derive from

35. Last accessed 29-05-2010.

36. See: *The Search for Nijinsky's Rite of Spring*, directed by Judy Kinberg (New York: WNET/13, 1989), 24:16

37. This text is taken from an untraceable publication (Millicent Hodson herself was unable to recall it) which notes that this English version of 'Choreographic Puzzles' is 'excerpted from a longer essay in the French collection *Le Sacre du Nijinsky* (Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Paris 1990)'.

38. Hodson, *Nijinsky's Crime*, xi.

Mexican mythology:

The final sacrifice of a chosen virgin, it is true, is an invention that has no historical Slavic antecedents. It seems to be Aztec and not anything connected with native Russian religion or folklore.

Even though some historians recognized a synthesis of ritual tradition in *Sacre*, few specify the possible origins of the sacrificial ceremony, an exception being Cyril Beaumont. He discussed the end of *Le Sacre* in his early book on Nijinsky:

Just as the Aztecs sacrificed the handsomest young man among them in honour of the god, Tezcatlepoça [sic], so one spring evening, after initial ceremonies, we see the fairest maiden of the tribe forced to dance until she dies from exhaustion...

Roerich wrote an essay on the Stone Age which does not relate directly to *Sacre*, but in it he associates the rites of Slavic and Scandinavian tribes with those of Mexico. So he may have found a precedent for the dance of the Chosen Maiden in each of these traditions, but he left no documentation of it.³⁹

This absence of a real Slavic precedent must surely have posed a choreographic puzzle for Hodson, because she relied heavily on Roerich's paintings and costume designs (as well as historical Slavic material, such as carved statues) as sources of inspiration for her reconstructed choreography; indeed, in the article 'Nijinsky's Choreographic Method' she discusses how authentic ancient Slavic idols had served as a starting point for postures in the ballet. The foreignness of the sacrificial element of *Le Sacre* to Russian culture, therefore, and the consequential lacunae in the possible sources of inspiration for the climactic moment of the ballet, surely must have encouraged her to turn to the art and mythology of the indigenous peoples of Mesoamerica, and more specifically to the Aztecs and Mayans.

There are, in fact, tantalizing hints that the Roerich/Nijinsky/Stravinsky team had looked to the Americas before her. I have already quoted Hodson's reference to a post-1913 essay by Roerich that linked Russia to the Americas. According to Robert Craft, Stravinsky too envisioned 'Indians' while composing *Le Sacre*, though he mentions the tribes of the Plains rather than those of Mexico. Craft remarked of the 'Danse de la terre' which concludes Part I of the ballet that:

The composer has said that he imagined the dancers "rolling like bundles of leaves in the wind" during the orchestral convulsions at the beginning of this piece, and "stomping like Indians trying to put out a prairie fire" during the latter part of it.⁴⁰

Craft also quotes the composer as remarking of the 'Action rituelle des ancêtres':

Of the actual action of the ancestors Stravinsky recalls only that he intended a type of ghost dance known to virtually all archaic communities, and that the women were to perform it while the men hovered at the sides marking time.⁴¹

Indeed, when leafing through Alice C. Fletcher's *A Study of Omaha Indian Music*, published twenty years before the premiere of *Le Sacre*, one cannot but be struck by the similarities between its written-out accompaniments to the Omaha tunes and the famous, albeit more dissonant chords of the 'Augurs of Spring'. Looking at the repeated chords, and the restless interplay of regular accents and irregular pedal markings, one cannot but be struck by the resemblance to the famous repeated chords of Stravinsky's opening scene of the ballet [see figures 1.6 and 1.7]

As interesting as the possible 'Indian' connection may be for the birth of *Le Sacre*, there are, however, problems in correlating the references mentioned above to the 1913 production: Roerich's essay was published in 1926,⁴² Beaumont's remark on Aztec ritual in 1932⁴³ and Stravinsky's references to ghost dances and prairie fires didn't find their way into print until 1969. None of them, therefore, can tell us anything incontrovertible about the intentions or inspirations of 1913.

Thus, as Hodson rightly points out, Roerich and his original collaborators may have drawn inspiration from

39. Millicent Hodson, 'Nijinsky's Choreographic Method', *Dance Research Journal*, 18/2 (Winter 1986-7), 9-10.

40. Igor Stravinsky, *The Rite of Spring*, XXI.

41. Igor Stravinsky, *The Rite of Spring*, XXII.

42. This essay is discussed in Hodson's 'Nijinsky's Choreographic Method'.

43. See: Cyril Beaumont, *Vaslav Nijinsky* (London: Beaumont, 1932), 19. In all fairness, he never presents this Aztec connection as anything more than a passing analogy; there is no claim from Beaumont that it somehow stems from the creators of the first production.

104

No. 33.

WA-WAN WA-AN. RECEIVING THE MESSENGER.

Sostenuto. Dignified. ♩ = 132.

Thae ho-wa - nae thae ho-wa - nae thae ho-wa-nae, ah hae

Hun - ga. Thae ho-wa - nae thae ho-wa-nae ah hae, Hun - ga.

The score is written for voice and piano. The voice part is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The piano accompaniment is in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The tempo is marked 'Sostenuto. Dignified.' with a quarter note equal to 132 beats. The score includes lyrics in English and a 'Double beat' section. The piano part features a 'Ped.' (pedal) marking.

Figure 1.6 'WA-WAN WA-AN, Receiving the Messenger', from *A Study of Omaha Indian Music* by Alice C. Fletcher.

ВЕСЕННЯ ГАДАНІЯ.
ПЛЯСКИ ЩЕГОЛІХЪ.
LES AUGURES PRINTANIER.
DANSES DES ADOLESCENTES.

Tempo giusto. ♩ = 56

Cor. ingl. 13. 15. 17. 19. 21. 23. 25. 27. 29. 31. 33. 35. 37. 39. 41. 43. 45. 47. 49. 51. 53. 55. 57. 59. 61. 63. 65. 67. 69. 71. 73. 75. 77. 79. 81. 83. 85. 87. 89. 91. 93. 95. 97. 99. 101. 103. 105. 107. 109. 111. 113. 115. 117. 119. 121. 123. 125. 127. 129. 131. 133. 135. 137. 139. 141. 143. 145. 147. 149. 151. 153. 155. 157. 159. 161. 163. 165. 167. 169. 171. 173. 175. 177. 179. 181. 183. 185. 187. 189. 191. 193. 195. 197. 199. 201. 203. 205. 207. 209. 211. 213. 215. 217. 219. 221. 223. 225. 227. 229. 231. 233. 235. 237. 239. 241. 243. 245. 247. 249. 251. 253. 255. 257. 259. 261. 263. 265. 267. 269. 271. 273. 275. 277. 279. 281. 283. 285. 287. 289. 291. 293. 295. 297. 299. 301. 303. 305. 307. 309. 311. 313. 315. 317. 319. 321. 323. 325. 327. 329. 331. 333. 335. 337. 339. 341. 343. 345. 347. 349. 351. 353. 355. 357. 359. 361. 363. 365. 367. 369. 371. 373. 375. 377. 379. 381. 383. 385. 387. 389. 391. 393. 395. 397. 399. 401. 403. 405. 407. 409. 411. 413. 415. 417. 419. 421. 423. 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3511. 3513. 3515. 3517. 3519. 3521. 3523. 3525. 3527. 3529. 3531. 3533. 3535. 3537. 3539. 3541. 3543. 3545. 3547. 3549. 3551. 3553. 3555. 3557. 3559. 3561. 3563. 3565. 3567. 3569. 3571. 3573. 3575. 3577. 3579. 3581. 3583. 3585. 3587. 3589. 3591. 3593. 3595. 3597. 3599. 3601. 3603. 3605. 3607. 3609. 3611. 3613. 3615. 3617. 3619. 3621. 3623. 3625. 3627. 3629. 3631. 3633. 3635. 3637. 3639. 3641. 3643. 3645. 3647. 3649. 3651. 3653. 3655. 3657. 3659. 3661. 3663. 3665. 3667. 3669. 3671. 3673. 3675. 3677. 3679. 3681. 3683. 3685. 3687. 3689. 3691. 3693. 3695. 3697. 3699. 3701. 3703. 3705. 3707. 3709. 3711. 3713. 3715. 3717. 3719. 3721. 3723. 3725. 3727. 3729. 3731. 3733. 3735. 3737. 3739. 3741. 3743. 3745. 3747. 3749. 3751. 3753. 3755. 3757. 3759. 3761. 3763. 3765. 3767. 3769. 3771. 3773. 3775. 3777. 3779. 3781. 3783. 3785. 3787. 3789. 3791. 3793. 3795. 3797. 3799. 3801. 3803. 3805. 3807. 3809. 3811. 3813. 3815. 3817. 3819. 3821. 3823. 3825. 3827. 3829. 3831. 3833. 3835. 3837. 3839. 3841. 3843. 3845. 3847. 3849. 3851. 3853. 3855. 3857. 3859. 3861. 3863. 3865. 3867. 3869. 3871. 3873. 3875. 3877. 3879. 3881. 3883. 3885. 3887. 3889. 3891. 3893. 3895. 3897. 3899. 3901. 3903. 3905. 3907. 3909. 3911. 3913. 3915. 3917. 3919. 3921. 3923. 3925. 3927. 3929. 3931. 3933. 3935. 3937. 3939. 3941. 3943. 3945. 3947. 3949. 3951. 3953. 3955. 3957. 3959. 3961. 3963. 3965. 3967. 3969. 3971. 3973. 3975. 3977. 3979. 3981. 3983. 3985. 3987. 3989. 3991. 3993. 3995. 3997. 3999. 4001. 4003. 4005. 4007. 4009. 4011. 4013. 4015. 4017. 4019. 4021. 4023. 4025. 4027. 4029. 4031. 4033. 4035. 4037. 4039. 4041. 4043. 4045. 4047. 4049. 4051. 4053. 4055. 4057. 4059. 4061. 4063. 4065. 4067. 4069. 4071. 4073. 4075. 4077. 4079. 4081. 4083. 4085. 4087. 4089. 4091. 4093. 4095. 4097. 4099. 4101. 4103. 4105. 4107. 4109. 4111. 4113.

North American or Mesoamerican myth and ritual, but if so, they 'left no documentation of it'. It is clear, however, that the connection between *Le Sacre* and 'Indians' is legitimate at least as early as the 1920 Ballets Russes revival, with choreography by Léonide Massine; as dance writer Shelley C. Berg noted in a paper entitled 'Forty Years of Rites' presented at the conference *The Rite of Spring* at Seventy-five':

Massine might have been preparing for this *Sacre* as far back as 1916 when he had done research on Native American culture while on tour with Diagalev.⁴⁴

This dovetails nicely with Kenneth Archer's suggestion, in his *Roerich East & West: Paintings from the Nicolas Roerich Museum*, that non-Slavic ideas only began to influence the performances of the ballet after the Paris premiere. Writing of the American premiere of Massine's version of the ballet in 1930, Archer notes:

When Roerich prepared the scenario and designs for the legendary first version of *Le Sacre* in 1913, he drew upon studies of the ancient Slavs that were so key to his art in that period. In the interim he had travelled widely throughout Europe, the United States and Asia, and quite naturally his interest in archaic civilizations expanded to encompass the cultural archetypes he encountered, particularly in the American Southwest and the Trans-Himalayas.⁴⁵

Looking at *Le Sacre* from a distance of nearly a century, it is now impossible to gauge exactly from whence the original inspiration for the sacrifice came⁴⁶ (and surely no one believes any more in Stravinsky's 1910 dream). But it seems that Hodson, in her own search for inspiration, may well have chosen to explore a possible Pan-American connection: her artistic vision of the very meaning of the ballet—that the Chosen One demonstrated the courage 'to liberate her community from their cosmological anxiety' and to ensure 'their peace and prosperity in the coming year'—cannot have come from any ancient Slavic source, nor from any currently surviving materials related to the 1913 performances. These sentiments do, however, accord well with our notions of the significance of human sacrifice in Mesoamerican cultures. The best known example of courage in the face of sacrificial death (which is also the one already mentioned by Beaumont in 1932), is that of the impersonator of the Aztec god Tezcatlipoca, who, on the fatal day, mounted the temple steps of his own accord and without coercion. Indeed, the current commonplace interpretation of this sacrifice is that his acceptance of his fate was key to its effectiveness.

1.3d Artistic synthesis

So if Hodson was influenced by Aztec attitudes towards sacrifice while deciding upon the emotional tenor for the entire work, how does this relate to the second stage of the reconstruction process? Let us remind ourselves of just how Hodson and Archer described this second stage (thus, in *Preservation Politics*):

The second stage is the synthesis of what we have gathered and learned. That means the facts are now framed by the larger context of all we have discovered. For example, what we know about the original creative process can now directly affect our interpretation of facts. At this point we prepare the design dossiers and choreographic score, which are both records of the research and handbooks for execution.

It seems clear that Hodson's view of the meaning of the sacrifice has helped to shape her interpretation of the sources at her disposal, and that this vision has colored, at least in part, her understanding of the original creative method: Nijinsky relied heavily on visual sources such as Slavic idols as well as ideas about myth and ritual as imparted to him by Roerich. It seems that Hodson correspondingly has sought inspiration in the same places, and when evidence points towards Mexico rather than Russia she has looked West. The Chosen One in the reconstruction is not crushed by her ordeal. She is not possessed by the rite, but rather the rite is firmly in her possession. Despite her terror and after her futile attempts at escape, she is resolved to carry it off with nobility. Here is how Hodson describes the sequence in *Nijinsky's Crime Against Grace*:

[...] she throws her arms higher and falls to the ground at [201] 1. The Ancestors in Bearskins stay motionless as she makes her last effort to rise, reaching up at [201] 2. She falls again in that measure and they rush to lift her into the air at [201] 3. The other ancestors then leap forward in a single move, still in their kneeling position, as

44. Suzanne Levy, 'The Rite of Spring at Seventy-five', *Dance Research Journal*, 19/2 (Winter 1987-8), 53.

45. Kenneth Archer, *Roerich East & West: Paintings from the Nicolas Roerich Museum* (Bournemouth: Parkstone Press Limited, 1999), 109.

46. Philippe de Lustrac and Sylvie Dancre, in fact, argue that Roerich knew images of Native Americans as early as 1913. See: Philippe de Lustrac and Sylvie Dancre, 'Exotisme et le nationalisme: Les Ballets russes et le Siam' in *Les Ballets Russes*, ed. Matthias Auclair and Pierre Vidal (Montreuil Cedex: Éditions Gourcuff Gradenigo, 2009).

her arms drop on her last breath and closing note of the score at [201] 4.⁴⁷

Let us now compare this written description from 1996 with what can be seen on the two DVDs of the reconstruction, the first of the 1989 revival of the original 1987 Joffrey Ballet production, the second a more recent version by the Mariinski Ballet.

Hodson seems to have changed her intentions between the making of the Joffrey video and the publication of *Nijinsky's Crime Against Grace*: what one sees in the performance is that the Chosen One falls at 201, stretching herself out on the ground. As the flutes make their upward runs she pulls herself up by abdominal contraction, offering her body to be lifted by the men in bearskins, who come forward and lift her on the final chords while the crouching men leap like frogs towards them in order to complete the tableau [See DVD *The Search for Nijinsky's Rite of Spring*, 54:28].

The Chosen One's abdominal contraction is of vital importance here. With it she seems to beckon the Ancestors to come forward and lift her up, to release her from her gruelling dance. It is a controlled movement, and apparently corresponds to Hodson's remark '[...] she makes her last effort to rise [...]'. Yet it hardly looks like an attempt to rise, nor is it followed by a fall, despite Hodson's later published assertion that 'She falls again in that measure [...]'. Instead, the Chosen One freezes into a position that seems oddly reminiscent of an iconic image of Mayan art: the male figure carved into the lid of the sarcophagus of Pakal [compare figure 1.8 to DVD *The Search for Nijinsky's Rite of Spring*, 54:32].

By 2008 Hodson's reading had changed again. Here the Chosen One, standing solidly on two feet, extends her arms upwards at 201, then sinks down in a very controlled manner and in one smooth movement, stretches herself out, does the abdominal contraction and looks towards the audience ('[...] she makes her last effort to rise'). She then stretches out again ('She falls again in that measure [...]') as the men come forward for the final lift [see DVD #3: *Stravinsky and the Ballets Russes*, 1:22]. This lift comes in the silence in between the flute scales and the final chords...a *lunga ad libitum* has thus been reinstated to accommodate stage action, but a bar later than in the 1913 score.

Here too the abdominal 'crunch' is highly emphasized, indeed, this time even more so than in the 1989 version due to the turning of the Chosen One's head. Once again Mesoamerican art comes to mind, this time the famous Chac Mool statue of Chichen Itza [compare figure 1.9 to DVD *Stravinsky and the Ballets Russes*, 1:22:35].

I do not wish to overstate the case here by insisting that these 'crunch' movements are meant to imitate exactly the positions of the male figures in the Mayan stonework. It is clear that there are very striking differences as well as similarities between the abdominal contractions depicted in cold, hard stone and warm, dancing flesh. But it seems to fit too well to just be a coincidence that at the moment of sacrifice the Chosen One should echo one or another Mesoamerican symbols of death, sacrifice and cosmic rebirth: the exact significance of the carvings on Pakal's sarcophagus is still a matter under scholarly dispute, but it is generally agreed that they deal with burial, regeneration and crop cycles; and, of course, Chac Mool statues are believed once to have held receptacles for the torn-out hearts of sacrificial victims.⁴⁸ Whether consciously or unconsciously, it seems that Hodson's choreography for this specific moment of the ballet was influenced by Mesoamerican statuary, just as Nijinsky's had been more generally influenced by Slavic idols.

1.3e Is Hodson's *Rite* wrong?

And now for the great question concerning 'The Great Sacrifice': what is the value of Hodson's work as a scholar-artist? Has she invalidated it by contaminating her reconstruction with personal preference; has she been led astray by artistic whim? In short, is Hodson's *Rite* wrong?

Before answering this question, let me formulate the discrepancies between her reconstruction and the sources she has used for the end of the ballet: she changes the timing, and reduces the number of the 3 falls

47. Hodson, *Nijinsky's Crime*, 199.

48. Scholars have become more circumspect of late. Lawrence G Desmond puts it thus: 'The chacmool [sic] is a sculptural figure seated on the ground with its upper back raised, the head is turned to a near right angle, the legs are drawn up to the buttocks, elbows rest on the ground, and its hands hold a vessel, disk or plate on the stomach where offerings may have been placed or human sacrifices carried out'. Lawrence G. Desmond, *Chacmool*, <http://maya.csuhayward.edu/archaeoplanet/LgdPage/Chacmool.htm>. Last accessed, 29-05-2010.



Figure 1.8 Pakal's Tomb.



Figure 1.9 Chac Mool of Chichen Itza.

suggested by the collective testimonies of Stravinsky, Nijinska and Craft [see table 1.1], and she stylizes these falls in order to express courage rather than exhaustion. She allows the body of the Chosen One to touch the ground when two sources explicitly state that the Ancestors rush forward to prevent this happening. And she has the girl die on the last chords of the piece, although Nijinska declares the girl's body to be 'unbreathing' at the time of her final fall.

numbers of score	Stravinsky/Nijinska/Craft annotations	Hodson's written description in <i>Nijinsky's Crime Against Grace</i>
200.1		
200.2		
200.3	'She falls down.' Stravinsky	
200.4	'She falls again.' Stravinsky	
200.5		
201.1	'They approach, running to her.' Stravinsky	'... she throws her arms higher and falls to the ground.'
201.2	'She falls in time with the flute scale' Craft 'The last jump, a high wave of the arms, and the old ones, who are guarding the sacrifice, catch the unbreathing body in their arms so as not to let it touch the ground' Nijinska, <i>bar number unspecified.</i>	'[...] she makes her last effort to rise, reaching up [...].'
201.3		'She falls again [...] and they rush to lift her into the air [...].'
201.4		'[...] her arms drop on her last breath and closing note of the score.'

Table 1.1

I have here built a strong case against Hodson. I would argue, however, that though her reconstruction may be flawed, it is not *contaminated* by her personal vision, but rather *animated* by it.

The proposal that I have made for the closing bars of the ballet may indeed include more of the source material, *but it is still an interpretation*. Like Hodson, I too am allowing an artistic vision to guide my choices: I am drawn to the Romantic aspects of *Le Sacre* and wish to emphasise them. It seems to me that *Le Sacre* is not so much a break with the past as a hinge between Romanticism and Modernism; and I enjoy imagining the two styles cheek by jowl in the resulting masterpiece. Hodson, however, is very concerned with emphasising the Modernist aspects of the ballet, urged to do so by no one less than Marie Rambert herself (who, famously, was Nijinsky's assistant during much of the choreographic process); it was Rambert who impressed upon Hodson the importance of honouring Nijinsky's intention to abandon grace in favour of stylistic precision.

So Hodson, true to her manifesto published in *Preservation Politics*, has allowed the wider search for meaning and her understanding of the original creative process to influence her interpretation of the facts she has meticulously gathered. It is now, as we move from the second to the third and final phase, that we see the importance of artistic belief and vision in the reconstruction effort; for no artist can produce anything worthwhile without believing in it. It could be argued that the belief of the artist matters not in this regard: that a reconstruction is either correct or not; and that if not, it is a mere adaptation. I, however, cannot help but believe that all reconstruction is adaptation to some extent, when viewed from such a strict perspective. The personal element will always make itself felt. Without the inspiration, ambition and belief of the artist to drive the project forward towards performance, the reconstruction would never reach the audience.

Thus, I would argue in the case of *Le Sacre* that it was Hodson's total commitment to her vision, faith in the

importance of her work, and belief in her work's fidelity to Nijinsky's intentions that gave her the energy to get *Le Sacre* on stage. In the final phase, that of setting the movement on the dancers, such conviction becomes essential: as reconstructor/choreographer she must inspire her dancers, chastise them, encourage them and finally stand back and let them dance. The dancers must be formed and informed by her artistic courage, tenacity and enthusiasm. Thus, and thus only, does an artistic work achieve the stage. A scholar's work, essential as it is, does not of itself get gigantic undertakings like this one into professional public performance. For that, an energetic artist is needed.

One only has to look at the footage of Hodson rehearsing the 'Danse sacrée' which is included as a bonus on the DVD *Stravinsky and the Ballets Russes* to see her tremendous energy and conviction in action. She demonstrates the moves with real intensity, she devours the Chosen One's dancing with her eyes, eager to encourage, applaud and reprimand as needed. Such fervor is incompatible with self-doubt; at the moment of creation, belief in the recreation must be uncompromised.

The reconstructor herself would see this as an acceptance of responsibility. Here, once again, is how Hodson described the third phase of reconstruction:

Just as ballets do not make themselves, they do not reconstruct themselves—we must intervene. As reconstructors, we place ourselves in the middle of a historical process. From the time we start the dossiers and choreographic score until the time the ballet is premiered, we function as artists as much as scholars. We must construct the lost parts and incorporate them with what we have been able to retrieve of the original. We take responsibility for the intervention and never claim that the reconstruction is identical to the original work. A 100% likeness would be impossible to achieve, even if all the collaborators survived, because they themselves would now perceive their work differently.⁴⁹

Hodson has always acknowledged her creative role in the process. In the opening paragraph of her 'Sacred: Searching for Nijinsky's Chosen One' she beautifully sums up her place as re-creator within the recreative process:

To reconstruct a dance is a creative task. Even with extensive documentation, any dance one tries to preserve for the future must be discovered anew in the present. Through verifiable fact and hypothesis, the reconstructor may reveal the past, but every decision, no matter how well-founded on these objective criteria, is filtered through his or her own subjectivity. And so, in the reconstruction of Nijinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps* of 1913, I acknowledge my mediating role.⁵⁰

So where does this leave us? First and foremost with a finished product, a work of art, a particular version of the ballet set on a specific group of dancers to be experienced in real time by a real audience. But it also, and equally importantly, serves as a starting point for further discussion. Nothing could better prove Moira Goff's point about reconstructions being essential to those working on historical performance than the Hodson/Archer *Le Sacre*: the spectacular difference between looking at the black and white photos of the dancers from 1913 and seeing the blazing color of the reconstructed costumes and sets, or the introverted experience of studying the sketches of the 'Danse sacrée' made by Valentine Gross-Hugo compared to the sensual assault of matching movement-in-space to music-in-time in the reconstructed dance should be enough to convince any spectator that seeing the ballet, even if it cannot be said to be—and indeed Hodson never claims that it is—the same dance as the *Le Sacre* of 1913, gives new insights into what the premiere might have looked and sounded like. The vibrant, swirling colors and stamping feet of the Hodson/Archer reconstruction have brought the discussion of the ballet to a new level. And it is the copious and careful documentation, published by the researchers themselves, of the reconstruction process that has made this analysis of mine possible. They have allowed me to engage with, reflect upon and profit from their mighty labours.⁵¹

1.3f *Le Sacre* and *Armide* or just how is this relevant?

The point I want to make here, in terms of my own work, is that no performer/researcher, no matter how

49. See footnote 16 in this chapter.

50. Millicent Hodson, 'Sacred, Searching for Nijinsky's Chosen One', *Ballet Review*, 15/3 (Fall 1987), 53-66, 53.

51. This is not to say that I do not wish Hodson had ended her ballet closer to the sources from 1913. Whenever I see the reconstruction, I regret the friendliness of the 'Danse sacrée'. I imagine a different quality to the movement, a different kind of tension in the Chosen One's body, a grim interaction between the dancers on stage. The effect of the end of the ballet would be, in my opinion, much stronger if the Ancestors caught the falling Virgin in the air, rather than hoisting her undramatically up off the floor. However, I can regret and imagine all of this solely due to Hodson and Archer; without them I could never have visualized the dance at all.

self-aware and critical, can be expected to, nor, indeed, even needs to, get it one hundred percent 'right' in one go. So long as the documentation of the work-process is sufficient for others to review and build upon, and so long as the work results in a sensual experience worthy of serving as a starting point for further exploration, the artefact which is derived from the entire process functions, as Moira Goff put it, as a 'research tool' for future study. Here is the pertinent Goff passage in full:

The reconstruction of dances recorded in Beauchamp-Feuillet notation involves many subjective choices, blurring the distinction between reconstruction and re-creation. I contend that this does not invalidate reconstruction as a research tool, provided that it is undertaken alongside the more objective scrutiny of academic research methods. On the contrary, reconstruction not only generates a wider range of possible interpretations but also contributes to a valuable iterative process whereby theories about dancing in the early eighteenth century developed through a study of the written sources can be tested by practical reconstruction of the dances surviving in notation, and the resulting reconstructions can then be themselves revised in the light of further academic study of the sources, and so on.⁵²

The process is clear and the goal noble, but it is the making of such choices that bedevils the reconstruction process, whether the Holy Grail being sought be lost Nijinsky choreography, the realisation of Beauchamps-Feuillet notation or reforging the link between gesture and timing on the stage of the Opéra. At the point where the creator in the re-creator takes over from the scholar, a personal choice will make itself felt. If this choice is purely academic, based solely on verifiable scholarly readings, it may very well lack artistic conviction and practical insight. If on the other hand the choice is made with artistic enthusiasm, it must inevitably be influenced by the personal point of view of the reconstructor. An entirely 'right' reconstruction, therefore, would demand, I believe, an impossible combination of personal artistic energy and impartial, distanced reflection. So let me be perfectly clear: I do not claim that the results of my research have a purity which would satisfy the demands of scientific experiment. I will nowhere present my work as a reconstruction of a specific performance at the Opéra, nor will I claim that the choice of the gestures I use and the timing thereof are infallible scientific facts proven through water-tight scientific method. My aims are at once much more humble and far more audacious: to open up a larger dialogue not only about an affect-driven freedom in performance as an expressive device in French operatic music, but, even more specifically, to underscore the central importance of the performer in bringing gesture and music to life.

It is my sincere hope that this will all be made evident in the course of this thesis. However, there is one more factor which I would like to comment upon here, before presenting the research itself: my own personal bias during this process. I have already mentioned that I prefer to look for the Romantic aspects of *Le Sacre*. This is not because I am an anti-Modernist when it comes to the performance of Modernist repertoire; instead, it is because I am strongly opposed to the inappropriate imposition of a Modernist aesthetic on Baroque or Romantic repertoire. I have already admitted that I view *Le Sacre* as swinging smoothly between Romanticism and Modernism (and indeed, one need only compare the Nijinsky/Stravinsky *Le Sacre* to the Nijinska/Stravinsky *Les Noces* to see the difference between transitional and full-blown Modernism). That is why studying the *Le Sacre* reconstruction of Millicent Hodson has loomed so large in my work on reconstructing aspects of French Baroque opera performance practice. For I agree with Robert Fink, writing of an authentic musical performance of the *Rite*, that:

The different perspective on canonical music that historical performance has come to represent disappears when it encounters early modernism, for the historical performance movement itself is one of the consequences, intended or not, of modernism in music. In tackling *The Rite of Spring*, Early Music is revisiting the traumatic scene of its own birth.⁵³

By examining the reconstruction process for *Le Sacre* I have not only learned something useful from Hodson's methods, but have confronted some of the most blinding prejudices of the Early Music movement to which I belong. For it is the murky nature of the relationship between authenticity, Modernism and the Romantic legacy of the 19th century that obscures the path of those of us hoping to reconstruct the emotion and expressive power of 18th-century theatre. What did the term *natural* mean when applied to stage gesture in the 18th century? Surely not what they meant in the intervening centuries; centuries that saw the triumph of Romanticism, followed by its overthrow and the subsequent coronation of the Modernist style? Surely Modernism, still alive if in its death-throes, now hampers our recreation of the past just as much as Romanticism hindered the creation of the future at the premiere of *The Rite*?

52. Goff, 'Imitating the Passions' in *Preservation Politics*, 163.

53. Fink, 'Rigorous', 305-6.

This is not merely a quick wink at Richard Taruskin's brilliant and biting criticisms⁵⁴, but a personal conviction based on years of performing experience. I shall therefore attempt to face 17th- and 18th-century sources without reference to Romanticism: that is to say that I will not shy away from rubato and affect in Baroque repertoire because I fear it might be too Romantic, but rather will try to take Baroque emotion seriously on its own terms.

That is, of course, a goal that cannot ever be attained. After all, lingering Romanticism infected the *Le Sacre* performances in 1913, and victorious Modernism now similarly impedes the reconstruction of a romantically-flawed premiere: creators, performers, reconstructors and audience all must inevitably experience things through the reality of their own time. Fink brought this up very clearly in his 'Rigorous':

At its premiere, regardless of the composer's intentions, the *Rite* ballet would have to be inserted into an existing tradition, one quite at odds with modernist ideas of the 'authentic' performance.⁵⁵

In fact this sandwich effect, with *Le Sacre* inserted between layers of 'existing tradition', was experienced literally by the audience at the ballet's premiere, where the very traditional *Les Sylphides* (music by Chopin) preceded, and the heavily perfumed *Le Spectre de la rose* (music by von Weber) followed, *The Rite*. Now, though we have no audio recording of the music from the premiere under Monteux's baton, we do have a recording from 1916 of music from *Les Sylphides* made by the American orchestra of the Ballets Russes conducted by Ernest Ansermet. And this performance is absolutely *Vitalist*:⁵⁶ rubati and portamenti are used as tools of musical expression, while horizontal lines are given a privileged place of importance at the expense of vertical precision.⁵⁷ Surely this recording, though made by different musicians under a different conductor than those who performed in 1913, tells us something about the style of music which accompanied ballets like *Les Sylphides*. The Vitalist musicians of 1913 could hardly have played the music of these ballets, which surrounded Stravinsky's startling new score, in the style in which we perform *Le Sacre* today; on the contrary, surely they were more likely to have approached—and Robert Fink makes a convincing case for this in 'Rigorous'—*Le Sacre* from the older, Vitalist performance tradition?

The same must have been true of the dancing. For me, the famous photograph of the *adolescentes* backstage at the Opéra breathes a mixture of the Romantic and the new: the dancers have adopted Nijinsky's poses, yet there is a disconcerting coquetry about their well-rounded, girlish physical expression. This expression is very different from that which results from Hodson's modern, Modernist, boyish female dancers assuming the same positions. In 1913 Nijinsky had to impress the necessity of a break from grace on those around him, precisely because the dancing world was still infused with it. His dancers had been trained in a Romantic, feminine, expressive dancing style that is seemingly lost today, even in the classical ballet world [compare figure 1.10 to DVD *Stravinsky and the Ballets Russes*, 55:49].

I may seem to overstate the case. However, just looking at footage from 1906 of Bournonville choreography performed by a ballerina from the Royal Danish Ballet sends shivers of artistic alienation down our spines (See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7xkcl0I6zA>).⁵⁸ Here we see a woman dancing, a woman whose performance by modern standards is sadly lacking: 'dumpy' and 'terrible arms' have been the remarks made by professional dancers who have looked at it for me. But if we can get past that which seems substandard to us in this performance, we find that there is a projection, and expression of joy and a womanliness in it that is in strong contrast to current ballet norms.⁵⁹ Surely the girls dancing in the 1913 *Le Sacre* would have brought something like this to Nijinsky's choreography automatically? They were, as we know from Marie Rambert, reluctant to dance 'gracelessly'. A graceful style had been drilled into their bodies. As Karsavina said of later revivals of *Les Sylphides*:

Les Sylphides was part of our upbringing in the romantic tradition. [...] I think, excellent as dancers are today, they

54. See, for example: Richard Taruskin, *Text and Act: Essays on Music and Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

55. Fink, 'Rigorous', 304.

56. I here use Richard Taruskin's terminology, following Fink's example in 'Rigorous'.

57. Indeed, *portamenti* and horizontal musical lines are much in evidence as late as 1929, in Monteux's earliest recording of *Le Sacre du printemps*.

58. Last accessed 29-05-2010.

59. The preface to the 1969 Dover Edition of Agrippina Vaganova's *Basic Principles of Classical Ballet: Russian Ballet Technique* singles out such girlishness and 'dumpiness' for censure, associating them with old-fashioned styles of dancing. On page vii the author of the preface C. Chistyakova writes: 'The traditional lessons of the French school at the close of the nineteenth century cultivated soft, but unnecessarily artificial and decorative, movements. Vaganova was later to recall, not without irony, the reproofs she heard from her instructors: 'Lightfooted! Lightfooted! Be coquettish!'. Deliberately emphasizing the archaic traits of this dance manner, Vaganova writes of its saccharine sweetness, the flaccidity of its poses—the arms with softly sagging or affectedly elevated elbows and 'elegantly' outspread fingers. In short, the disregard for the full use of the energy of the arms and body, and the tranquil and measured manner of conducting the exercises restricted balletic virtuosity'.



Figure 1.10 Backstage at the Opéra, dressed for *Le Sacre* in 1913.

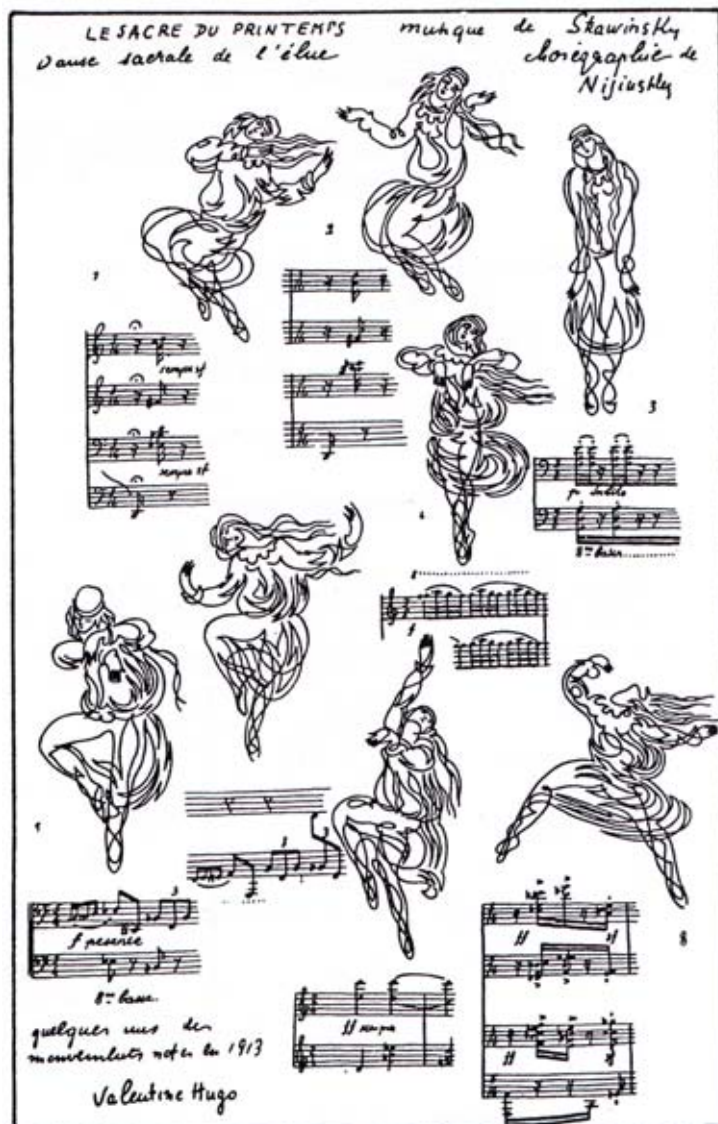


Figure 1.11 “Danse sacrée de l’élue” by Valentine Gross-Hugo, published in *Montjoie!, Organe de l’Impérialisme Artistique Français*.

haven't got that same feeling of style as we had ingrained into us.⁶⁰

Indeed, Maria Piltz, the Chosen One of the première, seems to have been possessed by an embodied and inexorizable grace, even during the *grand mal* of the 'Danse sacrée'. As Florent Schmitt noted after the première:

Mlle Piltz, que nous avons déjà remarquée dans *L'Oiseau de feu*, réalise la *Danse sacrée* avec une passion douloureuse et tragique, et le grotesque étudié de ses mouvements n'excult pas sa grâce, qui est infinie.⁶¹

In contrast, Hodson's *corps de ballet* no longer require Nijinsky's admonitions to avoid grace, at least not to the same extent. Modernism has won. It has invaded even the Classical ballet style. Austerity and abstraction have all but replaced the radiant expression of an earlier age. The strangely unnerving effect of that 1913 *Le Sacre* photo, showing what Stravinsky called those 'knock-kneed Lolitas'⁶²—the uneasy mix of dreamy girlish enticement and sculptural rigidity—would be almost impossible for Hodson to achieve fully today, just as Nijinsky and Rambert seem not to have been able to entirely de-Duncanize the *corps de ballet*, or get the requisite brutality of gesture into Piltz's performance. Hodson tells us that Rambert specifically warned her against being influenced by the graceful sentimentality of Valentine Gross-Hugo's drawings of *The Rite*. Her account of Rambert's advice concerning this key source for the *Le Sacre* reconstruction is worth examining at some length:

Gross-Hugo published a number of them [drawings of the 'Danse sacrée'] at the time of the première in the journal *Montjoie*, each one accompanied by several measures of Stravinsky's score. This coordination of movement and music gave me a skeletal sequence for the solo. But I bore in mind Rambert's warnings about grace, both regarding Piltz and Gross-Hugo. Some advice she gave me at the end of that interview became a touchstone for the project. She had stood up to conclude our conversation, and—as she was wont to do despite her ninety years—began to do some barre exercises, using the back of a chair. 'Be blunt,' she declared, suddenly inverting her plié, 'Nijinsky's ballet was blunt.' After the interview I studied the Gross-Hugo drawings of Piltz, sketching the movements preserved in them but blunting the lines. In this way the style for my *Sacre* reconstruction drawings was determined.⁶³

One can fully understand why Hodson would follow Rambert's advice here; after all, who could have more authority over the style of the ballet than Rambert, who literally forced it upon the bodies of the dancers in 1913? In following Rambert, Hodson is simply and quite justifiably taking her main oral source *au sérieux*. And yet, I cannot help feeling, despite Rambert's insistence, that grace was not entirely banished from *Le Sacre*. It appears in Schmitt's review, in the Gross-Hugo drawings [see figure 1.11], and in the backstage costumed photo. This lingering grace was perhaps unwanted by either Nijinsky or Rambert; indeed, was this grace precisely what made the latter declare Piltz's rendition of the 'Danse sacrée' to have been but 'a very pale picture-postcard reproduction'⁶⁴ of Nijinsky's own demonstration of the dance? Hodson's graceless reconstruction is faithful to Rambert's account of Nijinsky's intentions. However, paradoxically, the closer Hodson approaches the choreographer's intent, the further she is, I believe, from actually reconstructing the 1913 performances.

Indeed, if we examine the backstage photograph more carefully, we find a large discrepancy in grace between the existing evidence from 1913 and the Hodson reconstruction of the beginning of Act II of the ballet. The photo, as Hodson notes in *Nijinsky's Crime Against Grace*, shows dancers costumed for both Acts I and II:

The first and third dancers (from the left) are YOUNG WOMEN in blue and white smocks. The second is Marie Rambert.⁶⁵

The blue smock costumes belong to Act I, the other dancers are dressed for Act II: but they all are making gestures from the first scene of Act II, the 'Cercles mystérieux des adolescentes'. In reconstructing this scene Hodson once again had to make choices in evaluating her sources, choices this time about the style and emotional content of the gestures. It is a moment in the ballet for which there is relatively ample 1913 evidence; understandably so, for it is indeed a striking moment in the choreography. The 'adolescentes' are

60. John Drummond, *Speaking of Diaghilev* (London: Faber and Faber, 1997), 92. This ineffable grace can be seen in the photograph, published opposite page 129 of Marie Rambert's *Quicksilver*, of the 1930 revival of *Sylphides* which Karsavina set on Rambert's troupe.

61. Bullard, 'The First Performance', volume III, 84.

62. Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Expositions and Developments* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 143.

63. Hodson, 'Sacre', 57-8.

64. Drummond, *Speaking of Diaghilev*, 113.

65. Hodson, *Nijinsky's Crime*, 106.

tightly grouped into a circle, facing outwards, their toes turned in and their heads resting on the backs of their right hands. Lydia Sokolova, who danced in the *corps de ballet* in 1913, described this part of the choreography in *Dancing for Diaghilev*:

The second scene, with the sacrifice of the Chosen Virgin, began with all the female dancers standing in a large circle facing outward, the Chosen One among them. We all had our toes pointing inwards, the right elbow resting on the left fist, and the right fist supporting the head which was leant sideways. As the ring began to move round, at certain counts the whole group would rise on tip-toe, dropping their right hands to their sides and jerking their heads to the left.⁶⁶

This account, however, does not completely correspond to the pictorial evidence from 1913. It is clear from the photograph backstage at the Opéra that clenched fists were not, in fact, involved in Nijinsky's gesture, nor does the 'starting position' (assumed by the four dancers on the left) incorporate 'the right elbow resting on the left fist': the floppy left hand rather touches the inside of the right arm just above elbow level. Here the reconstructor's choice between much later verbal description based on recollection (Sokolova) and visual evidence from the period seems a fairly simple one to make: not only does the 1913 photograph show the starting position (four dancers on the left) and its modification (two dancers on the right), these gestures are exactly corroborated by contemporary drawings by Valentine Gross-Hugo (reprinted in *Nijinsky's Crime Against Grace*, on page 127). The Gross-Hugo drawings are line sketches, and do not suggest any quality of facial expression. There are, however, two more fully worked-out drawings of this scene by Emmanuel Barcet (also reprinted in *Nijinsky's Crime Against Grace*, on page 126). One shows the tight circle of dancers, pigeon-toed, in the 'starting position'. The same dreamy, innocent quality of facial expression is suggested here as appears in the backstage photograph. The second Barcet drawing shows an *adolescente* in the same attitude as the second dancer from the right in the photograph (the tall girl with her feet pointing to the left). Here too, the drawing and photograph show concordant facial expressions. This indicates that the *corps de ballet* was not 'mugging' for the photograph. This should hardly surprise us: after all, the photographs were meant to document Nijinsky's daring new choreography. One must assume that some attempt at accuracy would have been made, and that the girls would not have been allowed to play any merry pranks. Therefore it seems clear that graceful facial expression was in evidence during this scene of *Le Sacre*, and that it was tolerated, perhaps indeed even sanctioned, by the choreographer himself.

When we compare these drawings and the photograph to Hodson's version of the scene, the difference in expression is evident. Hodson's *corps de ballet* do not dream, they look blank. Their 'starting position' is more grotesque than that suggested by the Barcet drawing. Their right elbows now rest on their left hands, as in Sokolova's description, though no fists are to be seen, their knees are bent, they lean forward, thrusting their buttocks outwards and back. They do not project a girlish, innocent grace, nor, when they modify this basic position, do they assume the softness of attitude visible in the visual evidence from 1913, but rather go very rigid, the fingers of both hands pointing straight up. Nor does the head rest gently on the left hand. One must wonder what the effect would be if the original dreaminess were reinstated to this scene which originally was 'filled with fragrant lyricism'.⁶⁷ Surely the audience, realizing that one of these sweet young girls must soon be sacrificed, would be strongly moved? And surely, as I have argued already, this Romantic goal of catharsis was still desired in 1913?⁶⁸ I would propose that Nijinsky's *Le Sacre*, modern and shocking for its day, could not have been as abstract as Nijinsky's *Les Noces* of 1923, for if it had been, why would the latter choreography have so bemused the Ballets Russes team and Stravinsky himself?

Hodson, therefore, in attempting to be faithful to the choreographer, seems to have over-shot her mark. Let us examine, in this context, an anecdote associated with Nijinsky's choreography for Debussy's *L'Après-midi d'un faune*. In her autobiography entitled *Quicksilver*, Marie Rambert relates the following:

Each nymph looked a goddess. Although they were incapable of understanding Nijinsky's intentions, the mere fact of faithfully copying his unique movements gave them the requisite style. He told them: no expression in the face, you must just be as though asleep with your eyes open—like statues.

Once when a new girl had to learn Nijinsky's sister's part, in which the Nymph suddenly sees the Faune, turns away and walks off—he said to her: 'Why do you look so frightened?'

66. Richard Buckle, ed., *Dancing for Diaghilev: The Memoirs of Lydia Sokolova* (San Francisco: Mercury House, Inc., 1960), 43.

67. Krasovska emphasises the sweetness of this scene with its 'angel-like gestures'. See Chapter 1, footnote 22.

68. It is not by chance that Jean Cocteau, in criticizing *Le Sacre*, chose to compare its effect insultingly to the artistic goals of Wagner. For more on this see: Jed Wentz, 'De hoge hoed en de nachtspiegel: is Satie de grondlegger van de oude muziek?', *Tijdschrift voor Oude Muziek*, 1. 2008: 40-8.

She said she thought she was meant to be. Thereupon, quite in a rage, he said that the movement he gave her was all that was required of her, he was not interested in her personal feelings.⁶⁹

This is straight-forward, incontrovertible evidence from someone who was an eye witness to the rehearsals. Indeed, it was probably due to the influence of Rambert's *L'Après-midi* anecdote that Hodson deleted the expression from the faces of her *Le Sacre* dancers. She has said in an interview:

He [Nijinsky] also removed the great Russian facility of using the face. We look at Eisenstein films, we look at the Ballets Russes pictures and we see this great expression, magnified expression, of the face; and that was changed completely by Nijinsky, [he] said it [was] all in the body. So that was a very important rule that he made. [...] he has asked the face to be a mask [...].⁷⁰

We can see, in both this particular case and in other examples already cited, how Hodson's well-founded convictions have come together to create a particular expressive style for the ballet. Yet, if we compare the photograph of Nijinsky and his sister at the very moment in the *L'Après-midi* which Rambert describes (published in *Quicksilver* between pages 80 and 81), we see more expression in both dancers than is customary in performances today: Nijinska does not 'pull a face' in order to indicate fear in the tradition of silent film actors (which, arguably, goes back to Le Brun's *Conférences*), but her body, face and eyes do strongly project apprehension. Indeed, if we look at the many photographs of Nijinsky taken in poses from *Shéhérazade*, *Petrushka* or even the avant-guard *Faune*, we see incredible projection and expression, particularly in the eyes. Cyril W. Beaumont, who had often seen Nijinsky dance, stressed this element of projection in Nijinsky's art,⁷¹ while Rambert underscored the importance of the eyes: 'He had that extraordinary personality, you followed his eye; all his soul was in his eyes when he danced, like all dancers of genius.'⁷²

I bring this up here not because I wish to castigate Hodson, but because I wish to use this particular example of reconstruction to stand for the futility of all reconstructive efforts. As I have made clear, I have great respect for Hodson and her dedicated work to bring back the original *Sacre*. However, she, like all of us, can only see through the veil of her own time and gaze at the past through the gauze of her own assumptions. Rambert, remembering Nijinsky's struggle to eliminate extraneous grace from his dancers, stressed the 'bluntness' of the original choreography. Hodson, in the 1980s, takes Rambert's words seriously in the context of a style of movement already inconceivably blunt by 1913 standards. The result is naturally much to our current taste, as it results in the *avant-garde* art of 1913 reborn in the style of our time. Hodson herself has admitted as much in *Nijinsky's Crime Against Grace*:

The idea of reconstruction occurred to me at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1970. At the Bancroft Library there I became an avid reader of materials on the Ballets Russes. What intrigued me, above all, were the three extant photographs of *Le Sacre du Printemps*, shot backstage at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. They looked so contemporary. It was not only that Roerich's costumes mirrored the folkloric clothes that were then, and perennially are, so stylish. It was also the statement of the dancers' bodies. There stood Marie Rambert among her peers, toes turned in and elbows stuck to her ribs, the Nijinsky maidens Stravinsky later nicknamed his "knock-kneed Lolitas". They reminded me of fashion models of the 1970's photographed by Richard Avedon. Their inverted stance suggested vulnerability but also autonomy. Even in the context of glossy magazines, this position meant more than an oddly seductive proclamation or pretense of virginity.⁷³

Hodson here discloses that she noticed the coquettish expression of the photographs, but that it was not of primary importance to her: it did not register as being essential to the work, and therefore was rejected by her in favour of Rambert's 'bluntness'. I will argue more widely, at various points in this thesis, that the same blind process was at work in the authentic Early Music performances of that time, and that, indeed, it is still at work today in both musical and gestural reconstructions of the *tragédie en musique*. In fact, I feel that it is entirely possible for highly trained and intelligent scholars and performers to look at the sources (like Hodson looking at the photos) and to see only what the very particular light of the current *zeitgeist* allows. It is a fateful flaw in human perception, and it is one that I myself cannot escape. The fact that I can detect certain weaknesses in Hodson's work is no guarantee that I can see them in my own.

69. Marie Rambert, *Quicksilver: The Autobiography of Marie Rambert* (London: Macmillan, 1972), 61-2.

70. See: 'Interview with Millicent Hodson and Kenneth Archer', included among the 'Bonus' clips on the DVD *Stravinsky and the Ballet Russes*, 11:45.

71. see: Cyril W. Beaumont, *Vaslav Nijinsky* (London: C. W. Beaumont, 1932), 25-6.

72. Drummond, *Speaking of Diaghilev*, 114.

73. Hodson, *Nijinsky's Crime*, xix.

So, at the outset of this thesis, I propose that a detached and Modernist performance style still dominates Baroque musical and gestural reconstructions today. I am convinced that this has to do with our entirely understandable but all too imprecise attempts to extract and discard the Romantic as we gaze back in search of the Baroque. Our need to do so is forgivable, but the bloodless results are not: all too often Baroque actors look as emotionally empty and passionless as Hodson's boyish dancers cocking their heads to one side in *Le Sacre*. It is just such a Modernist reading of Baroque passion that I hope to avoid here.

Yet, in my search for authenticity of gesture, I remain aware that no written description of charisma can capture the real *feel*, the experience, of a dead artist's expression. One can attempt to remove Romanticism and somehow skip back to the pre-Romantic past; but expression, emotion, must fill the Baroque forms. And thus we come upon the thread which has woven itself through the stuff of this dissertation, the Ariadne's thread that has guided me through that labyrinth of strong opinions expressed in all those sources—oral, written or pictorial, from whichever nation, discipline or century—which have been consulted in preparing this research: the absolute impossibility of the undertaking. At best, in reconstructing the link between gesture and rhythmic freedom on the 17th- and 18th-century stage, I can but try to find the theory behind the outward forms. I can use information from the period from medical, musical and theatrical sources, and I can make a synthesis that, at least to some extent, *works*. A working model will be the result of this dissertation, but not a reconstruction of the original *content*. The authentic content expressed by the gestures when they were new included a layer, a bright sheen, that was personal, ineffable and irrevocably transient. Though I shall propose a synthesis of the outward forms and intellectual theory from the period that can directly address the research question, I shall inevitably have to fill the gestures with emotional content from the 21st century.



Chapter 2

Galenist musical affect theory
and its place in the reconstruction
process

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to function in a particular way for this thesis, and to do so succinctly. It is meant to clarify what I mean by the terms *affect*, *passion* and *Galenist musical affect theory*. I unveil no new discoveries about the ‘theory of the passions’ here, nor do I present any kind of overview of the immense literature on affect that has grown up from its Hippocratic roots. Indeed, it would far surpass the needs of this thesis for me to engage with or even acknowledge all aspects of a topic so vast as that of affect, passion and emotion in music; nor is it my intention to promote any particular work currently being done in this field by my colleagues¹; rather, my goal is to make clear how I personally understand the terms *affect* and *passion* as they relate to the *tragédie en musique*, and to demonstrate both the influence that Galenist writings on affect have had on my scholarship and the inspiration they have provided to my work as a reconstructor.

Section 2.2 is entitled ‘On the affects: from Aristotle to Descartes’. In the first sub-section (2.2a, entitled ‘Relevant aspects of Galenist affect theory from Aristotle to Coeffeteau’s *Tableau* (1620)), I present to the reader the basic interpretation of the term *affect* that I endorse here. This particular understanding of the word, based on both primary and secondary sources, has been used in my exegesis of musical and medical writings from the 17th and 18th centuries in Chapter 3, most notably those of Sébastien de Brossard, Jean-Philippe Rameau and Jean-Baptiste-Joseph Lallemand. In 2.2b, entitled ‘A brief re-evaluation of the importance of *De Passionibus animae*’, I address the usefulness, for my thesis, of René Descartes’ ideas about affect as presented in his famous treatise currently often referred to as *Les Passions de l’âme* (1649); while in 2.2c, entitled ‘Three German writers on musical affect theory’ I examine Athanasius Kircher’s *Neue Hall- und Thon-Kunst* (1684), Christoph Raupach’s *Veritophili Deutliche Beweis=Gründe* (1717) and Johann Mattheson’s *Der vollkommene Kapellmeister* (1739). These two sections are necessary simply because the work of Descartes and Mattheson looms so very large in 20th- and 21st-century scholarship on the topic of affect and Baroque musical expression, overshadowing—in my opinion unjustifiably—the works of writers like Kircher and his follower Raupach.

Section 2.3 is entitled ‘Passion and rationalization in 20th-century scholarship on the affects’. Here I examine certain aspects of influential works from the last century relating to the affects in Baroque music: Manfred F. Bukofzer’s *Music in the Baroque era from Monteverdi to Bach* (1947), two of George J. Buelow’s contributions to *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (1980/2001) as well as his article ‘Johann Mattheson and the invention of the *Affektenlehre*’ in *New Mattheson Studies* (1983)², and John Neubauer’s *The Emancipation of Music from Language* (1986). Though this literature may no longer be seen as cutting edge by scholars currently working on the affects, I argue that it still can be qualified as influential for many performers of Early Music. As I am here engaged in research in and through performance, it seems essential for me to address this literature in order to avoid misunderstandings about my intentions and methodology.

Section 2.4, which is entitled ‘*The Passions of the Minde in Generall* as a source of inspiration for this research’, contains a series of quotations taken from Thomas Wright’s *The Passions of the Minde in Generall* (1601).³ Wright’s writing has been an exceptional spur to my work in the case studies. Given the arguments I presented in Chapter 1—where I take Millicent Hodson’s reconstruction of the original choreography for *Le Sacre du printemps* as my example—that reconstructors working in the sphere of performance must document their subjective biases, I here present one of my own main sources of inspiration.

Before proceeding, however, some clarification of terminology is required. Firstly, as to what I mean by the terms *affect* and *passion*, I use these words interchangeably here, and in the way that I believe 17th- and 18th-century musicians would generally have understood them: as referring both to the physical reaction of the body to incoming sensory stimulation (musicians, of course, were especially concerned with sounds), and to the subsequent action of the body upon the soul; the result was roughly what we would call an emotion today, with its physical manifestations strongly underscored.⁴ A more complete explanation of this will follow in Section 2.2.

1. Much work has been done on the affects by writers on music such as Kate van Orden’s *Music, Discipline, and Arms in Early Modern France* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005) and Penelope Gouk’s *Music, Science and Natural Magic in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

2. I will not engage here with Buelow’s *A History of Baroque Music* (2004), because I do not feel that it represents a significant departure from the author’s previous work on musical affect theory; and because I feel that it is far less influential as a tool for performers than his articles in *The New Grove*.

3. Wright’s treatise was published in 1601, but later expanded and often reprinted. I have used the edition entitled: *The Passions of the Minde in Generall. In Six Bookes*. Corrected, Enlarged, and with Sundry New Discourses Augmented (London: 1630).

4. The question of whether or not the soul actually exists, one which will be variously answered by my readers, is here laid aside: I firmly believe that we must approach the past, as much as we possibly can, on its own terms. Whether or not we believe that man has a spiritual component, the concept of a soul is not so foreign to our thinking as to throw up an insurmountable barrier between us and the musicians of the period to be studied.

Secondly, my definition of the term *Galenist* is of particular importance. In speaking of *Galenist affect theory* I shall use the term very broadly, to designate or describe all those aspects of Western Medical philosophy on affect that fit into the greater Galenist tradition. In practical terms this means that I am little concerned if one writer leans more towards Aristotle, or if another is neo-Platonic in outlook; or whether one favors Descartes' view of the pineal gland while another remains true to Hippocratic humors: as long as a writer looks at the affects from a standpoint generally compatible with the larger tradition that grew from Galen's teachings I will label him or her, for the sake of brevity, *Galenist*.⁵ Some justification of this breadth of definition is in order here.

Galen was born in the second century A. D., and was arguably the most famous physician of Antiquity. Nancy G. Sirasi, in *Medieval & Early Renaissance Medicine: An Introduction to Knowledge and Practice*, describes his importance thus:

Greek medicine reached its fullest development in Galen (d. ca. A. D. 200). Galen was unquestionably one of the greatest scientists of antiquity. His contributions to anatomical knowledge—despite the limitation of his dissections to animals other than man—remained unsurpassed for nearly fourteen hundred years; and even the achievement of Vesalius, often thought of as overthrowing Galen, would have been inconceivable without Galen's foundation to build on. Galen was also a great synthesizer. His voluminous writings bring together almost the entire heritage of Greek medicine in all fields [...].⁶

Through Galen's numerous writings, as well as some that were attributed to him, a tradition of humoral medicine, one that ultimately was derived from the work of earlier Greek physicians like Hippocrates, was passed on to Europe. Furthermore, Galenist ideas about the body and its affects or passions were absorbed, in the 13th century, into Scholasticism, and thus would eventually enjoy a Pan-European influence. So, when I use the term *Galenist* here, I do so understanding that many ideas about the body and the affects attributed to Galen were received by 17th- and 18th-century Europeans:

1. through medical treatises written by or ascribed to the man himself, or
2. through medical works written by physicians long after Galen's death but based, at least to some extent, on received Galenist ideas, or,
3. through theological or philosophical works influenced by Scholastic view-points.

Galen's ideas, therefore, can be said to have been held in high esteem over a long period of time by people working in a variety of disciplines and over a large geographic and temporal spectrum, without his followers necessarily having actually read any of his authentic works: it should not surprise us then to realize that not everyone understood what I here call *Galenist medicine* in exactly the same way.

Indeed, long before the Scientific Revolution began to question the infallibility of Antique knowledge, numerous influences had been mixed together with Galenist theory to form a more general European medical tradition: Jewish and Arab medical writers, the works of Aristotle, and 'magical' sciences like astrology, all had been blended together to form a complex, and not entirely uniform system of medicine. Within it the passions or affects had an important place. Nancy G. Sirasi reviewed the medical sources written between 1200 and 1450, and distilled out of them the following enumeration of those fundamental concepts, the *naturals, non-naturals and contra-naturals*:

[...] the contra-naturals, or things against nature, were pathological conditions of all kinds. The non-naturals were a mixture of physiological, psychological, and environmental conditions held to affect health: air, exercise and rest, sleep and waking, food and drink, repletion and excretion, and the "accidents of the soul," or passions and emotions. [...] The list of things natural differed slightly in terminology and number of subdivisions in different versions; it usually included elements, complexions (sometimes divided into *commixtiones* and complexions), humors, members, virtues, operations and *spiritus*. The things natural thus joined together alleged material components imperceptible to sense (the elements of earth, air, fire, and water in the human body, and *spiritus*, which

Atomists, therefore, are requested to suspend their disbelief as far as the soul goes; my sympathetic advice to such readers is: *if you can't feel it, fake it*.

5. I shall attempt to show, in Section 2.2b, that Descartes' *De Passionibus animae* was intended by its author to update, rather than entirely to overthrow, Galenist medicine. I therefore shall but rarely make a significant distinction here between *Cartesian affect theory* and *Galenist affect theory*, as it would not be useful to the argument of this particular thesis. I am aware, however, that there are differences between the two systems, and that my chosen use of terminology, while it suits my needs here, cannot be regarded as universally happy in its application.

6. Nancy G. Sirasi, *Medieval & Renaissance Medicine: An Introduction to Knowledge and Practice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 4.

was supposedly a substance manufactured in the heart from inspired air and transmitted through the body via the arteries); physically perceptible bodily parts (humors, that is, body fluids; and members, that is, parts of the body); and activities or functions (virtues and operations).⁷

We can see here that European medicine in the 15th century was a complex concoction in which the passions were placed among the ‘environmental conditions held to affect health’ known as the ‘non-naturals’. ‘Spirits’ and humors, the enablers of passion, were listed among the ‘things natural’, for they belonged to the body itself, and its functioning. However, Siraisi informs us, even at this early date, and even though the larger picture of how the body worked was firmly in place and basically Galenist, not all writers agreed exactly on all of the mechanics. Such mechanical differences between writers would only multiply with the passage of time, especially once pressure from the Scientific Revolution began pushing the Galenist system towards complete collapse. When it comes to this thesis, however, such mere mechanical differences are of little importance: because I am concerned with performance, rather than the works or theoretical stance of a specific author or compositional school, it is to my advantage to make my understanding of the Galenist tradition as all-encompassing as possible. As I shall argue elsewhere in this thesis, it is not the detail of the mechanics that interests me here, but the broader scientific paradigm in which Galenist musical affect theory functioned: that is to say, whether it was believed by any given individual that the humors were more important than the animal spirits in determining affect, or that the soul was presented with outside stimuli in the heart rather than the pineal gland, the affect, the *feeling*, would have been held to have been the same. I would argue that, in terms of performance, it is this feeling that matters. Once the larger medical paradigm in which performers and composers worked has been established, the specific, in-the-body details are of little consequence. After all, we know that Quantz was still thinking in terms of passions and temperaments in 1752, for he mentions them both in his *Versuch*. A discussion of the temperaments, which according to medical theory ultimately arose from the humors, appears in a passage devoted to emphasizing the importance of being able to play strictly in time:

Einige halten das Zögern oder Nachschleppen, (trainiren) oder das Eilen, (pressiren) für einen Naturfehler. Es ist wahr, daß das herrschende sogenannte Temperament viel dazu beyträgt: und daß ein lustiger oder hitziger und hastiger Mensch zum Eilen, ein trauriger, niedergeschlagener, oder ein träger kaltsinniger Mensch aber, zum Zögern geneigt ist.⁸

Thus musicians of hot temperament (choleric and sanguine) are naturally ‘programmed’ towards making the mistake of rushing, while those of cold temperament (phlegmatic and melancholic) are physically predisposed to drag.⁹ Now, surely it would be far-fetched for us to believe that Quantz’ playing style and the emotional content of his performances, would have been different from those of a colleague who had abandoned the belief of the old-fashioned humors and temperaments for Descartes’ animal spirits, simply because the two performers’ conceptions of the mechanics of passion were incompatible? What is of far greater consequence here is the knowledge that Quantz still refers to a system that explained the passions as physical reactions to incoming sensory stimuli. And, I will argue, his Cartesian colleague would have done so too: indeed, broad Galenist musical affect theory was still being promoted as late as 1817.¹⁰ It is the consequence that this more general model of affect had for performance that I will examine in this dissertation.

And finally, let me elucidate, before continuing, my use of the term *Galenist affect theory*: I have coined this term with a clear awareness that *affect theory* is currently firmly associated with Silvan Tomkin’s *Affect Imagery Consciousness* (1962-1992)¹¹. However, to be frank, I was forced to find a new term suited to the purposes of this thesis because the existing musicological terminology seemed unsuited to an exploration of the *tragédie en musique*. ‘*Affektenlehre*’ carries too many undesirable connotations of work done by other scholars on a very different kind of repertoire, and moreover simply seems too specifically German, for me to use effectively.¹² To have used either *the theory of the passions* or *the doctrine of the affections* would have

7. Siraisi, *Medieval & Early Renaissance Medicine*, 101. For an accessible account of Galen’s theories see: Paul Strathern, *A Brief History of Medicine from Hippocrates to Gene Therapy*, (London: Constable & Robinson Ltd., 2005). For an interesting collection of essays on the topic of ‘members’ see: David Hillman and Carla Mazzio, ed., *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

8. Johann Joachim Quantz, *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversiere zu spielen* (Berlin: 1752), XVII: VII: 32, 254. Quantz has not placed this passage in the context of an argument for or against conscious, expressive rhythmic freedoms.

9. Quantz later uses much the same argument in describing the relationship between pulse, temperament and tempo. See: Quantz, *Versuch*, XVIII: VII: 55, 267.

10. The contribution Virey made to the *Dictionnaire des sciences médicales*, entry ‘harmonie’, reaffirms Galenist temperaments and qualities, and even refers to Kircher-esque experiments on sound waves and their influence on various kinds of liquids. See: C. L. F. Panckoucke, ed., *Dictionnaire des sciences médicales*, tome vingtième, 1817.

11. See the complete edition in two volumes: Silvan Tomkins, *Affect Imagery Consciousness: The Complete Edition Two Volumes* (New York: Springer Publishing, 2008).

12. How odd it would be to speak of ‘manifestations of the *Affektenlehre* in the *tragédie en musique*’!

been equally unsatisfactory, as these terms mainly function, in current musicological literature, as mere translations from the German *Affektenlehre*. It seemed best for me to come up with a new term to express what I mean in discussing affect in French tragic opera from Lully to Rameau: I therefore have chosen a basic term of ‘affect theory’, which I shall qualify in various ways, depending on the context of the passage in question.

I do not see the existing association between the term *affect theory* and the work of Silvan Tomkins as problematic: there are, in fact, broad resemblances between Tomkin’s work and the Galenist tradition. Tomkins’ affect theory proposes a fixed number of basic affects (mostly paired) which are hard-wired in each human infant, triggered by incoming sensory input and linked to physiological changes (facial expression, heart-beat, etc.) in the subject. These striking resemblances between Tomkins’ thought and the earlier affective tradition leads me to believe it acceptable here, for the specific purposes of this dissertation, to simply qualify the latter as *Galenist affect theory* in order to distinguish it from the former, or *Tomkinsist affect theory*. Moreover, in speaking of the application of this Galenist affect theory to music I shall further qualify it as *Galenist musical affect theory*.¹³

So, to sum up, I will use the term *Galenist musical affect theory* throughout this thesis to refer to the belief, widely and perhaps even universally held in the period in question, that sounds, like other sensual stimulation, move the human body and soul through the medium of either the humors, the animals spirits or a combination thereof. I use the term passions in a similarly broad sense: they are the effects on the body and soul of incoming sensory input. I believe that these concepts quite happily functioned, during the period in question, within various philosophical and medical contexts: whether the writer’s over-arching outlook was Scholastic or Neo-Platonist, or indeed whether he followed Galen or Harvey on the specifics of blood circulation, he almost certainly would have understood passion in terms of a physical movement of body on soul.

2.2 On the affects: from Aristotle to Descartes

2.2a Relevant aspects of Galenist affect theory from Aristotle to Coeffeteau’s *Tableau* (1620)

Before I begin to build up, from primary and secondary sources, an affective model which can serve as a specific tool to dissect and scrutinize, in later chapters, precepts and reports about the expression of emotion in the period in question, it will be useful, indeed necessary, to take into account my own attitude towards the science of the past: it is not my intention to show the affects to have been the quaint mythology of naive forebears. On the contrary, it is my belief that Scholasticism, the main channel through which Greco-Roman medical philosophy enriched European thought before the new methods of the Scientific Revolution discredited older models, was a deep and subtle method of approaching a world whose belief systems were very different from our own.

I have, throughout this research trajectory, done my best not to condemn the affective vocabulary, science and imagery of the past for being different to ours today. In this I have been inspired by the work of Susan James, who has published extensively on the place of emotion in the writings of various 17th- and 18th-century European philosophers. James has pointed out, in *Passion and Action: The Emotions in Seventeenth-century Philosophy*, that:

By demonizing aspects of our own philosophical past, we are able to bask in our own purportedly dispassionate originality and insight. By branding our most celebrated predecessors as incompetent, we release ourselves from the obligation to look as sensitively and creatively as we can at their philosophies, and fend off the possibility of having to acknowledge that sometimes they were there before us. This strategy will clearly not go away. It is part of the Oedipal struggle between philosophy and its past without which the subject would come to a standstill, and is a stage in a larger dialectical pattern of rejection and recovery. But it is nevertheless a strategy about which it is helpful to be self-conscious.¹⁴

So, while it would be both absurd and untrue to state that I have, in the course of my research, become convinced of the physical reality of the four humors and the animal spirits as affective triggers, I definitely

13. Having established this principal of nomenclature I see no reason not to use it extensively. Therefore, when I wish, for the sake of correctness, to distinguish specific aspects of Descartes thought from the larger Galenist tradition, I shall not hesitate to speak of ‘Cartesian affect theory’, nor even, when referring to *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, shall I hesitate to write of ‘Matthesonist musical affect theory’, and so forth.

14. Susan James, *Passion and Action: The Emotions in Seventeenth-century Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 18.

have, while performing, allowed my body to speak to my imagination using the vocabulary of the affects. I am as unlikely, at the end of this research trajectory, to open a vein in order to cure the common cold as I was at the start; but I do feel my heart growing warm and cold with passion when I perform, and I follow, artistically, the rush and sink of my 'spirits'. What follows therefore is both an explanation of my intellectual approach to the sources and a primer in the body-language that I used in the case studies in Chapter 5.

The term 'Galenist musical affect theory', as I have explained above, is one that I have coined to indicate a rather messy conglomeration of ideas passed down in a variety of sources (medical, musical, rhetorical and philosophical) from Antiquity onwards. I have already briefly addressed Galen's medical contribution to the subject in my introduction: here I attempt concisely to examine aspects of the philosophical legacy of Aristotle and Aquinas that contributed to said conglomeration. It is my hope that the concepts presented here will be of use to the reader in examining the following chapters of this thesis.

Let me begin with some fundamental principles. Long before Galen, the affects had already formed a basic component of Aristotelian philosophy. It was mainly from the Greek philosopher that they passed, through the works of Thomas Aquinas, into the Western Scholastic tradition.¹⁵ Susan James underlines the importance of the passions to Aristotle's thought:

[...] Aristotle views them [the passions] as properties of the soul-body composite, and thus as having what we would call physical as well as psychological effects. Turning to these bodily manifestations, he goes on to introduce a further dimension of passivity. When people become angry, for example, they become hot around the heart, and while this heat is not identical with the experience of anger, it always accompanies it. Similarly, when people are afraid, the interiors of their bodies become cold. These interior bodily events in turn cause and explain the visible effects of passions. Because angry people are hot around the heart, and because in anger this heat moves upwards, they become 'red in the face and full of breath'. With characteristic sensitivity to the physical language used in ancient Greek to describe the emotions, Aristotle remarks that this is why expressions about anger boiling up, rising, and being stirred up are appropriate. They are not simply metaphors, but describe a physical process. In addition, this process explains why anger is hard to overcome. Once the bodily motions that go with it are excited, they are not under our direct control and are difficult to stop. Even when an angry person sets up counter-motions, the passions continue to move them on in the same direction as the first. Aristotle's discussion implies that this problem afflicts us both when we set up counter-motions to a particular fit of anger, for example by calming down, and when we set up counter-motions to habitual anger by trying to become less irascible. [...] Running through these reflections is the idea that neither the passions nor their physical symptoms are entirely under our control. We cannot help ourselves going red in the face when we are angry, and, yet more seriously, we often cannot prevent ourselves from getting angry. So the passive character of passion does not just lie in the fact that they are responses to the world which only occur when circumstances excite us; it also lies in the fact that we often cannot control the way that we respond to a situation.¹⁶

These basic ideas would hold sway in Europe, through the channel of Scholasticism, until well into the 18th century. In Thomas Aquinas' Scholastic system, which was a synthesis of Pagan and Christian beliefs, Aristotle's ideas on the passions were combined with those of Galen to create a new, hybrid form.¹⁷ James lays stress on Aquinas' role in creating a medical-philosophical belief system that would dominate European thought for hundreds of years:

His [Aquinas'] analysis of the passions extends and alters the picture painted by Aristotle and exerts a tremendous influence, both on later Scholastic philosophical psychology up to and throughout the seventeenth century, and on the opponents of Scholasticism. It becomes, in short, a second Aristotelian orthodoxy, part of the legacy on which early-modern theorists of the passions depend.¹⁸

A striking aspect of this legacy that is of special interest to the topic at hand, is the idea of motion, and most specifically, of attraction and repulsion. It is important to remember, in reading the following passage, that in 17th- and 18th-century France *mouvement* could mean not only a motion of or in a physical body, but also both the tempo and the affect of a piece of music:¹⁹

15. Galen was, of course, also influenced to some extent by Aristotle: I have here followed James's exegesis (from *Passion and Action*) without attempting myself to research or differentiate these various strands woven by Aquinas into Scholasticism.

16. James, *Passion and Action*, 42.

17. For instance, Aquinas followed Galen in endorsing Plato's tri-partite soul, whereas Aristotle thought the soul was bifurcated. For more information see: *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, '17th and 18th Century Theories of Emotions > Ancient, Medieval and Renaissance Theories of the Emotions', 3. Hippocratic and Galenist Medicine. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/emotions-17th18th/LD1Background.html>. Last accessed 15-08-2010.

18. James, *Passion and Action*, 46.

19. For various definitions of the word see: *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française*, quatrième édition, tome second, 183-4. This double meaning for the word *mouvement* will be more fully explored in Chapters 3 and 4.

One of the most puzzling features of this [Aquinas'] analysis is its depiction of states of the soul as motions. The characterization of volitions and some of the passions as movements draws these phenomena into an explanatory scheme designed to cover both the soul and the material world, in which two sets of metaphors are used to blend the physical with the psychological. On the one hand, Aquinas applies ideas now considered psychological to physical things, for example, he describes the disposition of heavy objects to fall towards the centre of the earth as an expression of natural love. On the other hand, he also employs the reverse strategy, describing the soul in terms whose most transparent applications are to the physical world. Desire, for instance, is a movement towards a loved object. When these metaphors are run together, motions are variously conceived as pushes and pulls, attractions and repulsions, loves, and hatreds; and repulsions, loves, and so forth are in turn explicated as motions. Motion is therefore evoked in a wide range of contexts.²⁰

So, for Aristotelian Aquinas, the passions are movements of body and soul fundamental to the human condition. They are based on principles of attraction and repulsion, and they serve either to draw man towards that which is good for him, or to repulse him away from that which could be of harm. The idea that movement was related to affect in terms of:

1. movements of the soul towards or away from external objects perceived of as being either harmful or beneficial to the subject, and
2. movements within the subject's body that would ultimately result in a subjective 'emotional' experience

had a profound influence on the terminology and imagery associated with Galenist musical affect theory in France. However, I would argue that it is important to realize that no real distinction was made between musical affect and any other experience of the outside world through the senses. As Elisabeth Uffenheimer-Lippens has put it in her article 'Rationalized Passion and Passionate Rationality: Thomas Aquinas on the Relation between Reason and the Passions':

Passion is a reaction to the external world; it shows how man stands in this world. To be a human being means not only to have intellectual knowledge of the world; it means also to react to the world in that all encompassing reaction of body and soul which is a passion.²¹

This 'all encompassing reaction' to the outside world took place after sensory input set the mechanism of the passions in motion. In Galenist affect theory such sensory input was processed by a specific part of the tripartite soul: not the natural soul that dealt with body functions like digestion and the manufacture of blood, nor the rational soul that was associated with the understanding and will, but the sensitive soul that reacted to sights, sounds, smells, etc.²² Nicolas Culpeper summed up the duties of the tripartite soul in his *Galen's Art of Physic* (1652). According to him the power of the natural soul (which centered in the gut):

- 1 Altereth Food into Chyle,²³ Chyle into Blood and Humors, Blood into Flesh.
- 2 Joyneth, formeth, ingendereth, encreaseth, and nourisheth the Body of man.²⁴

In contrast it was the sensitive soul (centered around the heart) which 'moveth':

- 1 Sadness, Sorrow, Fear, Sighing, &c. by compressing the Heart.
- 2 Joy, Hope, Mirth, Singing, by dilating the Heart.²⁵

while the rational soul (which dwelt in the head) 'causeth':

- 1 Imagination, Apprehension, Fancy, Opinion, Consent, &c. in the two former Ventricles of the Brain
- 2 Judgement, Esteem, Reason, Resolution, Disposing, Discerning, in the middle Ventricle of the Brain.
- 3 Calling to mind what is to come, Remembrance of what is past, in the hinder Ventricle of the Brain.²⁶

20. James, *Passion and Action*, 62. This explains why the word *mouvement* in French means both a passion and the tempo of the music, because both imply movement.

21. Elisabeth Uffenheimer-Lippens, 'Rationalized Passion and Passionate Rationality: Thomas Aquinas on the Relation between Reason and the Passions', *The Review of Metaphysics*, vol. 56, no. 3 (Mar., 2003), 525-558, 538.

22. Descartes would disagree with this aspect of received wisdom on the passions. An analysis of Descartes' views will follow in Section 2.2b.

23. *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines 'chyle' as 'The white milky fluid formed by the action of the pancreatic juice and the bile on the chyme, and contained in the lymphatics of the intestines, which are hence called lacteals'.

24. Nich[olas] Culpeper, *Galen's Art of Physic* (London: 1652), 8.

25. Culpeper, *Galen's Art of Physic*, 8.

26. Culpeper, *Galen's Art of Physic*, 7-8.

Thus the rational soul was not involved in the passions in the Galenist system. Just how the sensitive soul moved, or was moved to the passions by means of sensory perception, and just how the heart itself dilated and contracted, was described in detail by the Frenchman Nicolas Coeffeteau in his *Tableau des passions humaines, de leurs causes et de leurs effets* (1620). I give the passage here in the English translation from 1621 in order to demonstrate both the longevity (Galen lived in the second century; Aquinas had died in 1274) and international applicability of these ideas:

Moreouer, wee must not wonder if the sensitiue appetite in particular, make so great an impression in the body. This proceedes from the sympathy which is found in those powers, which are gouerned by the same soule which imployes them: so as the sensitiue appetite, coming to play her part, shee doth stirre vp the mouing faculty of the heart, the which dilates it selfe, or shrinkes vp, according to the nature of the obiects which haue made impression vpon the sensitive appetite, whence grow al the alterations which are made in the body of man. And here we must remember, that nature hath fashioned the heart in such sort, as it is in perpetual motion, according vnto which it sometimes extendes it selfe, and sometime retires of it selfe, with a certaine measure and proportion; the which continuing within the bounds which nature hath prescribed it, as conformable vnto the condition of the creature, this motion is wholly naturall: but if it once come to breake this law, and shew it selfe more violent, or more slow, then the nature of the creature requires, the naturall harmony is broken, and there followes a great alteration in the body of the creature.²⁷

It is clear from this that a passion was thought to be a swelling or shrinking of the heart unnatural in its amplitude (and it might be useful to recall that Nancy Siraisi placed the passions among the ‘non-naturals’ in her survey cited in the introduction to this chapter). This unnatural situation brings about ‘a great alteration of the body’, which results in visible signs of whichever passion has manifested itself in the sufferer’s body:

Of all the powers of the soule, those of the sensitiue appetite onely cause the alteraiō of the motion, whose actions alone may make it more violent, or more slowe, then the lawes of nature doe allow. And hence it comes, that none but the actions of the sensitiue appetite are made with a visible change of the body, and with a sensible alteration of the naturall constitution. Yet as in this change the heart recieues an alteration, so the spirits, the blood, and other humours, are agitated and mooued beyond ordinary, the which doth wholly trouble the naturall constitution of the creature.²⁸

Coeffeteau notes that only the actions of the sensitive soul can alter the body, changing the very tempo of its functions, making it ‘more violent, or more slowe’. He also affirms that the constitution itself is greatly disturbed as ‘the spirits, the blood, and other humours, are agitated and mooued beyond ordinary’. He goes into detail about just how this happens:

The objects of the senses strike first vpon the imagination, and then this power hauing taken knowledge of them, conceiues them as good or bad, as pleasing or troublesome, and importune: then afterwards propounds them as clothed with those qualities to the creature, which apprehending them vnder this last cōsideration excites the concupiscible, or irascible power of the soule, and induceth them to imbrace or flye them, and by the impression of its motion, agitates the spirits which we cal Vitall, the which going from the heart, disperse themselues throughout the whole body, and at the same instant the blood which deriues frō the liuer, participating in this agitatiō, flowses throughou the veynes, and casts it self ouer all the other parts of the body: so as the heart and liuer beeing thus troubled in their naturall dispositions, the whole body feeles it selfe mooued, not onely inwardly, but also outwardly, according to the nature of that passinō which doth trouble it.²⁹

Here Coeffeteau refers to the sensitive soul exciting the two categories of passions that were endorsed by Thomas Aquinas: the concupiscible and the irascible. There were 11 basic passions in Aquinas’ system, 6 concupiscible and 5 irascible [see table 2.1]. Their purpose was to protect the creature in question by attracting it to that which would preserve it and causing it to repulse or fly those things that might destroy it. So, the sensitive soul evaluates incoming sensory perceptions, stirs up the appropriate passion from the appropriate category, thus causing the body to take on the commensurate warmth and tempo associated with this passion, all in order to preserve itself by shunning evil and/or embracing good:

For in motions of ioy and desire, the heart melts with gladnesse. In those of sorrow and trouble, it shrinks vp and freezeth with griefe. In those of choler and resolution, it is inflamed and all on fire. In those of feare, it grows pale and trembling. A louers words are sweete and pleasing, and those of a cholerick man are sharpe and rough: Finally, there riseth no passion in the soule, which leaueth not some visible trace of her agitation, vpon the body of man.³⁰

27. F. N. Coeffeteau, *A Table of Human Passions with their Causes and Effects*, trans. Edw. Grimeston (London: 1621), 13-4.

28. Coeffeteau, *A Table of Human Passions*, 14-5.

29. Coeffeteau, *A Table of Human Passions*, 15-7.

30. Coeffeteau, *A Table of Human Passions*, 17.

irascible passions (towards good)	irascible passions (away from evil)
hope	despair
fear	courage

irascible passion (confronted with evil)
anger

Table 2.1: Aquinas' concupiscible and irascible passions. See complete Table 4.1 on page 130

Here we see the foundations of Galenist musical affect theory and of 17th- and 18th-century theatrical styles of declamation and gesture: physical tempo, vocal timbre, body temperature and, as we shall see in Chapter 4, even amplitude of movement are all contained within this theory of emotion. How they were understood to function in a musical/theatrical context during the period in question will be examined in the course of this thesis.

2.2b A brief re-evaluation of the importance of *De Passionibus animae*

I now must engage briefly with the mechanics of Cartesian affect theory, in preparation of my discussion of Matthesonist musical affect theory and affective taxonomy, because a great deal of emphasis has been placed on these models by modern scholars of Baroque music in their discussions of affect. I will argue that Mattheson's fleeting reference to the French translation of *De Passionibus animae* in his *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* should not lead us to expect to discover specifically Cartesian ideas in every discussion of musical affect theory from the 17th and 18th centuries; the affects, as we have seen, had a long history before Descartes gave them an update in his treatise of 1649, nor were his ideas automatically embraced by all of his contemporaries. So, while I believe that it would be nigh impossible to overestimate the importance of the passions in the musical performance paradigms of the 17th and 18th centuries, I would question to what extent a purely Cartesian understanding of the affects need have been involved. Therefore, I aim to show that—speaking purely in terms of the artistic expression and transmission of affect—Descartes' thought on emotion departs only in specifically mechanical ways from the Galenist tradition; I further propose that Baroque musicians need not have cared much about these mechanical specifics when applying affective theory to their art.

David Summers, in an essay published in *Representing the Passions: Histories, Bodies, Visions* (2003), has pointed out the links between Descartes' system and that of earlier philosophers:

In general, Descartes taxonomy of the passions was a development and clarification of previous arguments concerning the most basic passivity of sensation.³¹

This Cartesian 'development and clarification' involved streamlining the older system, and updating it to incorporate William Harvey's controversial discovery of blood circulation (as proposed in his *Exercitation anatomica de motu cordis* of 1628). It is worthwhile to go into greater depth here, in order to show not only how pressure from the New Science was applied to the older medical tradition by forward-thinking philosophers like Descartes, but also how this applied pressure began to splinter an already hybrid system of medical beliefs.

In the Galenist tradition it was the liver which created blood from chyle, and sent the blood out into the body to nourish it: blood did not circulate, but was 'eaten up' by the muscles and had to be constantly new-manufactured from ingested food. Andrew Wear has shown that this hitherto unshakable belief began to crumble when:

In 1628, William Harvey, an Englishman who had studied anatomy at Padua, published a small book the *Exer-*

31. David Summers, 'Cogito Embodied: Force and Counterforce in René Descartes's Les passions de l'âme' in *Representing the Passions: Histories, Bodies, Visions*, Richard Meyer, ed. (Canada: Getty Research Institute, 2003), 13-36, 16.

citatio Anatomica de Motu Cordis et Sanguinis in Animalibus (*An Anatomical Essay Concerning the Movement of the Heart and the Blood in Animals*, usually referred to by its Latin abbreviation, *De Motu Cordis*). In it he announced his anatomical discovery of the circulation of the blood. It was a discovery that others saw as having revolutionary consequences for traditional medicine.³²

One anatomist who recognized the dangers to the Galenic tradition of this new idea was the Galenist anatomist and member of the medical faculty at Paris, Jean Riolan the Younger:

Riolan realised that the circulation of the blood in its Harveian form had the potential to destroy Galenic physiology, for the liver could no longer be the blood-making organ of the body. Moreover, Galenic therapeutics was put in doubt because the rationale for bleeding, one of the major therapeutic procedures, had been damaged.³³

While the conservative Rolan, in his *Encheiridium anatomicum et pathologicum*, felt the need to counter Harvey's claims, the circulation of the blood was joyfully embraced by Descartes: he advocates *De Motu cordis* in his *Discours de la méthode* (1637), in *De Passionibus animae* and in *De Homine* (1662). The latter two treatises will be examined here. In them, Descartes' formulates his updated vision of the relationship between soul and body, and between the body and its environment.

Of great importance to this vision was the reduction of the soul from a tripartite to a simple and unified form. For Descartes, the body ran on like a machine without the need for either a natural or a sensitive soul to animate it. In his system the functions of the four humors were also restricted.³⁴ Wear describes the new model thus:

Descartes' vision of life reduced to or equated with a mechanistic physics was fully developed in his *Treatise of Man*, written before 1637 but suppressed by him and not published until 1662, twelve years after his death, by which time his views were finding a favorable response. In the *Treatise* Descartes allowed human beings to have some degree of free will. He stated that the pineal gland at the base of the brain acted as a valve directing the flow of 'animal spirits' (Descartes was using the traditional terminology) composed of fine, quickly moving particles derived from the blood, which traveled through the nerves, muscles, and brain conveying sensation and motion. The mind could, by an effort of will, control the action of the pineal gland on the animal spirits and consequently affect the body's movements. The pineal gland was thus the link between the mind and the body. But Descartes stressed that most actions were automatic, and that in the case of animals this was so for all their actions. In 1748 Julien de la Mettrie (1709-51) took the further step and declared that man, like animals, was a machine.³⁵

So, with only one single soul joined to the body in the pineal gland, how did Descartes imagine that the passions were stirred? Sensory input was brought to the pineal gland, where it was presented to the soul [see **figure 2.1**]. The soul and body reacted to this sensory perception based on past experience and proceeded either to embrace or to reject the object depending on whether it was judged helpful or harmful to the body to which the soul was attached. Susan James puts it thus:

For Descartes, the evaluative perceptions that constitute our passions are just as basic and as natural as our sensory perceptions and sensations. We are designed to experience the world as beneficial or harmful to us as much as we are designed to experience colours or sounds; and we are designed to experience some of our bodily states as beneficial or harmful much as we are designed to experience them as itches or pains. Moreover, our capacity to discriminate between, say, situations that are angering and those that are frightening is marked on the body. Layers of experience are recorded, so to speak, in the connections between the movements of the pineal gland and the passions of the soul, so that we do not need to make a judgement in order to feel that a situation is frightening; we simply experience it as frightening.³⁶

Thus the animal spirits were sent out into the body in order to move it appropriately—for instance, to flee a vicious animal. In some cases the sending out of the spirits was a direct act of the soul, in which the pineal gland was purposefully moved in order to achieve specific desired motion in the body; but more often the body was 'on automatic' and the pineal gland was moved without active intervention from the soul. In these

32. Lawrence I. Conrad, Michael Neve, Vivian Nutton, Roy Porter, Andrew Wear, *The Western Medical Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 330.

33. Conrad, Neve, Nutton, Porter, Wear, *The Western Medical Tradition*, 338.

34. In "The 15th Article" of *De Passionibus animae* Descartes admits that the quality of the animal spirits depends on where the blood from which they are distilled originates: 'and for that according to the diversity of the parts from whence it comes most, it dilates it selfe diversly in the heart, and at last produces spirits of different natures, as for example, that which comes from the lower part of the liver, where the gall is, dilates it selfe otherwise in the heart, than that which comes from the spleene [...]'. This passage contains rather a whiff of the humors: black bile, by any other name, would smell as foul? See: René Descartes, *The Passions of the Soule in Three Books* (London: 1650), 14-5.

35. Conrad, Neve, Nutton, Porter, Wear, *The Western Medical Tradition*, 345-6.

36. James, *Passion and Action*, 105.

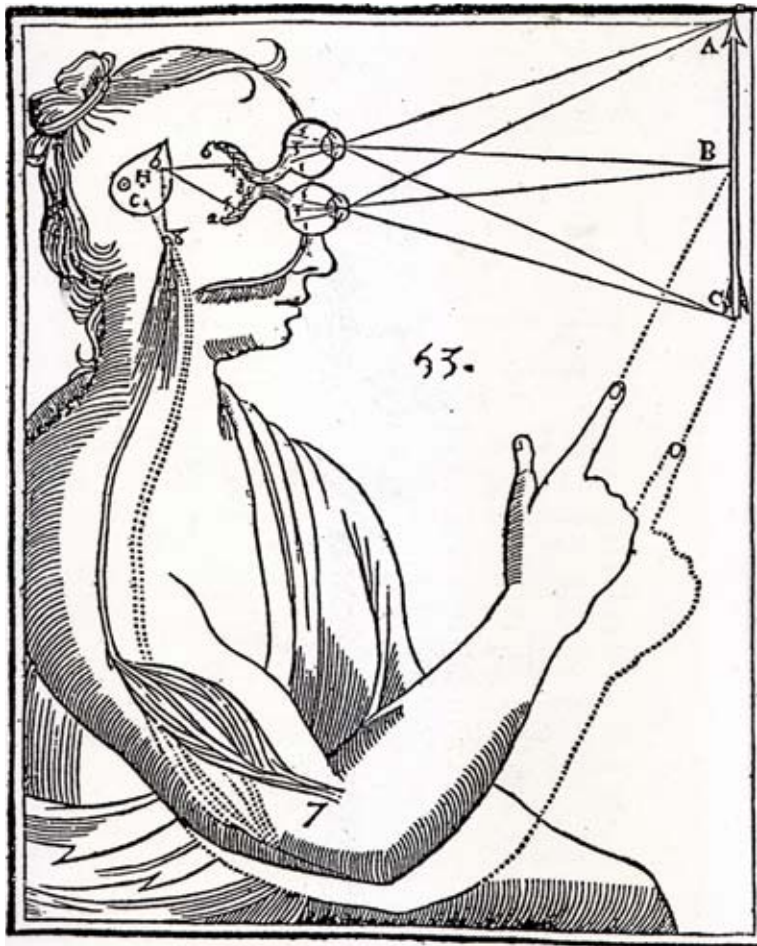


Figure 2.1 An illustration from Descartes' *L'Homme* showing light reflected from objects (ABC) entering the eyes, and the image subsequently being taken to the pineal gland (H); the animals spirits rushing out through the nerves (8) then cause the arm to move (7). Courtesy of Universiteitsbibliotheek, Leiden.

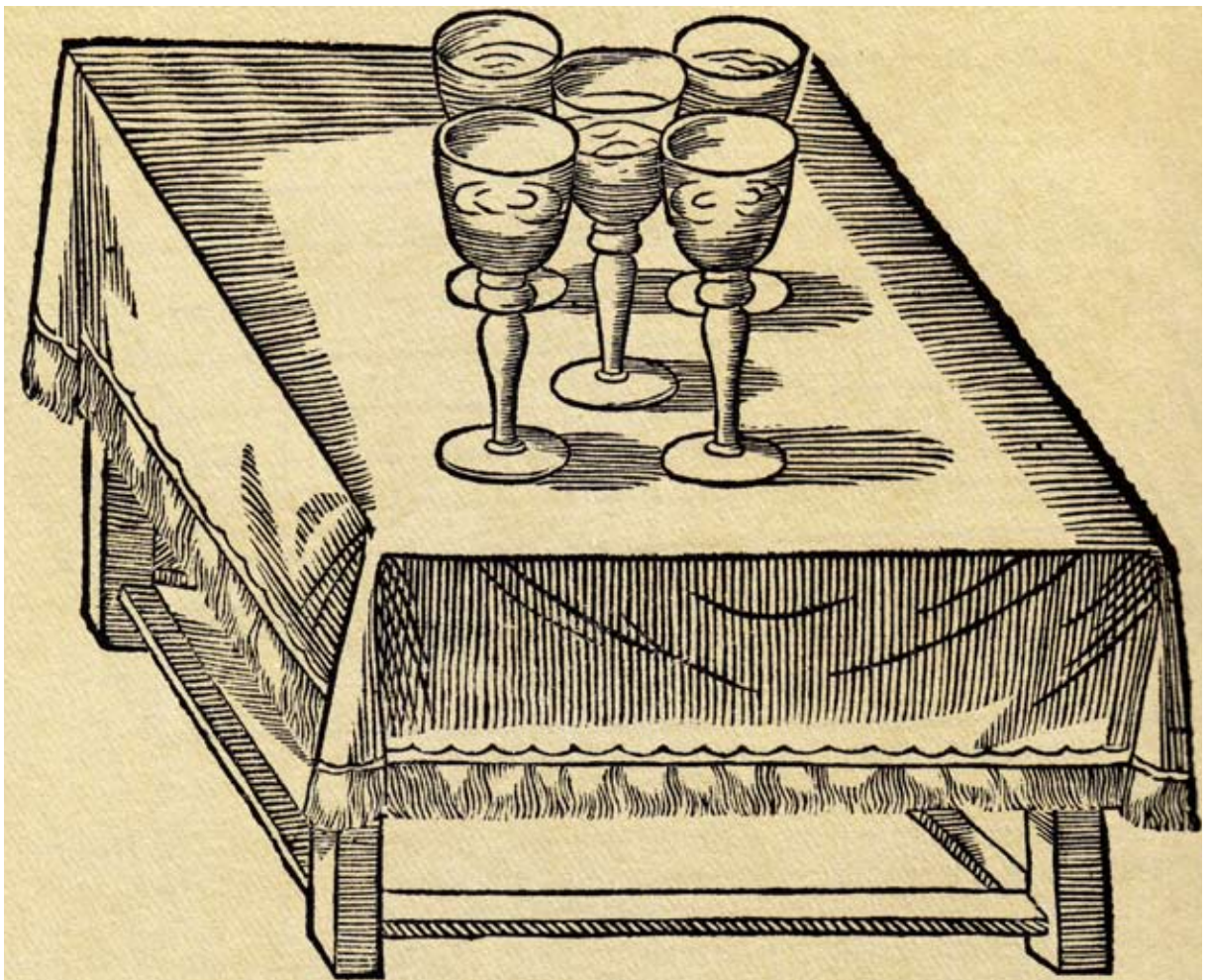


Figure 2.2 Liquids in glasses from Kircher's *Neue Hall- und Thon-Kunst*; the various fluids represent the humors. Courtesy of British Library.

cases the rushing animals spirits pushed the pineal gland of their own accord. Such passivity of reason, such 'incorporated knowledge' is qualitative and essential for a Cartesian passion.

Descartes' update of Scholastic theory was not warmly received by all. For instance, Walter Charleton mercilessly mocked Descartes in 1674:

[...] therefore I answer (1.) that had this excellent Man, Monsieur des Cartes been but half as conversant in Anatomy, as he seems to have been in Geometry, doubtles he would never have lodged so noble a guest as the Rational Soul, in so incommodious a closet of the brain, as the Glandula Pinealis is; [...] which having no Communication with the external organs of the Senses, cannot with any colour of reason be thought the part of the brain, wherein the Soul exerciseth her principal faculties of judging and commanding. (2.) The Glandule which he supposeth to be so easily flexible and yielding to contrary impulses, is not loosely suspended, but fixed: so that whosoever hath once beheld the solid basis, strong consistence, and firm connexion thereof, will hardly ever be brought to allow it capable of any impulse to either side, though by the greatest Hurricano of spirits imaginable; much less by every light motion of them excited by external objects affecting the senses.³⁷

All of this is meant to point out that Descartes' ideas did not sweep aside the older traditions overnight. Nor indeed were they, for our purposes here, so tremendously revolutionary: though the sensitive soul has disappeared from the man-machine, a passion is still an involuntary reaction to outside stimuli, whether visual, aural or apprehended through any of the other senses. Indeed, in many ways Descartes stays close to, or even within, the greater tradition. For instance, he is famous for his rationalization of the passions,³⁸ and he indeed reduced them from Aquinas' 11 concupiscent and irascible affections down to 6 basic passions from whose intermingling all others were formed: wonder, love, hate, desire, joy and sadness. But both Aquinas and Descartes believed that the purpose of the passions was to aid the soul in attaining that which was helpful, or avoiding that which was harmful, to it:

[...] the objects which move the sense, excite not divers Passions in us, by reason of so many diversities in them, but merely because they may severall wayes hurt or profit us, or else, in generall, be important to us; and that the use of all the Passions consists onely in this, that they dispose the Soul to will things which Nature dictates are profitable to us, and to persist in this will [...].³⁹

The myth that Descartes' work on affect represents a complete break with the past was propagated to some extent by himself. Indeed, he claimed, at the very beginning of *De Passionibus animae*, that:

There is nothing more clearly evinces the Learning which we receive from the Ancients to be defective, than what they have written concerning the Passions. For although it be a matter the understanding whereof hath ever been hunted after: and that it seems to be none of the hardest, because every one feeling them in himself, need not borrow forraign observations to discover their nature: yet what the Ancients have taught concerning them, is so little, and for the most part so little credible, that I cannot hope to draw nigh truth, but by keeping aloof from those roads which they followed.⁴⁰

I, however, prefer, in this current context, to look for those elements in his thought which his 'new philosophy' shared with the more old-fashioned beliefs by which he was surrounded. In this I follow Susan James:

As in the seventeenth century, so in recent discussions of Cartesianism there has been a tendency to focus on what are in fact aspects of its rejection of Aristotelianism: on its reorganization of the tripartite soul and its introduction of a dualistic division between the soul and the body. [...] What has tended to get neglected is the extent to which Descartes remains sympathetic to some features of Aristotelian psychology, among them the claim that sensory perception and passions are powers expressed in the soul-body composite. Descartes strives to combine his metaphysical division between body and soul with the view that there are states which 'cannot be referred to the body alone or to the soul alone'. And among these he includes, in best Aristotelian style, both sensory perceptions and passions.⁴¹

In order to demonstrate how the Cartesian and Galenist affective theories could function side-by-side in the musical thought of the period, I now will examine how three German writers on music approached the problem of affect in music: Athanasius Kircher, Christoph Raupach and Johannes Mattheson.

37. Walter Charleton, *Natural History of the Passions*, (London: 1674), no page numbers (see the 'Epistle Prefatory').

38. Which term seems to have misled some to think that Descartes' passions were conceived of as being rational, a viewpoint that he clearly did not endorse in *De Passionibus animae*.

39. Descartes, *The Passions of the Soule*, 46.

40. Descartes, *The Passions of the Soule*, 1-2.

41. James, *Passion and Action*, 106.

2.2c Three German writers on musical affect theory

Athanasius Kircher's *Phonurgia nova* (1673), published in a German translation as *Neue Hall= und Thon=Kunst* (1684), contains a section dedicated to the scientific investigation of music's powers, or as the author puts it:

Neüe Thon= und Stimm=Wissenschaft / in welcher die verborgene und geheime Ursachen und Eigenschafften durch Zahlen und Rechnung vorgestellet werden.⁴²

Kircher declares his intention to go more deeply into material he had already touched upon in his *Musurgia universalis* (1650), in order to satisfy the curiosity of his readers as to:

[...] wie es komme / daß eine berührte Saitte eine ohnberührte klingend und thönend mache; wie auch dannenher / so wohl die vocal= als *instrumental*=Musik die Lebens=Geister und Sinne bewege / und wunderliche Krafft in Würckung deß Zorns / Liebe / Mitleiden und Grausamkeit / so wohl in der lieblichen Übereinstimmung / als auch in der Beweg= und Berührung der lautenden und klingenden Körper / die Natur erweise [...].⁴³

This passage indicates that Kircher's theory of musical affect is one of sympathy: human emotions are moved by music much in the same way that sympathetic strings are set into motion by the sound waves of neighboring plucked strings. The 'innwendige Luft deß Menschen'⁴⁴ is stimulated, according to Kircher, by consonances and dissonances:

[...] woher auch dieses kommet / daß / wann wir eine lieblich und anmuhtige *Music*, Lied / oder Thon hören / Wir / so zu reden gleichsam einen Küzal oder liebliches Jucken in dem Hertzen und Gemühte fühlen / wodurch auch das Gemüht auf mancherley Weise gezogen und gelencket wird [...].⁴⁵

Indeed, for Kircher a variety of aural factors could move the human soul:

[...] nach dem sie entweder überein=stimmet und wohl=lautet / oder aber *dissoniret* und hart lautet / entweder geschwind oder langsam die Bewegung ist; oder welches mehr ist / wann die Stimm und Thon / hoch und also munter ist; oder tieff fällt / der Thon nachlasset / und zum Mitleyden bewege / auch wohl die Augen tränend machet [...].⁴⁶

Here harmony, tempo and tessitura are shown to have a strong effect on body and soul, even to the point of tears. Kircher proceeds to examine in a most learned manner music's affective power through the media of *propositio* (providing five different examples) and *Kunst=Stuck* (or experiment). It is to the third of these experiments that I turn now. Before doing so, however, it is important to reiterate that, according to Galenist theory, the vital and animal spirits (or *lebensgeister*) were thought to be distilled from the blood in the heart. Therefore, because the blood carried the other humors with it, the spirits were 'colored' by the humorous blood from which they were distilled; and these variously constituted spirits would react to different kinds of aural stimulation.

Kircher's third *Kunst=Stuck* or experiment is concerned with these humors [see figure 2.2], which are represented by various liquids poured into glasses and placed in close proximity: *aqua-vit* (which is choleric in nature), wine (sanguine), purified water (phlegmatic), pond-water (*irdisch* or melancholic) and oil. Kircher informs us that a sharp tone will variously set each of these liquids in motion: the thicker the substance the less noticeable will be its movement. Thus, different types of people will react differently to the same sound. For instance, if:

[...] die Lebens=Geister subtil und warm seyn / so wird die Music stolze / hohe / freche und gäh=zornige Bewegung würcken; Seyn sie aber noch subtiler / und einer mässigen Art / wird die Music zur Freud / Liebe / Lust / wollüstigen und Venerischen Neigugnen antreiben; Seyn die Lebens=Geister und Geblüt dicke / so bewege die Music zum Weynen / *Religions*-Andacht / Zucht und Eingezogenheit / auch andern ernstlichen *Affecten*; Ist dann das Geblüt ganz dick und grob / wie in betrübten / Geängstigten und Traurigen / so wird die Music fast gar keine Bewegung würcken / daß also die Music in Leyd und Traurigkeit ganz ungereimt und unbequem ankommt.⁴⁷

42. Athanasius Kircher, *Neue Hall= und Thon=Kunst / oder Mechanische Gebaim=Verbindung der Kunst und Natur durch Stimme und Hall=Wissenschaft gestiftet* (Nördlingen: 1684), 123.

43. Kircher, *Neue Hall= und Thon=Kunst*, 123.

44. Kircher, *Neue Hall= und Thon=Kunst*, 127.

45. Kircher, *Neue Hall= und Thon=Kunst*, 127.

46. Kircher, *Neue Hall= und Thon=Kunst*, 127.

47. Kircher, *Neue Hall= und Thon=Kunst*, 136.



Figures 2.3 The Tarantella from Kircher's *Neue Hall= und Thon=Kunst*. Courtesy of British Library.



Figures 2.4 The Terpsichorean effects of sound waves on men of choleric temperament. Courtesy British Lib.



Figure 2.5 A courante from *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*. The crosses marked in bars 3 and 8 indicate changes of affect. Courtesy of Prof. Dr. A. G. M. Koopman.

This particular aspect of Kircher's musical affect theory resurfaces later in *Neue Hall= und Thon=Kunst* as part of his famous discussion of the healing powers of the tarantella. Here he gives a more ample account of how the vibrating string can affect the human body by means of the vital and animal spirits:

[...] so geschiehet es / daß durch solch=wohl=klingenden Saitten=Thon / auß mancherley *proportionirter* Saitten=Bewegung / auch die Luft bewegt wird; die durch *imprimirte* Thon=Bewegung gleich bewegte Luft aber / so in den Leib dringet / durch die Verstands= und Empfindungs=Krafft / mit einer lieblichen Bewegung beschäftigt / die Lebens=Geister gleicher Weise bewegt [...].⁴⁸

Kircher then goes on to explain that a young girl, having a 'cold and tough' humoral make up (or *complexion*), could only be moved to dance the tarantella by the loud music of trumpets and drums, while a choleric person, whose animal spirits were thinner and more supple, would be moved to a quick cure by the 'sweet instrumental sound' of violins and harpsichord. Two images from the *Neue Hall= und Thon=Kunst* illustrate to this idea: the first [see figure 2.3] shows a tarantella in full swing. Two choleric men (the swords symbolize the heated nature of this temperament) dance to the sound of a violin, while a spider descends from a tree to join its venomous companion on the ground in the dance. The same idea appears, this time without the arachnids, in the frontispiece [see figure 2.4]. Here two armed gentlemen find themselves dancing rather than fighting, driven into the arms of Terpsichore by the music of a fiddle and a bass.

Kircher's text, published in Latin in 1673 as *Phonurgia nova* (nearly a quarter of a century after *De Passionibus animae*) does not embrace Descartes' theory of the pineal gland. On the other hand, the *Phonurgia* was specifically referred to by Christoph Raupach in his *Veritophili Deutliche Beweis=Gründe/ worauf der rechte Gebrauch der Music, beydes in den Kirchen / als ausser denselben / beruhet*, which was published in 1717 as an appendix to Friedrich Erhard Niedt's *Musicalische Handleitung*. Raupach maps out the physical process of musical affect as follows:

Der Klang der Music, welcher vielmehr *spirituel* als *materialisch* ist / wird mittelbar / zugleich mit der von demselben bewegten Luft ausgebreitet und dem Gehöre zugeführt; Er durchdringet auch die festen Körper / aber vielmehr unsere menschliche Körper / als welche sehr lockericht und voll von *Poris* sind; Er geht uns nicht nur in die Ohren / sondern auch ans Hertze selbst / welches die Werckstatt der Lebens-Geister / die im Gehirn / in und um das Hertz herum / und in den übrigen Theilen des Leibes zerstreuet sind. Diese Lebens-Geister / welche aus einem sehr zarten und beweglichen Blut-Dampff / bestehen / werden auch gar leicht / von der *Harmonisch-* oder *Musicalisch-*bewegten Luft bewegt; welche Bewegung / weil die Seele sie fühlet / nach unterschiedlicher [sic] solcher Geist-Bewegung / auch unterschiedene Gemüths-Bewegungen erzeiget. *Vide Kircher Phinurgiam. p. m. 127. & Gaspar. Schott in Magia Univers. P II. p. 196.*⁴⁹

Raupach goes on to report that music can stir a listener's dominant humor most easily, but that:

eines traurigen Melancholici träg=gehendes Geblüte durch eine aus muntren *metris* bestehende *Music* in geschwinder-Bewegung und darauf zu einem aufgeräumten Wesen gebracht wird.⁵⁰

Here is the basis for the idea that music can heal body and soul: by 'correcting' the humoral state of a patient by stimulating the weaker humors through concordant musical sounds. Raupach goes on to note that musical intervals can cause a displacement of animal spirits in the body just as affects themselves do:

Dahero / wann bemeldte Geister mit diesen oder jenen *intervallen* und Thonen mehr zu thun haben als mit andern / es geschehe nun solches durch eine *Alteration* oder durch die Bewegung von einem Orte zum andern / so bieget sichs Z. E. daß sie durch den Zorn ausschwellen und gleichsam aufkochen / durch die Furcht oder durch den Schmerz sich zusammen sehen / und durch die Freude und Wollust sich erweitern und ausbreiten.⁵¹

Here again we have a German treatise which clearly deals with Galenist musical affect theory without any reference to Descartes or the pineal gland. Johann Mattheson, in his *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (1739), however, does specifically mention *De Passionibus animae*, a reference that I believe has led to an over-exaggeration, in modern musicological literature, of the importance of Descartes' thought on 18th-century musicians and composers. The passage in question appears in the third chapter of the first part of the Mattheson's book:

48. Kircher, *Neue Hall= und Thon=Kunst*, 145.

49. Christoph Raupach, 'Veritophili Deutliche Beweis=Gründe / worauf der rechte Gebrauch der Music, beydes in den Kirchen / als ausser denselben / beruhet' in *Musicalische Handleitung*, Theil III, Friedrich Erhard Niedt (Hamburg, 1717), 19.

50. Raupach, 'Veritophili Deutliche Beweis=Gründe', 21.

51. Raupach, 'Veritophili Deutliche Beweis=Gründe', 21.

Die Lehre von den Temperamenten und Neigungen, von welchen letztern Cartesius [footnote: 'de passionibus animae'] absonderlich deswegen zu lesen ist, weil er in der Music viel gethan hatte, leisten hier sehr gute Dienste, indem man daraus lernet, die Gemüther der Zuhörer, und die klingenden Kräfte, wie sie an jenen wirken, wol zu unterscheiden.⁵²

Mattheson here specifically advances Descartes as worthy of study because 'he has done so much in music', which surely must be a reference to *Compendium musicae* (written in 1618, first published 1650). Mattheson's praise of the author of the mathematical-geometrical *Compendium* seems out of place in a chapter that he opened by remarking that:

In den meisten Büchern, welcher von der Ton=Kunst handeln, wird ein grosses Wesen gemacht von Zahlen, Maassen und Gewichten; vom Klange aber, und von dem sehr beträchtlichen physiologischen Theil der Wissenschaft sagt man fast kein Wort, sondern fährt so geschwind darüber hin, als wenn er wenig oder nichts bedeuten hätte.⁵³

Descartes' *Compendium*, after all, famously avoids even attempting to explain music's power over human emotion, although the author did admit that his book was incomplete without it.

Mattheson, in praising Descartes' *De Passionibus animae*, makes no mention of any of its revolutionary aspects: the theory of the pineal gland, the advocacy of Harvey's theory of blood circulation or the simplification of the soul from tripartite to indivisible. On the contrary, the passage in *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* that refers to Descartes begins with a reference to the temperaments, those old-fashioned elements of Galenist thought that Descartes had gingerly sidestepped in his 1649 treatise.

What Mattheson does single out for praise, however, is Descartes' ability to help his readers to differentiate between the emotions of the listener and the musical powers that affect them ('die Gemüther der Zuhörer, und die klingenden Kräfte, wie sie an jenen wirken, wol zu unterscheiden'). This distinction had already been mentioned earlier in this same chapter, where Mattheson noted:

Wenn alles unbeweglich wäre, müste auch alles todtstill seyn, so daß man keinen Klang, ja, nicht einmahl das geringste Geräusche, vielweniger eine wol=lautende Zusammenstimmung vernehmen würde: daraus zu schliessen stehet, daß aller Klang, Gesang und Schall von nichts anders herrühren könne, als von der Bewegung, nachdem, durch ihr Zuthun, die sich allenthalben befindlichen Luft mittelbarer Weise gerühret, zertheilet, getrieben, geschlagen und gestossen wird. Wobey es dreierley zu betrachten gibt, nemlich dasjenige so da rühret, als ein *agens*, dasjenigene so gerühret wird, als ein *patiens*, und das Mittel, wodurch sich die Wirkung dieser Bewegung dem Gehör mittheilet, als ein *vehiculum*.⁵⁴

This seems to refer to Descartes statement at the beginning of *De Passionibus animae* that:

[...] all which is done, or happens anew, is by the Philosophers called generally a Passion in relation to the subject on whom it befalls, and an Action in respect of that which causes it. So that although the Agent and Patient be things often differing, Action and Passion are one and the same thing, which hath two severall names, because of the two several subjects whereunto they may relate.⁵⁵

If I have correctly understood Mattheson's point in bringing up *De Passionibus animae*, he simply wants to make clear that a passion in the soul is an action in the body, and that the vehicle for the movement which causes these two indivisible manifestations is the vibration of the sound waves themselves. But even if I have here gone astray, it is clear that Mattheson does not mention Descartes in order to deal a deathblow to Galenist musical affect theory: in fact, just before he mentions Descartes' treatise, Mattheson refers his readers to Raupach's *Veritophili Deutliche Beweis=Gründe*, and reminds them that he himself had written the preface to this work. He thus places references to Galenist and Cartesian musical affect theory side-by-side in *Capellmeister*.

In a sense this should really not surprise us: Jennifer Montagu has pointed out that this rich mix of old and new philosophy is even to be found in the work most famously associated with Cartesian influence on the arts: Charles Le Brun's *Conférence sur l'expression générale et particulière*. In her *The Expression of the Passions: The Origin and Influence of Charles Le Brun's Conférence sur l'expression générale et particulière*, Montagu

52. Johann Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (Hamburg, 1739), 15.

53. Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, 9.

54. Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, 9.

55. Descartes, *The Passions of the Soule*, 2.

notes that for his lecture Le Brun drew not only on *De Passionibus animae*, but also on Marin Cureau de la Chambre's *Les Caracteres des passions* (1648-1662), a book whose underling philosophy is firmly Scholastic. Other 'old-fashioned' texts used by Le Brun include Jean François Senault's *De l'Usage des passions* (1607) and Pierre Charron's *De la Sagesse* (1607). Indeed, Montagu notes that:

Charron's descriptions of the passions, of which Le Brun makes use, are themselves borrowed from Guillaume Du Vair's *La philosophie morale des stoïques*, which has a privilege dated 1585, which was the most probable date of the first edition.⁵⁶

I would argue that Mattheson, in similar fashion, invokes *De Passionibus animae* in *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* without intending to make an all-encompassing statement about the New versus the Old Science nor to disqualify a humoral and sympathetic approach to music's power: Descartes is mentioned, but Mattheson draws on the older tradition, as expounded in the work of Kircher and Raupach, to support his apology for the strongly affective nature of music.

Having examined the medical/philosophical background to, and the musical application of, Galenist affect theory, I now turn to work done during the last century on the passions in order to see if I can bring my understanding of affect (drawn from primary sources) into line with some of the most important secondary sources that have strongly influenced my generation of Early Music performers.

2.3 Passion and rationalization in 20th-century scholarship on the affects

George J. Buelow's entries on 'affect' and 'rhetoric' in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (2001) enjoy the stamp of authority which such a prestigious lexicon imprints on its content;⁵⁷ they are also easily accessible to the professional and the amateur alike, and therefore can be presumed to have had, and to continue to have now that they are available online, extraordinary persuasive powers, particularly among musicians specializing in historically informed performances.

Buelow himself has noted—in his article entitled 'Johann Mattheson and the invention of the *Affektenlehre*', published in *New Mattheson Studies* (1983)—the importance of reference works as a starting-point for further research:

One cannot for long read about the music of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries without being confronted by the concept of the *Affektenlehre*—the Doctrine or Theory of the Affections. In running aground on this terminological reef for the first time, a reader normally turns to one of the standard music dictionaries or encyclopedias to find a definition. Unfortunately, most of these definitions are confused, frequently misleading, and at times grossly in error.⁵⁸

Buelow then proceeds to name a number of scholars in whose work on the *Affektenlehre* he finds serious shortcomings: Eric Blom, Willi Apel, Manfred Bukofzer and the author of the article on the topic in *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*.

Buelow had, of course, himself already written about affect three years earlier. His entry in *The New Grove* is as follows:

Affects, theory of the
(Ger. *Affektenlehre*).

In its German form, a term first employed extensively by German musicologists, beginning with Kretzschmar, Goldschmidt and Schering, to describe in Baroque music an aesthetic concept originally derived from Greek and Latin doctrines of rhetoric and oratory. Just as, according to ancient writers such as Aristotle, Cicero and Quintilian, orators employed the rhetorical means to control and direct the emotions of their audiences, so, in the language of classical rhetoric manuals and also Baroque music treatises, must the speaker (i.e. the composer) move

56. Jennifer Montagu, *The Expression of the Passions: The Origin and Influence of Charles Le Brun's Conférence sur l'expression générale et particulière* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 156.

57. I am using the 2001 edition here, as it is the one most likely, together with the online version, to exert an influence on Early Musicians performing today. The text discussed in this section is identical in the 2001 printed version and that which is currently online. The differences between the 2001 text and those published in 1980 are slight: the entry heading in the 1980 version is 'Affections, doctrine of the'; and the word 'affection' is used throughout in 1980, while the 2001 edition replaces 'affection' with 'affect'.

58. George J. Buelow, 'Johann Mattheson and the invention of the *Affektenlehre*' in *New Mattheson Studies*, ed. George J. Buelow and Hans Joachim Marx (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 393-407, 394.

the 'affects' (i.e. emotions) of the listener. It was from this rhetorical terminology that music theorists, beginning in the late 16th century, but especially during the 17th and 18th centuries, borrowed the terminology along with many other analogies between rhetoric and music. The affects, then, were rationalized emotional states or passions.⁵⁹

Buelow here situates his discussion firmly in the realm of German sources and German musicology. He avoids giving any real definition of affect or any description of the physical mechanics of the theory; instead, he attributes its 18th century application to music to the influence of rhetorical treatises from Classical Antiquity. There are certain difficulties with this approach, for while it is undeniably true that *Affektenlehre* is a German term, and that German musicologists discussed it, it would be incorrect, as we have seen, to label it as a specifically German phenomenon; of course, I hasten to underscore that Buelow does no such thing, but his initial German contextualization is potentially misleading to those 'running aground on this terminological reef for the first time'. Moreover, though it is equally true that Baroque music theorists claimed their art to have the same noble status and goals as that of oratory,⁶⁰ Buelow's quick segue from affect to rhetoric entirely bypasses the more fundamental, physical basis for the theory. And finally, by calling the theory of the passions 'an aesthetic concept' Buelow actually puts the reader on the wrong foot. Surely Galenist musical affect theory, whether in its German incarnation of *Affektenlehre* or as it manifested itself in any other European country, could better be described as a medical/philosophical concept appropriated and variously put to use by orators, rhetoricians, music theorists, performers and composers for aesthetic purposes?

Buelow finishes this passage of his *The New Grove* entry on affect with a highly ambiguous, and otherwise unsupported definition:

The affects, then, were rationalized emotional states or passions.⁶¹

It is unclear what Buelow means by 'rationalized' in this context. He could mean that the affects were listed and qualified in a logical and orderly fashion, for instance by being categorized or paired as opposites: and that indeed would be an accurate description of the way in which the affects are presented in many musical and philosophical treatises of the period. Buelow's use of the term 'rationalized' could also, however, be interpreted as implying that the affects were not real, heart-felt feelings that were experienced emotionally, but rather intellectual abstractions of emotion that were experienced rationally. Unfortunately, this is the meaning many musicians whom I have taught and worked with over the years have given to Buelow's words. Admittedly, it is true that physical manifestations of emotion were to some extent ennobled and idealized by actors on stage (a fact that will be examined in greater detail in Chapter 4). For this reason, a performer of today trying to recreate Baroque performance styles must decide for him/herself the amount of ennoblement that s/he feels is appropriate for any given affective situation. But this is a very different thing from actually believing that the affects themselves were abstractions. To do so is immediately to deny the performer any recourse to *verité* (which, I will argue in Chapter 4, was a kind of naturalism) in his performance. It is for this reason that I believe it is important to try and discover what Buelow meant by describing the affects as 'rationalized emotional states', and then to clarify my position in relationship to his.

One can, perhaps, infer what Buelow meant in promoting the idea of rationalized affects by examining a passage from in his *The New Grove* article on 'Rhetoric and music':

During the Baroque period the composer was obliged, like the orator, to arouse in the listener idealized emotional states – sadness, hate, love, joy, anger, doubt and so on – and every aspect of musical composition reflected this affective purpose. [...].⁶²

Buelow here asserts, unfortunately without any corroboration from 18th century sources, that composers and orators were obliged (though how or by whom is unclear) to 'arouse in the listener idealized emotional states': I myself have never seen a source from the period in question which proposes the arousal of idealized emotional states: the treatises that I have read simply exhort the performer to move the passions of the audience, without any further qualification. Buelow continues:

It needs to be stressed, however, that to compose music with a stylistic and expressive unity based on an af-

59. George J. Buelow, 'Affects, theory of the' in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie, (London: Macmillan Publisher Limited, 2001), vol. 1, 135-6.

60. See, for a French example, the preface to Alexandre de la Chapelle's *Les Vrais Principes de la musique* (1736).

61. Buelow, 'Affects, theory of the' in *The New Grove*, vol. 1, 136.

62. Buelow, 'Rhetoric', in *The New Grove*, vol.15, 800.

fect was a rational, objective concept, not a compositional practice equatable with 19th-century concerns for spontaneous emotional creativity and equally spontaneous emotional responses on the part of an audience. The Baroque composer planned the affective content of each work, or section or movement of a work, with all the devices of his craft, and he expected the response of his audience to be based on an equally rational insight into the meaning of his music.⁶³

Buelow, in this entry in the *The New Grove*, strongly qualifies the emotional content of the affects or passions. We read of 'emotional abstractions', of 'rationalized emotional state or passion' and even of 'idealized emotional states'. Deeply concerned that Baroque music might be thought to have had a direct emotional appeal, Buelow underscores that neither the creative act nor the emotional response of the listener was spontaneous: instead, it was intellectual, controlled, rationalized. Emotional spontaneity in art and in the audience's response to art, belongs, according Buelow, to the Romantics. Before their arrival it was musical craft that trumped emotion, both in the fashioning and in the experience of music.

Buelow, in the article on the *Affektenlehre* (published *New Mattheson Studies*) that was quoted at the beginning of this section, continues along the path laid down in *The New Grove*. Once again he begins his discussion with the rhetorical, rather than the medical/philosophical tradition:

The Affections, as well as the closely related idea of the musical figures, can only be understood in connection with their origins in the extensive literature on oratory and rhetoric formulated by Greek and Roman writers of Antiquity [...].⁶⁴

I have already expressed my reservations about attributing the origins of the affects to the art of oratory. Buelow does however proceed to mention philosophy, focusing on *De Passionibus animae*, but his summary of Descartes' work is baffling:

This treatise [*De Passionibus animae*] had a profound effect on developments in philosophy and music theory in the later seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, and one finds in it lists of the Affections divided into classifications according to the humors of the body, where Descartes believed the Passions originated.⁶⁵

At best one can only say that in this passage Buelow does Descartes' thought a great injustice.⁶⁶ The philosopher's treatise contains, as we have seen, a far more complex mechanical explanation of the affects, one in which far greater emphasis is laid on animal spirits and the pineal gland than on the humors. It is also difficult to see, when consulting the text of *De Passionibus animae*, just where Descartes says that he has listed the affections according to the humors of the body.

However, what is most baffling about Buelow's article in *New Mattheson Studies* is his summing up of the 'four-part aesthetic experience' which he claims Mattheson proposes:

Mattheson believed the listener was involved in a four-part aesthetic experience. First, he heard the music; second, apperception occurred when the listener interpreted the various musical symbols (hermeneutical interpretation) leading to a recognition of an Affection; third, the listener perceived the emotion; and fourth, through reflection on the experience, he would enjoy moral improvement, and when appropriate, a religious edification.⁶⁷

What is particularly frustrating about this passage is that Buelow gives no references as to where Mattheson has made any such statement. This is particularly surprising as he himself castigates ideas put forward by Blom, Apel and Bukofzer with the stinging jibe 'Nothing in Mattheson's own words justifies any of these conclusions',⁶⁸ a reproach that seems to apply equally well to his own work here; for nowhere in *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (which is the main focus of attention of Buelow's article) do I find anything approaching this 'four-part aesthetic experience'. The chapter in question in fact starts with a purely philosophical discussion of sound (Aristotle and Kircher are mentioned, among others), then moves to examine the power of music to heal physical illness in the body, from which point it quite naturally flows to the affects and their influence on the animal spirits. The *Natur-Lehre* or natural science of sound which Mattheson is explaining is clearly meant to be a physical reality, the effect of sound waves on the human frame. All of this places Mattheson's thought on affect, as presented in *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, firmly within the

63. Buelow, 'Rhetoric' in *The New Grove*, vol.15, 800.

64. Buelow, 'Johann Mattheson and the Invention of the Affektenlehre', 395.

65. Buelow, 'Johann Mattheson and the Invention of the Affektenlehre', 399.

66. I am indebted to Susan James for aiding me in my assessment of Buelow's exegesis.

67. Buelow, 'Johann Mattheson and the Invention of the Affektenlehre', 400.

68. Buelow, 'Johann Mattheson and the Invention of the Affektenlehre', 403.

Galenist tradition in the broadest sense, though possibly incorporating some influences from Descartes' *De Passionibus animae*. To deny the validity and reality of the emotion (in our current terminology) engendered by music, and the physical manifestation of that emotion in the bodies of the listeners, is to entirely misrepresent both Mattheson's thought and the larger Pan-European tradition to which he belongs.

Buelow, however, is by no means the only important musicologist to have written in the last century on the affects in terms of rationalization. After all, Manfred F. Bukofzer, in his pioneering *Music in the Baroque Era from Monteverdi to Bach* (1947), referred thus to the term 'expressio verborum':

This term does not have the modern, emotional connotation of "expressive music" and can more accurately be rendered as "musical representation of the word." The means of verbal representations in baroque music were not direct, psychological, and emotional, but indirect, that is intellectual and pictorial. The modern psychology of dynamic emotions did not yet exist in the baroque era. Feelings were classified and stereotyped in a set of so-called affections, each representing a mental state which was in itself static. It was the business of the composer to make the affection of the music correspond to that of the words. According to the lucid rationalism of the time, the composer had at his disposal a set of musical figures which were pigeonholed like the affections themselves and were designed to represent these affections in music.⁶⁹

For those who have read original sources on the passions, whether in a pictorial, a musical or a medical context, such statements seem odd: the idea that affects are somehow disconnected from the subtle everyday feelings of humans is entirely foreign to 17th- and 18th-century thought. After all, affective inertia (the idea that the soul remained in one affect until moved to another by new outside stimuli) does not imply that an affect 'was in itself static'. All the major sources, including Descartes' *De Passionibus animae*, explain that the basic affects can be combined to form more complex states of feeling: sometimes even quite opposite passions could battle within the human breast. Such admixtures of violent and incompatible feeling could result in a petrification of the frame until one affect emerged as dominant and pushed the body and soul back into motion,⁷⁰ but, in a musical context at least, the shadings of the component affects could be felt in sequence. This idea is very important to my understanding of *vérité* in French opera, so I will take a moment to elucidate it, using an example taken from that supposed champion of rationalized affect, Johann Mattheson.

In Chapter 13 of the second section of *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, in the section in which Mattheson deals with various musical forms and their affective content, the author has the following to say about the courante:

Die Leidenschaft oder Gemüths=Bewegung, welche in einer Courante vorgetragen werden soll, ist die süsse Hoffnung. Denn es findet sich was herzhaftes, was verlangendes und auch was erfreuliches in dieser Melodie: lauter Stücke, daraus die Hoffnung zusammengefüget wird.⁷¹

Here Mattheson describes the affect in which a courante should be performed, a mixed passion involving three separate individual affects: 'sweet hope', for Mattheson, is made up of courage, desire and joy. These component passions, however, are not presented simultaneously, but rather consecutively in his musical example [see figure 2.5]. According to Mattheson, the first 2 and a half bars are somewhat courageous. The next affect, which reaches over the repeat sign at the end of the first half and into bar 8, is desire, which is followed by 'a little joy' in the last three bars.⁷²

Descartes, in *De Passionibus animae*, notes that 'Hope is a disposition of the soule to perswade her that what she desires shall come to passe, which is caused by a peculiar motion of the spirits, to wit, those of Joy and desire mixed together'.⁷³ It is significant that courage, which is absent in Descartes' definition, is an essential, indeed the foremost, part of Mattheson's analysis, for its presence indicates that the author of *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* still thought of hope as belonging to the irascible passions as defined by Aquinas.⁷⁴

69. Manfred F. Bukofzer, *Music in the Baroque Era from Monteverdi to Bach* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1947), 4-5.

70. For a beautiful example of this see the letter published in *The Spectator* on Friday, May 4th, 1711, which relates the fictional tale of Marraton and Yaratilda, two native Americans: 'Who can describe the passion made up of joy, sorrow, love, desire, astonishment that rose in the Indian [Marraton] upon the sight of his dear Yaratilda? He could express it by nothing but his tears, which ran like a river down his cheeks as he looked upon her'. Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, ed., *The Spectator* (London: 1711-14), no. 56.

71. Johann Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, 231.

72. Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, 231.

73. *The Passions of the Soule*, 137.

74. Coeffeteau, in *A Table of Humane Passions, with their Causes and Effects*, writes of the admixture of confidence rather than courage in the affect hope: 'Whereby wee may gather, that although Hope hath her seat in the Irascible appetite, which hath the good for her object: yet as it is the property of powers indued [sic] with knowledge, to excite those which are capable of desire, representing their objects vnto them; her motions depend of the imagination which man frames in himselfe of a good which he beleevues confidently to obtaine, notwithstanding that he

Of even greater interest for us is Mattheson's attribution of specific affects to specific bars of his exemplary courante. Not only does this indicate that Mattheson expects these three affects to be experienced sequentially by both the player and the audience, but it shows, if the repeats are taken into account, that this simple, hopeful courante has an affective scheme of courage-desire-courage-desire-joy-desire-joy. The piece's main passion (hope) is therefore experienced by the audience as a fluid transition between the three characteristic affective states of which it is composed.

Even more interesting is the author's assertion that the composer has achieved this musical-affective display intuitively; Mattheson, though he elsewhere in *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* gives many examples of commonplace musical figures that could help the aspiring composer to portray the affects in music, here does not fall back on such standard devices. Instead of rummaging for inspiration in Bukofzer's 'pigeon-holes', he insists that:

Eine ziemliche Anzahl solcher Couranten, darunter viele noch besser, und im geometrischen Verhalt richtiger, sind von mir auf diese Art untersucht worden; Aber alle von ächten und bewährten Verfassern, die es aus natürlichem Triebe, *par instinct*, ohnen Absicht und Vorsatz getroffen haben.

This seems very far away from the static, rigid and intellectual expression of the passions that a number of 20th-century musicologists have attributed to Baroque musicians. We shall see (in Chapter 3) that Rameau, too, viewed the affects as fluid and ascribed the highest musical pleasure not to reason, but to instinct.

Now, it is not my intention to discuss here the motivations of Bukofzer and Buelow in stressing the rational above the emotional in Baroque music (and thus, consequentially, emphasizing the role of composers above that of performers in the transmission of affect); my point is not so much about the original context of their work as about the influence it has had, and still seems to have, on performance of the *tragédie en musique*.

For instance, ideas on the affects taken from John Neubauer's *The Emancipation of Music from Language*, (1986) were quite influential among performers in the late 1980s and early 1990s, at least in Holland.⁷⁵ Neubauer, who is currently Emeritus Professor of Literature at the University of Amsterdam, falls back on the distinction that Bukofzer had made between emotional expression and the representation of affect. Indeed, Neubauer went so far as to strip the *tragédie en musique* entirely of any attempt at emotional realism:

But if we consider the Cartesian theory of the passions, like the musical figures, as a conventional code of *representation*, then we may ask how this vocabulary gave music form and structure. For as so often happens, "faulty" science and philosophy could support good art: though the Cartesian categories of passion were logically and empirically ill founded for a scientific theory of musical affects, they could become labels for units of music or emotional states of characters on stage that made no pretense at psychological realism. The abrupt change from one static passion to another, which is all that the Cartesian model allows, corresponds exactly to the baroque practice of representing a series of static depersonalized passions. In Lully's and Quinault's *Armide*, for instance, the whole plot is determined by a series of emotional reversals, a repeated fluctuation between love and hate, between Armide's magic charm and her opponents' desire for martial glory. The inversions are so frequent and violent that only magic can make them "plausible".⁷⁶

I seriously question the validity of such statements: 17th- and 18th-century supporters of Lully would certainly never have agreed that *Armide* was a series of musical units composed to fit Cartesian categories without any pretense to psychological realism. Indeed, I intend to show later on that they experienced *Armide* as being enchantingly true to the human heart (*vérité*).

However, I would argue that even if one were to agree that such a fine distinction between representation and expression as Bukofzer and his follower Neubauer propose was what was actually intended by the sources, to then draw the conclusion that the 'means of verbal representation in baroque music were not direct, psychological, and emotional, but indirect, that is intellectual and pictorial' is untenable. As we shall see in Chapter 3, where we will examine Lallemand's *Essai sur le mécanisme des passions*, to represent a pas-

apprehends great crosses, in the pursuit. [...] So as this beleefe begets in the Irascible part a certain confidence, which makes him undertake that which he desireth, assuring himself to surmount all obstacles which may crosse him and hinder his enjoying.' See *A Table*, 518-9. Descartes had rejected Aquinas' classification system of concupisibile and irascible passions in *De Passionibus animae*. See: *The Passions of the Soule*, 53-4.

75. I speak here from personal experience; I studied and worked in Holland in the Early Music scene at this time, and was confronted with, and chastised by, followers of Neubauer's thought. In fact, I would argue that Holland was very influential in the formation of the Early Music aesthetic that crystallized in the period from the 1970's to the 1990s, and it is my firm belief that certain affective aspects of current performance practice for the *tragédie en musique* can ultimately be traced back to the dispassionate elegance of the Leonhardt school.

76. John Neubauer, *The Emancipation of Music from Language: Departure from Mimesis in Eighteenth-century Aesthetics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 49.

sion well was to make it directly, physically contagious. Just such an awakening of affect in the breast of the listener was the essence of the musician's task, which he achieved, like an orator, by awakening it in his own breast first. Thus the performer, by making his own passion as real as possible to the audience (and we shall see how the sources suggest that this may be done), speaks for the composer to the listener, and stimulates in him/her all the feelings the composer intends—and perhaps even some he never did. Performance is the moment at which the passions are passed on, directly through the medium of sound waves (music) and light waves (gesture), from an active performer to a passive, receptive audience.

2.4 *The Passions of the Minde in Generall* as a source of inspiration for this research

Having made a case, in Chapter 1 for the importance of documentation in the reconstruction process, I feel strongly that the following quotations, taken from Thomas Wright's *The Passions of the Minde in Generall*, have a legitimate place and an important function in this thesis: they not only underscore that the principles of contemporary musical affect theory were the logical application of pan-European Galenist models to the sense of hearing generally, they also were a very important source of inspiration to me in the research process. Thus, the quotations presented here shed light on my own mindset as I worked out my case studies in Chapter 5. Although more specifically French information on acting at the Opéra shall follow in Chapter 4, information which has also strongly influenced my work, Wright's vivid prose has inspired my performative undertakings in a unique way.

The first quotations are taken from the section of *The Passions of the Minde in Generall* entitled 'How passions are moved with musick and instruments'. Wright sets out to answer the following questions:

[...] there remaineth a question to be answered, as difficult as any whatsoever in all naturall or morall Phylosophy, viz. How musicke stirreth vp these passions, and moueth so mightily these affections? What hath the shaking or ratificall [sic: artificiall] crispling of the ayre (which is in effect the substance of musicke) to doe with rousing vp choller, afflicting with melancholy, inbilating the heart with pleasure, eleuating the soule with deuotion, alluring to lust, inducing to peace, exciting to compassion, inuiting to magnanimitie?⁷⁷

Wright proceeds to give four possible answers to these questions. The first is 'a certaine sympathie'⁷⁸ betwixt the soul and music, rather like that between iron and a magnet. The second is a natural miracle brought about by 'Gods general prouidence'.⁷⁹ His third answer is more relevant to our purposes here:

[...] the very sound itselfe, which according to the best Philosophie, is nothing else but a certaine artificiall shaking, crispling or tickling of the ayre (like as we see in the water crispled, when it is calme, & a sweet gale of wind rufflet it a little; or when we cast a stone into a calme water, we may perceiue diuers warbling natural circles) which passeth thorow the eares, and by them vnto the heart and there beateth and tickleth it in such sort, as it is moued with semblable passiōs. For as the heart is most delicate and sensitue, so it perceiueth the least motions and impressions that may be; and it seemeth that musick in those cels plaieth with the vital and animate spirits, the onely instruments and spurs of passions. In like maner we perceive by a little tickling of our sides, or the soles of our feet, how wee are moued to laughter, yea and the very heart strings seem in some sort to be moued by this almost senselesse motion. And in confirmation hereof, we may bring two apt coniectures: The first is in our own hands or face, the which if we smooth, tickle, presse downe, nip, heat, or coole, we perceiue diuers sorts and diuersities of sensations, and feelee our selves sundry wayes affected: if such varieties we finde in a thicke skin, how much more in a tender heart, far more apter to feelee thā any member else of our bodie. The second conjecture is, the filing of yron, and scraping of trenchers, which many naturally (yea and almost all men before they bee accustomed vnto them) abhorre to heare, not onely because they are vngratefull to the eare, but also for that the ayre so carued, punisheth and fretteth the heart.⁸⁰

Here Wright attributes the stirring of a passion to the direct influence of sound waves—including non-musical ones—on the heart, the seat of the sensitive soul. His imagery of the heart being tickled much resembles Kircher's 'Küzel oder liebliches Jucken in dem Hertzen und Gemühte', while the image of a stone cast in water to refer to the dispersa of sound waves through the air reappears in *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*.⁸¹ For Wright, it is literally the sensitive heart, the organ itself, which is tickled by sound waves, which radiate away from the sounding object as the ripples disperse away from the place where the stone entered the water.

77. Thomas Wright, *The Passions of the Minde in Generall* (London: 1630), 168.

78. Wright, *The Passions*, 168.

79. Wright, *The Passions*, 169.

80. Wright, *The Passions*, 170.

81. See: *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, Theil I, 11

But Wright, like Kircher, and indeed Mattheson as well, does not see this mechanical process as a one-size-fits-all experience. Not every human body will react in the same way to similar stimuli:

[...] as all other senses haue an admirable multiplicity of objects which delight them, so hath the eare: & as it is impossible to expound the variety of delights, or disgusto, which we perceiue by them, and receiue in them (for who can distinguish the delights we take in eating fish, flesh, fruit, so many thousand sauces, & commixions of spices with fish, flesh and fruit) so in musicke, diuers cōsorts stirre vp in the heart, diuers sortes of ioyes, and diuers sorts of sadnesse or paine: the which as men are affected, may be diuersly applied: Let a good and a godly man heare musicke, and he will lift vp his heart to heauen: let a bad man heare the same, and hee will convert it to lust: Let a soldier heare a trumpet or a drum, and his blood will boile & bend to battle; let a clown heare the same, & he wil fall a dancing; let the common people heare the like, & they will fall a gazing, or laughing, & many neuer regard them especially if they be accustomed to heare them. So that in this, mens affections and dispositions, by meanes of musick may stirre vp diuers passions, as in seeing wee daily proue the like.⁸²

This is an important concept for the performer, for it means that not only will the passions be moved variously in the audience, they must also manifest themselves specifically and personally in the performer's body as he literally embodies them. The passions are not one-size-fits-all, nor are they stencils. The performer's own body, temperament and experience will influence the affects as they are passed on to the audience. After all, the player's body is a literal instrument of transmission, as Wright makes clear in the following section of his treatise, where he deals with oratorical gestures:

Therefore if we intend to imprint a *passiō* in another, it is requisit first it be stamped in our hearts: for thorow our voices, eies, and gestures, the world will pierce and thorowly perceiue how we are affected. And for this cause the passion which is in our brest, must be the fountaine & origen of al externall actions; as the internal affection in [sic] more vehement, so the externall perswasio will be more potent: for the *passiō* in the perswader seemeth to me, to resemble the wind a trumpeter bloweth in at one end of the trumpet, & in what maner it proceedeth from him, so it issueth forth at the other end, & commeth to our eares; euen so the passion proceedeth from the heart, & is blowne about the bodie, face, eies, hands, voice, & so by gestures passeth into our eies, & by sounds into our eares: & as it is qualified, so it worketh in vs.⁸³

Here a musical image is used to reinforce Wright's point: the body is the instrument through which passion is blown, and will reach and affect the audience in proportion to the strength and quality of the affect as it manifests in that instrument. The performer must feel, look and sound his part. Indeed, Wright is at some pains to emphasize the necessity of using the proper inflections of the voice in order to inspire the passions:

Furthermore, the passion passeth not onely thorow the eyes, but also pierceth the eare, and thereby the heart; for a flexible and plyable voyce, accommodated in a manner correspondent to the matter whereof a person intreateth, conueyeth the passion most aptly, pathetically, & almost harmonically, & euery accent, exclamation, admiration, increpation, indignation, commiseration, adboimation, exanimation, exultation, fitly (that is, distinctly, at time and place, with gesture correspondent, and flexibilitie of voice proportionate) diliured, is either a flash of fire to incense a passion, or a bason of water to quench a passion incensed.⁸⁴

This idea of inflections as indicators of affect will reappear when we examine more specifically French sources in Chapter 4.

Finally, Wright uses a musical metaphor in summing up the physically contagious movements that must accompany impassioned speech:

Action then vniuersally is a naturall or artificiall moderation, qualification, modification, or composition of the voice, countenance, and gesture of body proceeding from some passion, and apt to stir vp the like, for it seemeth, that the soule plaieith vpon these three parts, as a musitian vpon three strings, & according to his striking so they sound.⁸⁵

For Wright, then—and we shall see that broadly these same principles apply for Blanchet at the Opéra in the 1740s—*actio* is the unified expression of an affect in vocal inflection, facial expression and body movement. I have tried to keep these ideas in mind while preparing the videos presented in Chapter 5.

82. Wright, *The Passions*, 170-1.

83. Wright, *The Passions*, 174.

84. Wright, *The Passions*, 175.

85. Wright, *The Passions*, 176.

2.5 In Closing

In this chapter I have tried to approach the understanding of affect during the period in question, and to understand it on its own terms. Contrary to the work of some musicologists which has preceded mine, I have not been concerned about differentiating between Baroque emotion and that of the Romantic, or even later, periods. I have only tried to grasp some of the most essential beliefs about emotion and the body that were contemporary with the birth and natural life of the *tragédie en musique*. I have felt warmly encouraged to do so by Francis Sparshott's keen criticism of the mentality—the philosophical method—behind ‘a position taken up in a series of publications by Peter Kivy’.⁸⁶ Sparshott disagrees with Kivy's work, most notably with ‘Mattheson as Philosopher of Art’ and *Sound sentiment*:

The philosophical method to which Kivy is committed, one that has long been standard in American graduate schools, is one that criticizes discussions of established practices, which deal[s] with them from the inside and take[s] their familiarity for granted, as though they were single-mindedly devoted to spinning out isolated webs of self-consistent verbiage. In a statement that someone has made with a range of phenomena in mind, its reference to complex and familiar realities is ignored, and it is construed as if one were picking definitions out of the dictionary of a foreign language. One then shows that on the resulting interpretation the statement is ambiguous, or fails to cover everything its author meant it to apply to. This is a very useful exercise, and it has been a powerful tool of philosophy since Socrates invented it, but it does not do to use it without continual attention to what people are actually talking about.⁸⁷

‘[W]hat people [we]re actually talking about’ in the period in question was, I argue, the direct experience of strong emotions while attending the *tragédie en musique*. Although Neubauer could speak, in the 1980s of ‘emotional states of characters on stage that made no pretense at psychological realism’⁸⁸, 18th-century writers described their own experience of opera very differently, as can be seen from this account of Le Rochois acting the title rôle in Lully's *Armide*:

Dans quel ravissement n'étoit-on pas dans la cinquième Scène du second Acte du même Opera de la [Le Rochois as Armide] voir le poignard à la main, prête à percer le sein de Renaud endormi sur un lit de verdure? La fureur l'animoit à son aspect, l'amour venoit s'emparer de son cœur; l'une & l'autre l'agitoient tour à tour; la pitié & la tendresse leur succédoient à la fin, & l'amour restoit le vainqueur. Que de belles attitudes, & vraies! Que de mouvements & d'expressions différentes dans ses yeux sur son visage pendant ce Monologue de 29 Vers, qui commence par ces deux-ci:

Enfin il est en ma puissance,
Ce fatal ennemi, ce superbe vainqueur.

Lorsqu'Armide s'anime à poignarder Renaud, dit l'Auteur de la vie de Quinault, p. 56.

On a vû vingt fois tout le monde saisi de frayeur ne soufflant pas, demeurer immobile, l'ame toute entiere dans les oreilles & dans les yeux, jusques à ce que l'air de Violon qui finit la Scene, donna permission de respirer: puis les Spectateurs reprenant haleine avec un bourdonnement de joie & d'admiration, se sentoient transportés par ce mouvement unanime qui marquoit assez la beauté de la Scène, & leur ravissement.⁸⁹

The argument put forth by Buelow that all of this emotion on stage and in the audience was rationalized, that the ‘Baroque composer planned the affective content of each work, or section or movement of a work, with all the devices of his craft, and he expected the response of his audience to be based on an equally rational insight into the meaning of his music’⁹⁰ is specious. As Wright has shown us, in order to excite an affect the performer had to represent it with realism by awakening it strongly within himself. Only then did it become a powerful affective tool, ‘a flash of fire to incense a passion’⁹¹ in the heart of the audience.



86. Francis Sparshott, ‘Reflections on *Affektenlehre* and dance theory in the eighteenth century’, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 56, no. 1 (Winter, 1998), 21–28, 22. I have chosen not to engage with *The Corded Shell* here, as it would take me too far away from my main topic of discussion.

87. Sparshott, ‘Reflections on *Affektenlehre*’, 22.

88. Neubauer, *The Emancipation*, 49.

89. Published in *Histoire du théâtre de l'opera en France depuis l'établissement de l'Académie royale de musique, jusqu'à présent*, [Jacques Bernard Durey de Noinville and Louis-Antoine Travenol] (Paris: 1753), première partie, 61–2. This quotation can be traced back to Évrard Titon du Tillet. See: Évrard Titon du Tillet, *Le Parnasse françois* (Paris: J.-B. Coignard fils, 1732; supplement 1743), 791–2 in *French Baroque Opera: a Reader*, trans. Caroline Wood and Graham Sadler (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 132.

90. Buelow, ‘Rhetoric’ in *The New Grove*, vol.15, 800.

91. Wright, *The Passions*, 175.

Chapter 3

Primary and secondary sources for
and against the use of rhythmic
freedom in the *tragédie en musique*

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I focus on sources, both primary and secondary, concerning the metrical and rhythmical freedoms that were associated with French music during the 17th and 18th centuries. The arguments for and against mainly center around French vocal music, but interesting references to the use of rhythmical liberties in instrumental pieces will not be excluded here: there is such a prejudice against the use of rubato in French Baroque music today, and the sources supporting its use are so little known, that I felt it was important to place the specifically vocal phenomenon within a broader context. Therefore the period discussed in this chapter extends beyond the time frame indicated by the phrase ‘from Lully to Rameau’ in the title of this thesis: my earliest source dates from 1668—and thus predates, by several years, the premiere of Lully’s first *tragédie en musique*—while my latest source dates from the 19th-century. I hope that the reader will indulge this extension as it is the result of my desire to enable the him/her to place the specific sources used for reconstruction within a broad historical context. My point is that the discourse concerning rhythmic freedom in the performance of French music was one that both preceded the advent and out-lived the demise of the *tragédie en musique*. This chapter, therefore, is quite extensive, though it makes no claims to be exhaustive, and is subdivided into four main sections:

Section 3.2 entitled ‘French sources from Bacilly (1668) to de La Chapelle (1736)’ deals with sources dating from before the *Querelle des Bouffons*. These include a vocal and an instrumental treatise as well as Brossard’s *Dictionnaire* (editions published in 1701, 1703, 1705). An important treatise on declamation by Grimarest entitled *Traité du récitatif* (1707) will also be examined. The information contained in these pre-*Querelle* sources demonstrates that many of the most salient accusations leveled at French opera during the 1750s, far from being pure polemic, had a basis in earlier practice.

Section 3.3 entitled ‘Remarks on metronomic devices as a source of information about rhythmic freedom’ follows the 18th-century discourse surrounding the relationship between a strictly held tempo and the use of metronomes; several writers on music used d’Onzembray’s *métromètre* as an excuse to proclaim that true musical expression could only be achieved through a freely beaten meter. The well-spring of this line of argument is Diderot’s *Observations sur le chronomètre* (1748). The ways in which Diderot’s ideas were put to use by later writers show that the topic of rhythmic freedom was embedded in discussions of music in France over a long period of time. Writings of Diderot, Rousseau, Laborde and Framéry are here examined in particular depth.

Section 3.4 simply entitled ‘The *Querelle des Bouffons*’, looks at works—both pamphlets and books—associated with the *Querelle*. The main focus here is on writings by Rameau and Rousseau. However, lesser musical figures will also be cited to support arguments for and against a freely beaten performance style for the *tragédie en musique*.

Section 3.5 entitled ‘On French music being in time’, examines two articles published in the 1980s: Mary Cyr’s ‘Eighteenth-Century French and Italian Singing: Rameau’s Writing for the Voice’, and Patricia Rannum’s ‘Audible Rhetoric and Mute Rhetoric: the 17th-century French Sarabande’. I argue that the point of view that was put forward in these articles regarding rhythmic flexibility in the performance of French music is now ripe for revision.

Chapter 3, then, looks at a wide range of musical sources from both before and after the Rousseau/Rameau conflict. I am here tracking a phenomenon whose general principles fall on both sides of the aesthetic boundary delineated by the *Querelle des Bouffons*: thus I hope to show that the practice of a freely beaten meter in France was of long duration and seems to have been one of several characteristics which distinguished the *tragédie en musique* from Italian opera.

Before continuing, I would like to make clear what criteria I have used in selecting the quotations that are singled out for attention here. In them, a number of factors, from ornamentation to vocal color/inflection, will be commented on in relationship to a freely beaten meter. My choices ultimately derive from the qualifications found in following quotation, taken from Rousseau’s *Dictionnaire de musique* (1768):

C’est peu de lire la Musique exactement sur la Note; il faut entrer dans toutes les idées du Compositeur, sentir & rendre le feu de l’expression, avoir surtout l’oreille juste & toujours attentive pour écouter & suivre l’Ensemble. Il faut, en particulier dans la Musique Française, que la Partie principale sache presser ou ralentir le mouvement,

selon que l'exigent le goût du Chant, le volume de Voix & le développement des bras du Chanteur; il faut, par conséquent, que toutes les autres Parties soient sans relâche, attentives à bien suivre celle-là. Aussi l'Ensemble de l'Opéra de Paris, où la Musique n'a point d'autre Mesure que celle du geste, seroit-il, à mon avis, ce qu'il y a de plus admirable en fait d'*Exécution*.¹

This single quotation incorporates—as Aristotle's cherry seed does the full blown tree—the entirety of my dissertation. Rousseau here stresses the necessity for the performer to be no passive, Modernist sound-generator of notation, but rather an active co-creator; one who, together with the composer, finds the right degree of fire for the expression of the musical ideas. Especially in French music, this can mean (according to Rousseau) speeding up or slowing ('presser et ralentir') the tempo of the performance in order to accommodate the ornamentation ('le goût du Chant')², the volume of the voice ('le volume de Voix') and the gesticulation of the singer on stage ('développement des bras du chanteur').

However, it was these three characteristics of French vocal performances, praised in the *Dictionnaire*, which Rousseau had earlier singled out for censure in his *Lettre sur la musique Française* (1753). It is the final sentence in the following citation which is of importance here, but the fuller context is given for the sake of clarity:

Le caractère traînant de la langue, le peu de flexibilité de nos voix, & le ton lamentable qui regne perpétuellement dans notre Opéra, mettent presque tous les monologues François sur un mouvement lent, & comme la mesure ne s'y fait sentir ni dans le chant, ni dans la Basse, ni dans l'accompagnement, rien n'est si traînant, si lâche, si languissant que ces beaux monologues que tout le monde admire en bâillant; ils voudroient être tristes, & ne sont qu'ennuyeux; ils voudroient toucher le cœur, & ne font qu'affliger les oreilles.

Les Italiens sont plus adroits dans leurs Adagio; car, lorsque le chant est si lent qu'il seroit à craindre qu'il ne laissât affaiblir l'idée de la mesure, ils font marcher la basse par notes égales qui marquent le mouvement, & l'accompagnement le marque aussi par des subdivisions de notes, qui soutenant la voix & l'oreille en mesure, ne rendent le chant que plus agréable & sur-tout plus énergique par cette précision. Mais la nature du chant François interdit cette ressource à nos compositeurs: car dès que l'Acteur seroit forcé d'aller en mesure, il ne pourroit plus développer sa voix ni son jeu, traîner son chant, renfler, prolonger ses sons, ni crier à pleine tête, & par conséquent il ne seroit plus applaudi.³

'[...] for if the actor were forced to go in time he would no longer be able to develop either his voice or his acting, [...] nor could he scream at the top of his lungs, and consequently he would no longer be applauded.' Here again, as in the quotation from the *Dictionnaire de musique*, the expression of strong emotions—for let us not forget that Rousseau's context here is the 'touching' monologue—is linked to rhythmic freedom (and perhaps even to rubato: 'traîner son chant, renfler, prolonger ses sons'), acting and vocal volume.

Rousseau's *Lettre* is of course polemical, satirical and unabashedly anti-French. The quotation from his *Dictionnaire* is much milder in tone. But whether praising or reviling the French operatic style, he asserts that it was one in which observance of the rhythm was sacrificed to theatrical expression in the broadest sense. How could this have functioned in general, and, more particularly, how could gestures made on stage have influenced the musical pulse? The answer to this question is of vital importance to the current research.

Therefore, the original texts which shall follow here were chosen because they refer to one or more of the following concepts (which we have already seen in Rousseau's quotation from his *Dictionnaire*):

1. the actor's expressive interpretation, or *feu*, in performance. How could a performer's level of intensity influence the musical pulse at the Opéra? This question will be more deeply delved into in Chapter 4, but I felt it was important to show that the actor's *feu* also appears in a purely musical context.

2. rhythmic flexibility resulting from gesture and acting. Here gesture in and of itself, without reference to

1. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Dictionnaire de musique* (Amsterdam: 1768), tome premier, 328. Although many of the articles of Rousseau's *Dictionnaire* were first published in the *Encyclopédie* of Diderot, this is not the case with the entry 'Exécution', the *Encyclopédie* entry for which was written by Cahusac. For information on authorship of the articles in the *Encyclopédie* see: <http://artfl-project.uchicago.edu/>. Last accessed 3-11-2010.

2. Rousseau wrote: 'GOÛT DU CHANT, *en Musique*; c'est ainsi qu'on appelle en France, l'art de chanter ou de jouer les notes avec les agréments qui leurs conviennent.' See: Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert, ed., *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, 7:770. University of Chicago : ARTFL Encyclopédie Projet (Winter 2008 Edition), Robert Morrissey (ed), <http://encyclopedia.uchicago.edu/>. Last Accessed 22-5-2010.

3. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 'Lettre sur la musique française' (1753), 66-7, in *La Querelle des Bouffons: texte des pamphlets*, ed. Denise Launay (Genève: Minkoff Reprint, 1973), tome I, 669-764. Differences between spelling in text and footnote represents differentiation between the work *an sich* and the specific text consulted.

the passionate intensity of performance (*feu*), is linked to a free beat.

3. *rubato an sich*: changes of tempo involving all of the musical parts simultaneously, in both texted and untexted music (to express the harmony, the words or to make room for ornamentation, including vocal inflections and *sons filés*).

4. the power of sound over, and the impact of sound on, the human body; the soul's passions (as I have argued in Chapter 2, I believe that this is implicit in the idea of *feu*).

3.2

French sources from Bacilly (1668) to de La Chapelle (1736)

3.2a Bacilly's *L'Art de bien chanter* (1668).

The earliest source consulted was Bénigne de Bacilly's *L'Art de bien chanter* (1668); since Lully drew on the *air de cour* tradition when creating the *tragédie en musique*,⁴ it seemed appropriate to begin at the root of the style. Bacilly's treatise is one of the most important of the 17th-century sources that refer to the *air de cour*. Bacilly's experience as a composer and teacher is reflected in his book, which deals with various aspects of performance, including ornamentation and syllable length. However, he also has interesting information to impart about tempo fluctuations. He first establishes the need for a constant tempo in certain types of music:

Le Mot de *Iustesse* est fort équivoque dans le Chant: Les vns appellent *Chanter juste*, lors qu'on chante vn Air dans sa fidelité, & selon l'intention de l'Autheur, pour ce qui concerne seulement les traits, sans considerer la veritable justesse de la Voix, mais simplement le rapport fidele des ornemens que l'Autheur veut estre adjoustez à l'Air qu'il a composé: Les autres au contraire, appellent *Chanter juste*, lors que la Voix se porte à bien entonner chaque Note en particulier, quoy que d'ailleurs elle manque pour la fidelité des Traits qu'elle ignore dans vn Air qu'on ne luy aura pas bien appris.

D'autres nomment *Chanter juste*, lors que l'on obserue la Mesure & le Mouuement des Chants, principalement de ceux qui ont leur Mesure réglée, comme sont les Gauottes, Sarabandes, Menuets, &c."⁵

Here we see the term *justesse* being explained in various ways, but always in the sense of correctness: one must realize the notation properly, and observe the meter and tempo of vocal dance movements in order to deserve the adjective *juste*. But, though he clearly established the propriety of performing such vocal music in time, Bacilly later refines this approach by taking affect into account. He begins this more subtle passage by defending a certain type of old-fashioned song which appears—at least on paper—to be mediocre in text and musical expression:

Il y a aussi de certains petits Airs, qui sont ou d'une Mesure réglée, comme sont les Gauottes, Sarabandes, Menuets, ou d'une Mesure libre, comme sont les *Vilanelles* [...] lesquelles Chansonnettes, il est quasi necessaire de rendre communes, ou pour mieux dire *Naturelles*, & qui n'auroient pas cet agrément, ny cette tendresse qui les fait tant estimer, si le Chant en estoit trop recherché, ie veux dire trop particulier; d'où vient que presque toutes ces sortes d'Airs se ressemblent sur le papier [...].⁶

And yet, Bacilly continues, these pieces which look so weak on paper can be made into wonderful jewels, if the performer understands the arts of ornamentation (*l'ajustement*) and execution:

& comme ils sont de peu d'étenduë, & quasi toujours sur certains *Modes* (c'est le terme de composition) qui leur conuiennent preferablement aux autres Tons, tout leur auantage consiste dans l'ajustement que l'on y met, & dans leur agreable execution, qui fait dire que ce sont *des petits Riens, qui dans la bouche de celui qui chante paroissent des Merveilles* [...].⁷

Bacilly's point here seems to be that it is not enough simply to perform this kind of repertoire, which is naive

4. Lully was inspired by both Italian and French models in creating his operas. See: James R. Anthony, 'Lully's airs. French or Italian?', *The Musical Times*, vol. 128, no. 1729 (Mar., 1987), 126-9.

5. I am using the second edition of Bacilly's treatise here, see: Bénigne de Bacilly, *Traité de la methode, ou l'Art de bien chanter* (Paris: 1671), 55. I shall refer to it hereafter as *L'Art*.

6. Bacilly, *L'Art*, 105.

7. Bacilly, *L'Art*, 105-6.

in character and rather standardized in style⁸, with *justesse*; one must interpret the notes on the page, and then these little songs can be made even more effective than grand airs. I would argue that is their so-called mediocrity, their common character which allows them to be performed in a way 'qui assurément les fait valoir mesme audelà des grands Airs'.⁹

The method for doing so, as one can see in the following quotation, is to perform them more slowly than usual, and even to alter the meter, in order to accommodate the ornamentation and to express the exclamations of the text:

Au reste ie ne veux pas oublier que c'est mal à propos reprendre celui qui chante ces sortes de Chansonnettes, lors que pour les rendre plus tendres, & se donner le loisir d'y adjouster les agrémens qu'il juge à propos, il les alentit, & mesme quelquefois on corrompt la Mesure; ce qui se remarque principalement dans certaines Gauottes anciennes qui veulent estre executées avec plus de Tendresse, comme celles-cy.

L'Amour qui me presse,
Cause ma langueur, &c.

Ah! petite Brunette, &c.
Ah! ma chere Maistresse, &c.

Et d'autre semblables dans lesquelles on rompt la Mesure de la Danse, afin de leur donner plus d'éclat, & les tourner de cent manieres l'une plus agreable que l'autre, & selon tout l'Art & toute la Methode de bien Chanter, mesme pour mieux exprimer certaines Exclamations, & avec plus d'agrément. Il ne faut pas, dis-je, blâmer ces manieres d'exécuter & dire mal à propos, comme font mille Ignorans, que l'on ne pourroit pas y danser, comme si c'estoit l'intention de celui qui les chante, de les faire danser, & leur servir de Violon.¹⁰

Here Bacilly ridicules contemporary objections to slowing the tempo of these affective pieces; their current function, as songs of tender feeling, is more important to success in performance than their formal provenance in dance music. But he also warns that such freedom must not be taken too far:

Cette obseruation toutesfois n'a lieu que pour certaines Gauottes, desquelles il est permis non seulement d'alentir la mesure, mais mesme de l'alterer, pour se donner plus de temps d'y adjouster les ornemens du Chant; car pour les autres Chansons qui ont leur mesure réglée, il est bien permis de la rendre plus lente; mais il faut toujours en conseruer la proportion, & ne pas faire d'un Menuet, ou d'une Sarabande, un Chant qui soit d'une mesure libre, comme sont ceux que nous appellons précisément *Airs*.¹¹

Here dance-based vocal pieces are strongly contrasted to *Airs*: if the former are performed too freely they will begin to sound like the latter. So, for Bacilly, vocal dance music, with the exception of 'certaines Gauottes', can be free, but never as free as the *Air*.

Clémence Monnier has pointed out that not only Bacilly, but also his contemporary Pierre Perrin, who was involved in the earliest attempts to create a French operatic genre, made a distinction in performance style between forms based on dances and those that were not. She begins with an attempt to define the various genres:

«Air sérieux», «air», «chanson», «brunette», «chansonnette», «air tendre», etc. Les appellations qui désignent le corpus de l'air dans la seconde moitié du XVIIe siècle sont multiples et l'établissement d'une différenciation nette entre ces différents «genres» reste aujourd'hui difficile. Certains jalons sont néanmoins posés. Tout d'abord, il paraît clair que l'adjectif «sérieux» est relatif au sens du poème: au cours de la 2nd partie du siècle, l'*air* «sérieux» se développe aux côtés de et par opposition à l'air «à boire»: «sérieux» ne concerne en rien l'aspect musical de l'air. Il n'en est pas de même du terme «chanson», qui s'oppose à «air» (ce dernier vocable étant également l'appellation générique du genre, ce qui ne facilite pas notre compréhension!): ils constituent les deux principaux genres *musicaux* de notre corpus.¹²

8. For a discussion of the terms *naturel* and *commun* see: Clémence Monnier, 'Comment pense-t-on l'articulation du texte et de la musique au XVIIe siècle ? Les théories de Perrin et Bacilly' (Silène: http://www.revue-silene.com/f/index.php?sp=liv&livre_id=127), 5-6. Last accessed: 12-08-2010.

9. Bacilly, *L'Art*, 106.

10. Bacilly, *L'Art*, 106-7.

11. Bacilly, *L'Art*, 107-8.

12. Monnier, 'Comment', 6.

She then goes on to examine these classifications in relationship to Bacilly and Perrin:

Pierre Perrin les distingue dans l'«Avant-propos» de son *Recueil de Paroles de musique*:

«La chanson diffère de l'air, en ce que l'Air suit comme nous avons dit une mesure libre, et la chanson un mouvement réglé, ou de danse ou autre.»

Bacilly emploie presque la même classification: les chants de mesure libre sont appelés «airs» ou «grands airs», les autres «à mesure réglée» sont des danses, ou «petits airs» ou «chansonnettes». Cette dichotomie est constante chez nos deux auteurs. Précisons que «à mesure libre» ou «à mesure réglée» sont des indications d'interprétation, et non de notation. Lorsqu'il chante un «air», l'interprète doit accélérer et ralentir le mouvement même si sur le papier, la même mesure est conservée du début à la fin.¹³

Indeed, Perrin, like Bacilly, felt that the stronger emotions could be more properly expressed in pieces which were composed to be performed without strictly beating time. Monnier cites the following passage from his *Recueil de Paroles de musique*:

L'air marche à mesure et à mouvements libres et graves, et ainsy il est plus propre pour exprimer l'amour honneste, et les emotions tendres qu'il cause dans les cœurs, de douleur ou de Joye, par les divers rencontres et evenemens de presence, d'éloignement, de retour, de poursuite, de desir, d'esperance, de crainte, de colere, de mepris, de jouissance &c.¹⁴

The link between expression and tempo, so beautifully laid out by Monnier, is further elucidated in Bacilly's *L'Art de bien chanter*. In examining the following passage, which is taken from the chapter 'Du Mouuement & de l'Expression', it is important to keep in mind the double meaning of the word *mouvement*, which can either indicate the tempo of a piece of music, or, as we have seen in chapter 2, an affect in the human body:

Plusieurs confondent le Mouuement avec la Mesure, & croient que parce qu'on dit d'ordinaire vn Air de mouuement, pour le distinguer d'un Air fort lent, tout le Mouuement du Chant ne consiste que dans vn certain sautillerment propre aux Gigue, aux Menuets, & autres semblables.¹⁵

Bacilly thus makes a distinction between meter ('Mesure') and tempo ('Mouuement'): his point is that the tempo implicit in the meter sign ('Mesure') of 'bouncy' jigs and minuets (for instance) should not be confused with a related but quite separate phenomenon: the tempo of emotional expression ('Mouuement'):

Le Mouuement est donc tout autre que ce qu'ils s'imaginent; & pour moy ie tiens que c'est vne certaine qualité qui donne l'ame au Chant, & qui est appelée Mouuement, parce qu'elle émeut, ie veux dire elle excite l'attention des Auditeurs, mesme de ceux qui sont les plus rebelles à l'harmonie; si ce n'est que l'on veuille dire, qu'elle inspire dans les cœurs telle passion que le Chantre voudra faire naistre, principalement celle de la *Tendresse*; d'où vient que la plupart des Femmes, ne parviennent iamais à acquerir cette maniere d'expression, qu'elles s'imaginent estre contre la modestie du sexe, & tenir du Theatre, & rendent par ce moyen leur Chant tout à fait inanimé, faute de vouloir vn peu feindre.¹⁶

'Mouuement', then, is a theatrical quality of expression which goes beyond mere tempo or meter. For Bacilly it was *mouvement* which kept the listener breathlessly enthralled:

Ie ne doute point que la varieté de la Mesure ou prompte, ou lente, ne contribuë beaucoup à l'Expression du Chant; mais il y a sans doute encore vne autre qualité plus épurée & plus spirituelle, qui tient toûjours l'Auditeur en haleine, & fait que le Chant en est moins ennuyeux, qui est le Mouuement qui fait valoir vne Voix mediocre, plus qu'une fort belle Voix qui manquera d'Expression.¹⁷

These texts of Bacilly's show that there was, in the 17th century, a link between a performer's passion (which I would argue corresponds to the idea of *feu*), musical expression and rhythmic freedom in the broadest sense. Bacilly also asserts—as we have seen in the case of the gavotte—that there is a link between both a slower-than-normal tempo and a freely beaten meter in vocal dance movements and the expression of affect; and finally that he sanctions changing the tempo for the sake of expressive ornamentation. So it would seem

13. Monnier, 'Comment', 6.

14. Monnier, 'Comment', 7.

15. Bacilly, *L'Art*, 199-200.

16. Bacilly, *L'Art*, 200.

17. Bacilly, *L'Art*, 200-1.

that, long before the appearance of either Rousseau's *Lettre* or his *Dictionnaire*, and indeed, at the very cradle of the *tragédie en musique*, freedom of tempo was described as a legitimate expressive device in French vocal music, when called for by the affective content of the text, and the singer's desire to ornament.

3.2b Brossard's *Dictionnaire de musique* (1701)

The question of how expressive the French were in their singing is one that is both difficult to resolve and important to confront. If *mouvement* was, as Bacilly asserts, a theatrical quality of emotional expression, then just how passionate were French singers on stage?

Brossard's *Dictionnaire de musique: contenant une explication des terms grecs, latins, italiens, & français, les plus usitez dans la musique* (1703, 1705) contains several entries that indicate their expression could be extreme. For instance, the following definition:

STENTATO du Verbe *Stentare*, qui veut dire, SOUFFRIR, *Peiner*, &c. se met pour marquer, non seulement qu'il faut travailler, ou se donner de la peine en chantant quelque morceau; mais aussi qu'il faut *pousser la Voix* de toute sa force, & chanter comme si l'on souffroit beaucoup, ou d'une maniere qui fasse sentir ou qui exprime la douleur dont on est pénétré, &c.¹⁸

Of course *stentare* is an Italian word (translated by the *Dictionnaire Italien et François et François-Italien* of 1729 as 'pâtir')¹⁹. Could this 'audible suffering' while singing be a purely Italian musical phenomenon, or did French vocalists also go to such expressive extremes?

Although it is impossible to answer these questions with complete certainty, it is interesting that Brossard does not, in defining 'stentato', mention it as being a purely Italian phenomenon; nor does he, as he does in defining 'trillo', describe an Italian variant that differed from French practice.²⁰ Moreover, the word 'souffrir' occurs in the 'Table alphabetique' which is appended to the main text of Brossard's *Dictionnaire*. This table was added by the author specifically to facilitate Frenchmen in finding foreign equivalents for French musical terms:

LES Termes François qui concernent la Musique, & dont l'on trouve l'explication dans ce Dictionnaire; tant pour donner la facilité à ceux qui voudront envoyer leurs Pieces dans les Pays Estrangers, de mettre et d'exprimer leurs Avertissements en des termes entendus de tous les Musiciens de l'Europe: qu'affin de donner moyen de trouver vite et aisement les matieres, sur lesquelles, ceux qui ne savent ny le *Grec*, ny le *Latin*, ny l'*Italien*, souhaiteront quelque éclaircissement.²¹

In this list we find the following entry:

Souffrir. S'efforcer. Faire quelque chose avec peine. V. *STENTATO*.²²

Clearly, Brossard thought it worthwhile to include an Italian equivalent for the French word *souffrir*. This would suggest that both French and Italian singers at this period could '*pousser la Voix* de toute sa force' in order to express the suffering of a character on stage.²³

Brossard's *Dictionnaire* also indicates that singers took liberties with the tempo, and perhaps made a *ritenuto*, in order to give themselves more time to act out the passions of the text:

TEMPOREGIATO veut dire ordinairement la même chose que à Tempo, que nous venons d'expliquer. Mais il signifie aussi souvent que *ceux qui accompagnent*, & celui qui donne la mesure, doivent prolonger quelques fois certains *temps*, soit pour donner à l'Acteur la commodité d'exprimer la *Passion*, soit pour donner à celui qui chante

18. Sebastien de Brossard, *Dictionnaire de musique*, seconde edition (Paris: 1705), 114.

19. *Dictionnaire Italien et François et François-Italien* (Amsterdam: 1729), tome premier, 453.

20. 'TRILLO. au plur. *Trilli*, qu'on trouve souvent marqué en abregé par un T. ou par *Tr.* ou simplement par un petit *t* tant pour les Voix que pour les Instrumens. C'est souvent la marque qu'on doit battre fort vite alternativement, ou l'un après l'autre deux Sons en degré conjoints comme fa, mi, ou mi, re, &c. De maniere qu'on commence par le plus haut, & qu'on finisse par le plus bas, et c'est là proprement la *Cadence* ou le *Tremblement* à la Française. Mais c'est aussi très-souvent sur tout dans les Musiques Italiennes, une marque qu'on doit rebattre plusieurs fois sur le même degré, le même Son; d'abord un peu lentement, et sur la fin avec autant de *vivacité* et de *vitesse* que le gosier le peut faire'. Brossard, *Dictionnaire*, 169-70.

21. Brossard, *Dictionnaire*, 235.

22. Brossard, *Dictionnaire*, 306.

23. This in turn might be the root of that style of singing which Rousseau censured in his *Lettre sur la musique française* as 'crier à pleine tête'.

le temps de faire les *agréemens*, dont il juge à propos d'orner ce qu'on luy donne à chanter, ou qui sont marquez, &c.²⁴

Here time is taken in all the musical parts at once for the sake of either acting ('pour donner à l'*Acteur* la commodité d'exprimer la *Passion*') or ornamentation ('pour donner à celui qui chante le temps de faire les *agréemens*').

Just what Brossard means by the term passion can be understood from three quotations given in succession here:

USO. [...] LA TROISIÈME maniere de l'*Uso*, enfin est celle que les Grecs appellent *Petteia*, & les Italiens après les Latins *Pettia*. Mais pour bien entendre ce que c'est, il faut remarquer 1ere. que les Sons en general ont la force d'exprimer par eux-mêmes, & même d'exciter en l'homme ce que les Latins appellent *Mores*, & les Italiens *Costume*, c'est à dire, *certaines mouvemens interieurs* que les Philosophes appellent *Affections*, ou *Passions*.²⁵

MUSICA PATHETICA. Musique *Pathetique*, c'est à dire, qui *touche*, qui *emeut* & *ébranle* le cœur & les entrailles, &c.²⁶

PATHETICO. veut dire, PATHETIQUE, *Touchant*, *Expressif*, *Passioné*, capable d'emouvoir la pitié, la compassion, la colere, & toutes les autres passions qui agitent le cœur de l'homme. Ainsi on dit, *Stilo pathetico*, *Canto pathetico*, *Fuga pathetica*. Le genre *Chromatique* avec ses *semitons majeurs & mineurs* tant en descendant qu'en montant est fort propre à cela, comme aussi le bon menagement des *dissonances*, sur tout des *superflus*, & des *diminués*; la variété des *mouvemens* tantôt *vifs*, tantôt *languissans*, tantôt *lents*, tantôt *vîtes*, &c. y contribué aussi beaucoup.²⁷

In defining the 'uso' Brossard underlines the power of pure sound over human emotion that is commonly associated today with the German phenomenon of the *Affektenlehre*. As we have seen in Chapter 2, this belief was actually a pan-European one in this period and by no means restricted to German-speaking countries.

In particular it was 'musica pathetica', as we can see from Brossard's definition, which moved the passions in the human frame and soul; the results could be quite strong. In fact it could 'emeut & ébranle le cœur & les entrailles' of the listener. Indeed, as in the third definition, music which was 'pathetique' could agitate the human heart by the skillful use of small chromatic intervals and dissonances and by a 'variété des *mouvemens* tantôt *vifs*, tantôt *languissans*, tantôt *lents*, tantôt *vîtes*'.

Taken together, the remarks cited from Bacilly's *L'Art de bien chanter* and Brossard's *Dictionnaire* affirm that there is a plausible context for some of the more controversial aspects of Rousseau's remarks on French operatic practices which well pre-dates the polemical pamphlet war now known as the *Querelle des Bouffons*.

3.2c Grimarest's *Traité du récitatif* (1707)

As we shall see when examining the sources related to the *Querelle des Bouffons*, much of the most interesting (for me as a researcher) and inspiring (for me as a reconstructor) material related to the links between gesture and rhythmical freedom in the *tragédie en musique* comes from sources antagonistic either to music in general, or to French music in particular. Jean-Léonard le Gallois de Grimarest belongs in the former category. Of him David Tunley has written:

Grimarest died in 1720, but very little is known of his life. He speaks with a personal authority about the way Corneille and Racine recited their dramatic works (judging Racine to be the better, Corneille having retained his provincial Normandy accent), and as Corneille had virtually retired from literary activity in 1674, it is reasonable to assume that Grimarest was active before this time and may therefore have been born about the middle of the century.²⁸

24. Brossard, *Dictionnaire*, 155.

25. Brossard, *Dictionnaire*, 229.

26. Brossard, *Dictionnaire*, 60.

27. Brossard, *Dictionnaire*, 74.

28. David Tunley, 'Grimarest's *Traité du récitatif*: Glimpses of Performance Practice in Lully's Operas', *Early Music*, vol. 15, no. 3, Lully Anniversary Issue (Aug., 1987), 361-364, 361.

In his *Traité du recitatif dans la lecture, dans l'action publique, dans la déclamation, et dans le chant*, Grimarest made clear that, for him, the affect of any given vocal text was only obscured and enfeebled by its subjection to musical treatment:

C'est une grande question de savoir si la Musique ajoute à la passion, ou si elle la diminue. Pour décider ce problème, il faut établir pour principe, que la passion ne saurait être exprimée que par les accents, par la prononciation, & par les gestes qui lui sont propres. Or il est impossible, en conservant les règles de la Musique, de donner à la passion ce que je viens de dire; il n'y a que la seule Déclamation qui puisse le faire. Donc toute passion assujettie aux intervalles, & aux mesures de la Musique, perd de sa force. En effet on ne peut donner aux syllabes la quantité qui leur a été déterminée: on ne saurait varier ses accents suivant les passions, ou les figures; on ne peut donner à ses gestes la vivacité & le délicatesse qu'ils doivent avoir; en un mot la passion ne saurait être mesurée.²⁹

For Grimarest, then, music restricts the actor's vocal and physical expression of the words: the proper timing of the text is gravely impeded by the singer's need to maintain musical meter. There is only one way for an actor/singer to perform sung texts which can please Grimarest, and that is by taking musical liberties in favor of textual expression:

Si la Musique vocale cause communément du plaisir, c'est qu'on est dédommagé du tort que les intervalles font aux paroles, par la voix agréable, & par l'artifice de l'Acteur, qui quand il a le sentiment juste, s'écarte des mesures de la Musique pour approcher le plus qu'il peut de la manière dont la passion doit être exprimée.³⁰

Grimarest seems to be advocating a form of what Brossard called 'Temporegiato': a willful alteration of the beat in order to allow the actor time to express the affect of the text. Here the performer's passion is in control of the tempo's flow. Grimarest is very clear about what he considers to be the relative responsibilities of those involved in the creation and performance of vocal music: the composer, the poet and the listener are all entirely dependent on the performer. It is the latter who must be able to make an impression on the audience, no matter how hampered by the constraints of the music:

Comme j'ai fait voir que constamment la Musique altérerait l'effet de l'expression, par des mesures & des intervalles qui ne lui conviennent point; & que nous avons besoin d'être dédommagés de ce défaut par le son d'une belle voix, par une harmonie bien ménagée, & par la délicatesse de sentiment de celui qui chante; il s'ensuit de là que l'Acteur est celui qui doit le plus au Spectateur. Car bien que le Compositeur doive par la disposition de ses notes, imiter le plus qu'il peut la Nature; néanmoins l'acteur a la voix, le geste, & le sentiment pour exprimer la passion.³¹

Even the most famous composer-poet team of the day, that of Lully and Quinault, was dependent on the singers to correct and improve the *tragédie en musique*. To prove his point, Grimarest gives an example from *Atys* [see figure 3.1]:

Le Compositeur, comme je l'ai déjà remarqué, étant souvent contraint par les règles de son art, de déranger la quantité des syllabes, c'est à un habile Acteur à suppléer à ce défaut, en faisant longues les syllabes qui doivent l'être, & brèves, celles qui sont brèves, sans faire attention à la longueur, ou à la brièveté de la note, à laquelle elles sont assujetties. Par exemple, dans la scène de Zangaride dans *Atys*, si l'on chantait *Ô vous me laisserez mourir*, suivant la note des deux premières syllabes, *Ô* serait beaucoup plus long que *vous*; ce qui serait contre les règles les plus communes de la quantité. Ainsi celui qui chante prend de la note de la première syllabe pour mettre sur la seconde, afin de donner plus de justesse à son expression.³²

Here Grimarest bids the performer to take liberties with Lully's setting, in order to respect the differences in syllable lengths for the words *et* and *vous*, Grimarest's solution is simply to take from one note and to give to another, altering the small-scale rhythm without either changing tempo or the number of beats in the bar. Having addressed this problem of syllable length, he then moves seamlessly into a completely different kind of rhythmic alteration, one in which both the bass and the upper part are affected:

Et il est vrai que l'on doit en user de cette manière dans les endroits passionnés, que l'on n'y doit point battre la mesure, parce que l'Acteur doit être le maître de son chant pour rendre conforme à son expression; & l'accompagnement doit aussi être assujetti à sa manière de chanter. On ne saurait mieux remarquer la vérité de ce que je dis, que dans l'endroit de Phaëton, où Libie chante

29. Jean-Léonar le Gallois de Grimarest, 'Traité du recitatif' in *Sept Traités sur le jeu du comédien et autres textes: de l'action oratoire à l'art dramatique (1657-1750)*, ed. Sabine Chaouche (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2001), 356.

30. Grimarest, 'Traité' in *Sept Traités*, 356-7.

31. Grimarest, 'Traité', in *Sept Traités*, 363.

32. Grimarest, 'Traité', in *Sept Traités*, 363.



Figure 3.1 Example of problematic recitative from Lully's *Atys*.

Que l'in-cer-ti-tu-de Est un ri-gou-reux— tour-ment!

Non, non, on n'a point, en ai-mant, De pei-ne plus ru-de Que

l'in-cer-ti-tu-de. Je sens croi-stre à tout mo-ment mon in-qui-e-

tu-de. Que l'in-cer-ti-tu-de. Est un ri-gou-reux— tour-ment!

Figure 3.2 'Que l'incertitude' from Lully's *Phaëton*.

Que l'incertitude
Est un rigoureux tourment!
&c.

À le chanter selon la note, on accusera sans doute M. de Lully d'avoir travaillé cet endroit extravagamment, par rapport à la situation où doit être Libie. Mais si on le chante comme le faisait l'Actrice, à qui on l'avait confié dans les commencements, on sentira toute la passion qui y doit être: au lieu qu'à l'entendre comme on l'exécute communément, il semble que cet air a été fait pour réjouir l'Auditeur.³³

Both this quotation from Grimarest and the air from Lully will feature prominently in Chapter 5 of this thesis, and will therefore only be briefly examined here. But before looking more closely at 'Que l'incertitude' it should be made clear that Grimarest's suggestion that this piece be performed 'without beating time at all' is meant to protect Lully's reputation. It is Grimarest's contention that to perform the notes as they appear on the page would leave the composer open to charges of incompetence: 'on accusera sans doute M. de Lully d'avoir travaillé cet endroit extravagamment'.³⁴

Indeed, the listener certainly experiences an audible discrepancy between the text and the music when the piece is performed in time, as in the recording done by Marc Minkowski in the early 1990s: Libie's rigorous torments appear to be set to a jolly dance tune, or as David Tunley put it, 'a seemingly simple melody in triple time'.³⁵ The simplicity of the air, [see figure 3.2] its dearth of strongly affective dissonances and its irregular structure offer no easy solutions to the performer when it comes to freedom of tempo. As Grimarest indicates, it is the emotional conflict, the 'situation' in which Libie finds herself that must offer the key to a more affective interpretation. The possible link between gesture and the free expression of the affect will be explored in two different versions of the piece, to be presented in the case studies in Chapter 5.

Grimarest then continues with his comparison of spoken theatre to opera by lamenting the near impossibility of finding singers up to the job:³⁶

Le mérite d'un Acteur, qui par son chant satisfait le Spectateur, est encore plus grand que celui de l'Acteur qui déclame, puisque celui-là a plus de parties à allier ensemble, & des inconvénients à prévenir. Car supposé, & c'est beaucoup, que de le présumer, qu'il se trouve des personnes qui connaissent parfaitement le sens des paroles, & qui sentent les mouvements qu'elles expriment, il faut qu'ils fassent un tout agréable de la Musique, de la prononciation, & du geste, quand ils se donnent en spectacle: ce qui fait que lorsqu'un bon Comédien a la voix favorable pour le chant, il l'exécute à la satisfaction de ceux qui l'écoutent; & son chant tranche si fort en bien avec celui des autres, que c'est une preuve incontestable de ce que j'avance.³⁷

Thus, that rare creature, the actor who can not only understand his role, but also both gesticulate and sing, is worth even more than the mere stage actor: but, Grimarest continues, it would be better yet, even for such a miracle-actor, if the particular performance space³⁸ were to free him from the necessity of adding gesture to his song:

C'est un avantage pour celui qui chante, dans les endroits où l'on ne peut mettre le geste en usage, de pouvoir s'en épargner le mélange avec la voix; car c'est le plus difficile à ménager dans l'action du chant; parce que les mouvements en sont opposés à la mesure de la Musique; & il faut un grand goût pour les faire durer avec grâce pendant l'intervalle de cette mesure; de manière que le Spectateur n'aperçoive point de contraste, ou une contenance immobile très désagréable.³⁹

It may seem that Grimarest explodes my research question by advising singers not to gesticulate at all if possible: however, if he here, once again, laments the adverse affects of musical timing on acting, it is because they form an obstacle to each other in terms of passionate performance: 'les mouvements [...] sont opposés à

33. Grimarest, 'Traité', in *Sept Traités*, 363-4.

34. The *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* defines 'Extravagant' as 'Fou, bizarre, fantastique, qui est contre le bon sens, contre la raison'. See: *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française*, quatrième édition (Paris: 1762), tome premier, 704.

35. See: Marc Minkowski's CD recording of *Phaëton*, MF 4509-91737-2, and also see: David Tunley, 'Grimarest's *Traité du Recitatif*: glimpses of performance practice in Lully's operas', *Early Music*, vol. 15, no. 3, Lully Anniversary Issue (Aug., 1987), 361-4, 362.

36. Grimarest's sentiments here about the near impossibility of finding all the skills required that make a great opera performer united in a single human frame were echoed one hundred years later by Gilbert Austin. See: Gilbert Austin, *Chironomia; or a Treatise on Rhetorical Delivery* (London: 1806), 243-8.

37. Grimarest, 'Traité', in *Sept Traités*, 365.

38. The author of *La Galerie de l'Académie royale de musique* mentions, for instance, that no gesture was used at the Concert Spirituel. See: [Travenol], 'La Galerie de l'Académie royale de la musique, contenant les portraits, en vers, des principaux sujets, qui la composent en la présente année 1754' (1754), 14-15, in *La Querelle des Bouffons: texte des pamphlets*, ed. Denise Launay (Genève: Minkoff Reprint, 1973), tome II, 1487-1548.

39. Grimarest, 'Traité', in *Sept Traités*, 365.

la mesure de la Musique'.⁴⁰ He emphasizes that words set to music take more time to enunciate than spoken ones, and the actor must take care not to fall into slow-motion gestures or disturbingly static facial expressions. Grimarest's insistence that 'one needs extraordinary taste to sustain [the gestures] during the time allotted by the music in such a way that the spectator perceives neither a discrepancy nor a fixed countenance, which is very disagreeable' shows that he was aware that there is a limit to just how much freedom a singer could take with the tempo for the sake of acting: there were bound to be moments when the acting would simply have to conform to the music and not the text. Ever jealous of the supremacy of the word over the note, even a fleeting moment in which text expression (including gesture) was subjugated to music, was, for Grimarest, unacceptable.

Finally, Grimarest touches on the distinction between airs and vocal dance forms, as did Bacilly and Perrin before him. Like the former, he admits that some of his contemporaries insist that vocal dance music be performed in time, but he is even more adamant than Bacilly that all texts have their own specific characteristics which need to be brought out in performance. He first presents the arguments of his opponents:

On dira sans doute que toutes mes réflexions, supposé qu'on veuille m'en passer la nécessité pour bien chanter, ne regardent que le Récitatif, ou les grands airs où règne la passion. Mais que pour exécuter des paroles qui n'expriment que des pensées communes, telles qu'on en place sous les gigue, sous des menuets, ou autre Musique de mouvement, il n'y a absolument qu'à s'attacher à la note, sans s'embarrasser des expressions.⁴¹

Grimarest's response to such critics is clear, however:

Il est aisé de répondre à cette objection. Car il n'y a point de ces paroles qui n'aient un caractère particulier, par rapport à la pensée qui les termine ordinairement, soit qu'elle roule sur la tendresse, soit sur l'infidélité ou la constance, ou que ce soit un air à boire. Or tout cela est caractérisé différemment; & si celui qui le chante ne l'anime suivant les règles que j'en ai données dans la Déclamation, je puis conclure qu'il ne chante point des paroles, mais des notes. Encore un coup, que l'on observe la manière dont les bon Comédiens chantent ces petits airs, on verra qu'ils demandent la même attention que les autres, quelque vive, quelque légère que soit la Musique, sous laquelle on a assujéti les paroles.⁴²

It is worthwhile noting that the sweeping statement 'suivant les règles que j'en ai données' undoubtedly was meant to include not only musically breaking time, but also gesture; for, although Grimarest does not specifically say that the singer must take time in order to perform a gesture, he clearly expects singers to be actors when performing. And, as he repeatedly mentions throughout his book, actors expressed their words with voice, countenance and gestures, and timed all three to best express the meaning of the text.

3.2d de La Chapelle's *Les Vrais Principes de la musique* (1736):

The final quotation in this first section is by no means unambiguous, and yet it has exerted a subtle but pervasive influence on this entire chapter. It comes from a general music treatise written by Jacques Alexandre de La Chapelle entitled *Les Vrais Principes de la musique*. In an elaborate and elegant preface, de La Chapelle praises the sense of hearing above those of sight, touch, smell or taste because only hearing, according to him, can contribute to the moral improvement of man. Music's status as a stimulus to the noblest sense consequently raised the importance of de La Chapelle's own treatise, and served as a justification for his publishing on the subject:

Ne lisons-nous pas que Pythagore par le moyen de la musique fit quitter à un jeune homme le dessein de commettre un crime? Concluons donc que la musique en elle même, est une science noble et nécessaire qui nous porte à la vertu, après cela on ne doit voir qu'avec joye que notre siècle s'applique plus que jamais à une science qui fait le soulagement et la douceur de la société; cette considération m'a engagé à faire part au public de mes réflexions sur la musique, et de luy offrir une nouvelle methode, donc les principes simples et les notions claires et distinctes, peuvent conduire un commençant à l'art d'une parfaite intonation [...].⁴³

40. The *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* defines 'Opposer' as 'Mettre une chose pour faire obstacle à une autre'. See: *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française*, tome second, 255.

41. Grimarest, 'Traité', in *Sept Traités*, 365.

42. Grimarest, 'Traité', in *Sept Traités*, 366.

43. Alexandre de La Chapelle, *Les Vrais Principes de la musique exposez par une gradation de leçons distribuez d'une manière facile et sûre pour arriver à une connaissance parfaite et pratique de cet art* (Paris: [1736]), preface unpaginated.

But de La Chapelle feels forced to follow this up with the admission that there are two aspects of performance which simply cannot be learned from a book:

[...] car s'il étoit vray que l'on pût arriver à cette perfection sans le secours d'un maître, ce seroit certainement par le chemin que j'ouvre aujourd'huy; mais l'expérience ne prouve que trop la neccessité d'avoir un guide pour la justesse des tons et le libre mouvement de la mesure.⁴⁴

Although it is not clear in what context de La Chapelle speaks of rhythmic freedom —vocal music, or possibly recitative? *Airs*? Dances?— it is still noteworthy, indeed, remarkable, that he insists that intonation and 'le libre mouvement de la mesure' are the only two things that it is impossible to learn from a book. What is important here is his assertion that some aspects of the musical art are not discussed because they cannot be adequately explained in words. I find it significant that he has placed freedom of tempo/affect ('mouvement') in this category because it helps to explain why the 18th-century polemical and theoretical literature is rich in references to rhythmical freedom, while the practical methods, manuals and treatises are surprisingly silent on the topic.

3.3 Remarks on metronomic devices as a source of information about rhythmic freedom

A specific stream of significant quotations, all eddying around controversial metronomic devices proposed by various inventors in order to determine and preserve musical tempi, runs from the mid-18th century right down to the 1830s. The original source of this flow of ideas was Diderot, who published his 'Observations sur le chronomètre' in 1748 in a volume of articles entitled *Mémoires sur différens sujets de mathématique*. We will examine his *Observations* here in detail, before looking at the uses to which it was put, and the misuses to which it was subjected, by later authors like Rousseau, Laborde and Framéry. Although clearly related to arguments that became fashionable during the *Querelle des Bouffons*, the metronomic quotations have, for the sake of clarity, been gathered together in this section. The reader is advised, however, to bear in mind that some of the same extra-musical, cultural forces that played a role in the *Querelle* are in effect here as well.

3.3a Diderot's 'Observations sur le chronomètre' (1748)

Metronomic devices, that is to say machines invented to aid musicians in determining the tempo of the music they performed, were advocated by many different French authors from the late 17th-century onwards: Loulié, Sauveur, d'Onzembray, de La Chapelle, Choquel, Duclos, Renaudin and Thiémé—and this list is not exhaustive—all came up with devices, some using pendulums, some with clock-works, under a variety of names like *chronomètre*, *echomètre*, *métromètre*, *rhythmomètre* and even *plexichronomètre*.⁴⁵ Devices without clockworks were silent; the performer had to watch the oscillations of the pendulum in order to experience the tempo visually (to *see* rather than to *hear* the beat); on the other hand, at least some of those devices fitted with clockwork tapped out the beat; in fact the *plexichronomètre* had a system of four little hammers which gave not only audible beats, but even distinguished the 'good' beats from the 'bad'.⁴⁶ It is important to bear in mind, when reading the polemical arguments which were inspired by their use, that the performer's eyes and ears could be variously engaged when using these devices, depending on their type.

Diderot, in his *Mémoires sur différens sujets de mathématique*, published opinions about the usefulness of musical metronomic devices that would reverberate until well into the 19th century. Yet none of the later authors quoting selected remarks from his *Mémoires* took the original context—an essay on barrel organs—into account. Therefore, extra attention shall be paid here to the *philosophe's* possible intentions in writing of music, man and machine.

The fourth *mémoire* in Diderot's publication is entitled 'Projet d'un nouvel Orgue sur lequel on pourra exécuter toute pièce de Musique a deux, trois, quatre, &c., parties, instrument également a l'usage de ceux qui savent assez de Musique pour composer, & de ceux qui n'en savent point du tout'. It is a witty piece which proposes the use of a barrel organ (*l'orgue d'Allemagne*) both for personal pleasure and as a teach-

44. de La Chapelle, *Les Vrais Principes*, 2.

45. For a study of this material see: Klaus Miehling, *Das Tempo in der Musik von Barok und Vorklassik: die Antwort der Quellen auf ein umstrittenes Thema* (Wilhelmshaven: Florian Noetzel Verlag, 2003).

46. See: *Encyclopédie méthodique: arts et métiers mécaniques* (Paris: 1784), tome troisième, 393.

ing device. An idea of the tone of the piece can be gained from the following quotation, in which Diderot recounts the cool reception with which his plans to promote the barrel organ were met by professional musicians:

En appuyant sur cette idée, je ne la trouvai point aussi creuse que l'imaginèrent d'abord quelques personnes à qui je la communiquai. Il est vrai qu'elles avoient leur talens à défendre, & qu'au fond de l'âme elles auroient été fâchées qu'on découvrit un moyen de faire, à peu de frais et dans un moment, ce qui leur avait coûté beaucoup de tems, d'étude et d'exercice. »Eh oui, me dirent-elles, Monsieur le paresseux. On vous en fera des Orgues d'Allemagne qui joueront tout sans que vous vous en mêliez! Ne faudrait-il pas encore vous dispenser de tourner la manivelle?« Je répondis qu'assurement cela n'en seroit que mieux, mais que j'aimois tant la Musique, que je me résoudrois à prendre cette peine, pourvû qu'on m'épargnât celle d'avoir, pendant quinze ans les doigts sur le Clavecin, avant que d'exécuter passablement une pièce. Si le célèbre Vaucanson, ajoutai-je, qui a fait manger et vivre un Canard de bois & jouer de la Flûte à des statuës, se proposoit cette autre machine, je ne doute point qu'il n'en vint à bout, & qu'on ne nous annonçât incessamment un Organiste Automate. Et pourquoi non? Seroit-ce le premier qu'on auroit vû?⁴⁷

Diderot mentions Jacques de Vaucanson, the celebrated French inventor of automata in order to make the first of several jokes about man-machines: here organists are mocked as being mechanical, but later the metaphor will be put to more complex, philosophical use.

Diderot goes on to explain in great detail how the cylinder of the barrel organ could be prepared in order to produce any and all pitches, and even any length of sound that might be required. The placement of the pins and the number of airs to be noted on a single cylinder are discussed, and this section of the *Mémoire* ends with a satirical list of advantages and disadvantages of introducing such an instrument, which is really just an excuse for Diderot to lampoon musicians in general and organists in particular.

The next section of this fourth *mémoire* is entitled 'Observations sur le chronomètre'. In it Diderot disparages the idea of using a machine to regulate tempo. First he states the idea that such chronometrical devices could preserve the composer's intentions for future generations:

On entend par un Chronomètre un instrument propre à mesurer le tems. On prétend qu'il seroit fort à souhaiter qu'on eût un bon instrument de cette espece, afin de conserver par ce moyen le vrai mouvement d'un air, car les mots *allegro, vivace, presto, affettuoso, soavemente, piano*, &c., dont se servent les Musiciens, seront toujours vagues, tant qu'on ne les rapportera point à un terme fixe de vitesse ou de lenteur, dont on sera convenu. Aussi voit-on aujourd'hui des personnes se plaindre que le mouvement de plusieurs airs de Lully est perdu. Si l'on eût eu attention, disent-ils, de se servir d'un pendule pour déterminer le temps de la mesure dans un air, & d'écrire à la tête des pièces de Musique, au lieu des *presto, prestissimo, andante*, &c. qu'on y lit, 1, 2, ou 3 secondes par mesure, ou 5 secondes pour 1, 2, 3, ou 4 mesures, ou *m* de secondes pour *n* de mesures; on auroit évité cet inconvénient, & l'on auroit dans mille ans le plaisir d'entendre les airs admirables de M. Rameau, tels que l'Auteur les fait exécuter aujour'd'hui.⁴⁸

Diderot, however, could not agree with what he considered to be such simplistic thinking, for he felt that musical performance was more flexible than proponents of such metronomes were willing to take into account. His description of French musical practice is startling:

Ceux qui s'en tiennent à l'écorce des choses trouveront peut-être ces observations solides; mais il n'en sera pas de même des connoisseurs en Musique.

Ils objecteront contre tout Chronomètre en général, qu'il n'y a peut-être pas dans un air quatre mesures qui soient exactement de la même durée; deux choses contribuant nécessairement à ralentir les unes & à précipiter les autres, le goût et l'harmonie dans les pièces à plusieurs parties, le goût et le presentiment de l'harmonie dans les *solo*. Un Musicien qui sçait son art n'a pas joué quatre mesures d'un air qu'il en saisit le caractère & qu'il s'y abandonne: il n'y a que le plaisir de l'harmonie qui le suspende; il veut ici que les accords soient frappés, là qu'ils soient dérobés; c'est-à-dire, qu'il chante ou joue plus ou moins lentement d'une mesure à une autre, & même d'un tems & d'un quart de tems à celui qui le suit.⁴⁹

Diderot here proposes that contemporary French performance practice was one in which a performer intuitively 'seized the character' of the piece, and in which the choice of tempo was fueled by the sheer pleasure imparted to the player by the harmony. For Diderot, music making is an inspired artistic act,

47. Denis Diderot, *Mémoires sur différens sujets de mathématiques* (Paris: 1748), 172-3.

48. Diderot, *Mémoires*, 192-3

49. Diderot, *Mémoires*, 193-4.

not a mechanical representation of notes on the page in a fixed and determined tempo, and he insists that even non-vocal music should be free: harmony-driven rubato is his theme here, not Grimarest's text-driven performative freedom. For Diderot, some harmonies will be accentuated, others will be hidden and whole bars, whole beats and even quarters of a beat can be stretched or rushed. The verbs which Diderot uses to describe these agogic accents are telling: 'frapper' is defined by the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* as making a strong impression on the senses ('Le son frappe l'oreille. Une grande lumière frappe la vue. Cette odeur est trop forte, elle frappe le cerveau.'⁵⁰). The word was also used in relation to musical performance in order to express boldness or daring ('Frappier des touches, pour dire, Toucher avec hardiesse'⁵¹). So, it seems that Diderot is advocating that the performer not only strike the striking harmonies with energy and force, but that s/he should even linger over them, once struck, so that they more forcefully strike the listener with pleasure. On the other hand, *dérober*, according to the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française*, means to hide ('Dérober quelque chose à la vue de quelqu'un'), or to become obscured ('À mesure que le jour baisse, les objets se dérobent insensiblement à la vue'⁵²). According to Diderot, the performer's desire to emphasize some harmonies, and to disguise or pass lightly over others would lead to an ebb and flow of tempo for each phrase, so that no four bars would have the exact same length. For him, then, music-making requires a human interpreter, one sensible to emotions and sensations; and the interpreter's rights and insights rivaled those of the composer:

Le seul bon Chronomètre que l'on puisse avoir, c'est un habile Musicien qui ait du goût, qui ait bien lû la Musique qu'il doit faire exécuter & qui sache en battre la mesure.

Si l'on ne jouë pas aujourd'hui certains airs de Lully dans le mouvement qu'il prétendoit qu'on leur donnât, peut-être n'y perdent-ils rien. Un Auteur n'est pas toujours celui qui déclame le mieux son ouvrage.⁵³

After delivering this slap to 'composer's intentions', Diderot now takes his argument in a highly philosophical direction by returning to the idea, already proposed in his *mémoire* entitled 'Projet d'un nouvel Orgue' that man himself is a machine:⁵⁴

Mais si on ne trouve pas ces observations assez solides & qu'on persiste à désirer un instrument qui mette des bornes au caprice des Musiciens, je commencerai par rejeter tous ceux qu'on a proposés jusqu'à présent, parce qu'on y a fait du Musicien & du chronomètre deux machine distinctes, dont l'une ne peut jamais bien assujettir l'autre. Cela n'a presque pas besoin d'être démontré. Il n'est pas possible que le Musicien ait, pendant toute sa pièce l'œil au mouvement ou l'oreille au bruit du pendule, & s'il s'oublie un moment, adieu le frein qu'on a prétendu lui donner.⁵⁵

Diderot here has emphasized the impossibility for a musician, who himself is a machine, to watch a swinging pendulum, or even to listen to the tick-tock of a metronome, during the course of an entire musical performance: the implication seems to be that it would be physically impossible, though it could also be his intention to simply emphasize that the creative and imaginative man-machine cannot be subjected to a mere mechanical man-made instrument that measures time. Be that as it may, Diderot quickly reveals that his discussion of tempo and interpretation has been an elaborate ruse, one that returns us to his beloved barrel-organ:

Mais comment, me demandera-t-on, faire du Musicien et du Chronomètre une seule & même machine? Il paroît que cela est impossible.

Je répons qu'il y a tout au plus quelque difficulté. Mais voici comment j'estime qu'on viendrait à bout de la surmonter: il faudroit d'abord que les Musiciens renoncassent aux signes dont ils se sont servis jusqu'à présent, & qu'ils substituassent aux *piano, presto, vivace, allegro*, &c. qu'on trouve à la tête de leurs pièces, les temps employés à les jouer entier; et qu'au lieu d'écrire *giga, allegro*, ils écrivissent *gigua*, 12, 13, 14, &c. secondes.

On noteroit ensuite cette gigue sur le cylindre de l'Orgue que je propose, et l'on appliqueroit le pendule à secondes au cylindre, de manière que l'aiguille parcourroit 12, 13 ou 14, &c. secondes; tandis que le cylindre tourneroit sur lui-même par le mécanisme même du pendule qui lui seroit appliqué, de l'arc sur lequel la gigue entière seroit

50. *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française*, tome premier, 780.

51. *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française*, tome premier, 780.

52. *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française*, tome premier, 510.

53. Diderot, *Mémoires*, 194

54. A discussion of the relationship between Diderot's text and la Mettrie's *Homme machine* (both of which were published in the same year) has been suppressed here as non-essential to this discussion of the *tragédie en musique*. Suffice it to say that Diderot had mixed feelings about la Mettrie's radical text, see: Aram Vartanian, 'Diderot's Rhetoric of Paradox, or The Conscious Automaton Observed', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol. 14, no. 4 (Summer, 1981), 379-405.

55. Diderot, *Mémoires*, 194-5

So, the logic of including these ruminations on the *chronomètre* in an essay on barrel organs has now become clear: Diderot has defended the human performer against the tyranny of the metronome merely to replace him entirely by a mechanical organ. Frustratingly, Diderot makes no specific mention of exactly how such an organ would deal with those essential changes of tempo and expression—*frapper* and *dérober*—which had made the rigors of the *chronomètre* unacceptable to him in the first place. It is reasonable to assume, however, that he imagined that the changes of tempi would be ‘programmed’ onto the cylinder: he advocates noting the entire duration of the piece at the head of a piece of music (*gigue*, 12, 13, 14, &c. seconds). The piece of music would thus be notated on the cylinder and the device would be calibrated to play the entire movement in the prescribed time. The implication, therefore, is that any expressive changes in tempo, or indeed any stretching of notes, would have to be noted directly onto the cylinder, safe-guarding the proper performance of the piece as well as its proper basic tempo.

There is indeed a reference to just such a thing having been accomplished about ten years before the publication of Diderot’s *Mémoires*. The source of this anecdote is late, but the information it contains is too intriguing to be ignored. The *Dictionnaire de la conversation et de la lecture* (1834) has the following to say in the course of its definition of the word ‘chronomètre’:

Un géomètre français (Sauveur) entreprit le premier d’introduire dans la musique une évaluation plus précise du temps, et, conformément aux habitudes des mathématiciens, il employa les nombres pour cette détermination. L’instrument qu’il imagina pour fixer ainsi la valeur particulière du *temps* pour chaque pièce de musique reçut à bon droit le nom de *chronomètre*. Mais cette tentative de la science en faveur de l’un des beaux-arts n’eût point de succès, quoique l’on fit pour accréditer le système de Sauveur et l’emploi de son instrument. On prétendit même que le mouvement d’une régularité parfaite, tel que celui d’un mécanisme à pendule, était incompatible avec les inspirations du goût, la mobilité des passions que la musique doit exprimer, et qui tantôt précipitent certaines notes, et tantôt en ralentissent quelques autres. A cette époque de la musique française, ce raisonnement était fondé, car les musiciens de notre nation se piquaient, en quelque sorte, de ne pas jouer de mesure. Lorsque le célèbre Vaucanson composa son *flûteur automate*, il fit imiter par cette statue le jeu d’un virtuose de ce temps nommé Blavet, et régla lui-même sur le cylindre où les airs étaient notés, l’espace que chaque note devait occuper en raison de la longueur que lui assignait l’artiste, dont il suivait exactement le jeu. Cette opération difficile réussit parfaitement, et les auditeurs non prévenus croyaient entendre Blavet lui-même, lorsqu’ils ne voyaient pas l’automate jouer, et qu’ils ne faisaient pas cesser le son de la flûte en interceptant avec une carte le souffle du flûteur. Il est donc bien prouvé qu’à cette époque les musiciens français ne pouvaient se soumettre à la parfaite égalité de mesures prescrite par le *chronomètre* de Sauveur. Quant aux Italiens, comme ils ne s’écartèrent jamais de cette égalité, ils n’avaient pas besoin d’instrument pour les y ramener.⁵⁷

Here is evidence of an attempt to record precisely a specific performer’s style long before Engramelle’s famous transcription for barrel organ of Balbastre’s *Romance*. It must, of course, be treated with care; for though it seems unlikely that a writer in 1836 would consciously try to falsify evidence by making up a story about Blavet and Vaucanson, one cannot but wonder where such information could have come from, so many years after the fact. It is, however, piquant in terms of our current discussion, because Diderot mentions Vaucanson in his *Observations*: could it be that his proposal to replace the *chronomètre* with a barrel organ with rubati programmed onto the cylinder was inspired by Vaucanson’s ‘recording’ of the expressive style of Blavet?

Engramelle, whose transcription of Balbastre’s performance of the *Romance* contains no such large-scale rubati, but a good deal of small-scale tempo rubato, published *La Tonotechnie ou l’art de noter les cylindres* in 1775. The book is, of course, from a later period than Diderot’s, but, to some extent at least, it looks back to an earlier time. Its frontispiece contains a distinct visual reference to Vaucanson:

Le frontispice représentant l’atelier d’un Facteur d’instrumens à Cylindres, sera placé en face du titre [...] à côté est un Clavessin à Cylindre; derrière cet instrument paroît un Automate jouant de la flûte, son piédestal ouvert laisse entrevoir le mécanisme qui le conduit [...].⁵⁸

Engramelle proceeds to lament the inevitable loss of the performance style of the great composers of the past, and to promote the use of cylinders for this purpose:

56. Diderot, *Mémoires*, 195–6.

57. *Dictionnaire de la conversation et de la lecture* (Paris: 1834), tome XIV, 272.

58. Pere Engramelle, *La Tonotechnie ou l’art de noter les cylindres, et tout qui est susceptible de notage dans les instrumens de concerts mécaniques, ouvrage nouveau* (Paris: 1775), from a page without pagination.

La Musique sur-tout, faite pour élever l'ame par les sentimens harmonieux qu'elle inspire, a fait des pertes qu'on ne peut réparer. Nous jouirions encore à présent de l'exécution des Lulli, des Marchand & de tous les grands hommes, qui ont ravi d'admiration leurs Contemporains, s'ils avoient sçu le notage: leurs meilleurs morceaux, transmis par eux-mêmes à la postérité sur quelques cylindres inaltérables, auroient été conservés dans ce genre d'expression dont nous n'avons plus d'idée que par l'histoire.⁵⁹

Like Diderot, Engramelle proposes replacing mediocre organists with mechanical organs. He also seems to indicate the possibility of notating large-scale rubato onto the cylinders. He describes the work of a colleague named Marchal as follows:

Marchal prenoit une licence pour les cadences à la fin de la premiere partie des airs [...] Cette licence à la vérité fausse la mesure; mais il falloit contenter ceux qui ne savent apprécier que les cadences dans les serinettes: d'ailleurs la nature du repos que paroît exiger la fin de chaque partie d'un air, faisoit qu'on ne s'en appercevoit pas.⁶⁰

In summing up this section it is important to determine whether or not Diderot is being serious when he says that 'there are perhaps no four bars of an air that have exactly the same duration'. After all, the tone of the article is often light and satirical; perhaps the entire piece is a parody?

I would argue that this is not the case. There is much technical information in the *Mémoires* on how to program cylinders that is clearly not meant as a joke. To advocate replacing the mechanical *chronomètre* with another machine, the barrel-organ, as Diderot does, only seems paradoxical until one realizes that the performer's (or the composer's) rubati could be programmed onto the cylinder itself. In light of the evidence that such cylinders existed in the period (from the hands of Vaucanson and Marchal), Diderot's remarks on the extreme freedom of airs can be taken as sincere. More importantly, we shall see that Diderot's contemporaries took his remarks at face value.

3.3b Rousseau's *Encyclopédie* entry for 'Chronomètre' (1753):

Jean-Jacques Rousseau relied heavily on Diderot's *Mémoires* in his entry for 'chronomètre' in the *Encyclopédie*.⁶¹ In doing so, he would put his own spin on Diderot's ideas concerning rhythmical freedom in musical performance.

Rousseau mentions a specific type of clockwork metronome, called the *métromètre*, which had been invented by d'Onzembray in the 1730s:

Il y a une douzaine d'années qu'on vit reparoître le projet d'un instrument semblable, sous le nom de *métromètre*, qui battoit la mesure tout seul; mais tout cela n'a pas réussi. Plusieurs prétendent cependant qu'il seroit fort à souhaiter qu'on eût un tel instrument pour déterminer le tems de chaque mesure dans une piece de Musique. On conserveroit par ce moyen plus facilement le vrai mouvement des airs, sans lequel ils perdent toujours de leur prix, & qu'on ne peut connoître apres la mort des auteurs que par une espece de tradition fort sujette à s'effacer. On se plaint déjà que nous avons oublié le mouvement d'un grand nombre d'airs de Lulli. Si l'on eût pris la précaution dont je parle, & à laquelle on ne voit pas d'inconvéniens, on entendroit aujourd'hui ces mêmes airs tels que l'auteur les faisoit exécuter.⁶²

Like Diderot before him, Rousseau indicates that the original tempi of Lully's airs may have been lost forever, and that it is generally lamented ('on se plaint') that a *chronomètre* had not been used to preserve them for all time.⁶³ It is at this point that Rousseau directly cites Diderot's *Mémoires*:

A cela, les connoisseurs en Musique ne demeurent pas sans réponse, Ils objecteront, dit M. Diderot (*Mémoires sur différens sujets de Math.*) qu'il n'y a peut-être pas dans un air quatre mesures qui soient exactement de la même

59. Engramelle, *La Tonotechnie*, ij.

60. Engramelle, *La Tonotechnie*, 220.

61. To be found in volume III, published in October of 1753, one month before the infamous *Lettre sur la musique française* and a year after the success of his *Le Devin du village* at Fontainebleau.

62. See: Diderot and d'Alembert, ed., *Encyclopédie*, 4: 402. <http://encyclopedia.uchicago.edu/>. Last accessed 22-5-2010.

63. In fact, d'Ozembray had already listed a number of metronome markings for airs by Lully in 1732. Rebecca Harris-Warrick has argued that these markings may go back to a list that Loulié had put together in the late 17th century. See: Rebecca Harris-Warrick, 'Interpreting pendulum markings for French Baroque dances', *Historical Performance*, 6/1 (1993), 9-22.

durée, deux choses contribuant nécessairement à ralentir les unes & à précipiter les autres, le goût & l'harmonie dans les pieces à plusieurs parties, le goût & le pressentiment de l'harmonie dans les solo. Un musicien qui sait son art, n'a pas joué quatre mesures d'un air, qu'il en saisit le caractere & qu'il s'y abandonne. Il n'y a que le plaisir de l'harmonie qui le suspend; il veut ici que les accords soient frappés; là qu'ils soient dérobés, c'est-à-dire qu'il chante ou joue plus ou moins lentement d'une mesure à une autre, & même d'un tems & d'un quart de tems à celui qui le suit.⁶⁴

Having cited a paragraph of Diderot's text word-for-word, Rousseau now uses it to highlight the differences between French and Italian music. This comparison is not written in the vituperative tone of the *Lettre sur la musique française*, but the argument put forward is much the same as a major point of the *Lettre*; namely, that Italian music is performed more in time than the French:

A la vérité cette objection [to the *chronomètre* in general, or perhaps the clockwork *métromètre* specifically] qui est d'une grande force pour la Musique Française, n'en auroit aucune pour la Musique Italienne, soumise irrémédiablement à la plus exacte mesure: rien même ne montre mieux l'opposition parfaite de ces deux sortes de Musiques; car si la Musique Italienne tire son énergie de cet asservissement à la rigueur de la mesure, la Française met toute la sienne à maîtriser à son gré cette même mesure, à la presser & à la ralentir selon que l'exige le goût du chant, ou le degré de flexibilité des organes du chanteur.⁶⁵

Here ornamentation is once again mentioned as a catalyst to changes in the beat of French music, following the citation of Diderot's harmony-based rubato in the previous paragraph. Rousseau's statement that Italian music gains its energy from the beat, while the French expends energy in subduing it, is important: it shows that, before the bitterness unleashed by the *Lettre*, Rousseau had referred to French rhythmical freedom without mocking it.

He now turns back to Diderot's *Mémoires*, entering into the philosophical argument of the man-machine:

Mais quand on admettroit l'utilité d'un chronometre, il faut toujours, continue M. Diderot, commencer par rejeter tous ceux qu'on a proposés jusqu'à présent, parce qu'on y a fait du Musicien & du chronometre deux machines distinctes, dont l'une ne peut jamais assujettir l'autre. Cela n'a presque pas besoin d'être démontré: il n'est pas possible que le musicien ait pendant toute sa piece l'oeil au mouvement ou l'oreille au bruit du pendule; & s'il s'oublie un moment, adieu le frein qu'on a prétendu lui donner.⁶⁶

Rousseau at this point, however, does not go on to propose the use of a barrel-organ, as Diderot had done: instead he proposes that musicians, like other humans, are too stubborn and self-flattering to admit the need for any such device:

J'ajouterais que quelque instrument qu'on pût trouver pour regler la durée de la mesure, il seroit impossible, quand même l'exécution en seroit de la dernière facilité, qu'il fût admis dans la pratique, Les Musiciens, gens confians, & faisant comme bien d'autres, de leur propre goût la regle du bon, ne l'adopteroient jamais; ils laisseroient le chronometre, & ne s'en rapporteroient qu'à eux-mêmes du vrai caractere & du vrai mouvement des airs [...].⁶⁷

The final flourish of this *Encyclopédie* entry is taken directly from Diderot's *Mémoires*, but Rousseau adds a stinger of his own:

[...] ainsi le seul bon chronometre que l'on puisse avoir, c'est un habile musicien, qui ait du goût, qui ait bien lû la Musique qu'il doit faire exécuter, & qui sache en battre la mesure. Machine pour machine, il vaut mieux s'en tenir à celle-ci.⁶⁸

3.3c Rousseau's *Dictionnaire de musique* entry 'Chronomètre' (1768)

Fifteen years after the appearance of the entry in the *Encyclopédie*, Rousseau republished his entry for 'chronomètre' almost word for word in his *Dictionnaire de musique*. The changes made to the text are mostly cosmetic. There are, however, three points worth noting here:

1. To the sentence from the *Encyclopédie* lamenting Lully's tempi being lost, Rousseau has now added a tell-

64. Diderot and d'Alembert, ed. *Encyclopédie*, vol. III, 402.

65. Diderot and d'Alembert, ed. *Encyclopédie*, vol. III, 402.

66. Diderot and d'Alembert, ed. *Encyclopédie*, vol. III, 402.

67. Diderot and d'Alembert, ed. *Encyclopédie*, vol. III, 402.

68. Diderot and d'Alembert, ed. *Encyclopédie*, vol. III, 402.

tale phrase, having deleted the name of the composer altogether (bold typeface is editorial):

On se plaint déjà que nous avons oublié le Mouvement d'un grand nombre d'Airs, et il est à croire **qu'on les a ralentis tous**.⁶⁹

This textual change is interesting in relation to the many complaints, during the *Querelle des Bouffons* and after, about the languishing nature of French opera, which seemed to drag along when compared to the more vigorous Italian repertoire. Dubos already said something similar in 1719 about the performance of Lully in his day:

Ces personnes alleguent comme une preuve de ce qu'elles disent que la representation des opera de Lulli dure aujourd'hui plus long-temps que lorsqu'il les faisoit executer lui-même, quoi qu'à present elle dut durer moins de temps, parce qu'on n'y repete plus bien des airs de violon que Lulli faisoit jouer deux fois. Cela vient selon ces personnes, car je ne suis garant de rien, de ce qu'on n'observe plus le rithme de Lulli que les Acteurs alterent, ou par insuffisance ou par presumption.⁷⁰

2. In citing Diderot's claims concerning freedom of tempo in French music, Rousseau makes an emendation and then grievously misquotes his source. Here is how the sentence stands in the *Encyclopédie*:

A cela, les connoisseurs en Musique ne demeurent pas sans réponse, Ils objecteront, dit M. Diderot (*Mémoires sur différens sujets de Math.*) qu'il n'y a peut-être pas dans un air quatre mesures qui soient exactement de la même durée [...].⁷¹

And here is the version of 1768 (bold typeface is editorial):

A cela les connoisseurs en Musique ne demeurent pas sans réponse, Ils objecteront, dit M. Diderot, (*Mémoires sur différens sujets de Math.*) **contre tout Chronomètre en général**, qu'il n'y a peut-être pas dans un Air **deux** Mesures qui soient exactement de la même durée [...].⁷²

Rousseau apparently decided to clear up the question of whether the *métromètre* was particularly unsuited to regulating French music by referring to 'all chronometers in general'. He then goes on to say that no two bars of a French air have the same duration. Was this a mistake, or a willful misrepresentation? It is hard to imagine that Rousseau could have made such a gross error, while tidying up the details of his entry; and yet, it seems equally impossible that he would purposely have misquoted both Diderot's *Mémoires* and his own entry in the *Encyclopédie*. At any rate, Rousseau's new and more radical statement would be taken at face value by later commentators on the topic.

3. In relating freedom of tempo to French music in particular Rousseau adds a phrase in order to make clear that in doing so he is not attacking the style out of hand (bold typeface is editorial):

A la vérité, cette objection qui est d'une grande force pour la Musique Française, n'en auroit aucune pour l'Italienne, soumise irrémisiblement à la plus exacte Mesure: rien même ne montre mieux l'opposition parfaite de ces deux Musiques; **puisque ce qui est beauté dans l'une, seroit dans l'autre le plus grand défaut**.⁷³

This is important, because it shows Rousseau in agreement with his arch-enemy Rameau on this key point: as we shall see later in this chapter, during the course of their vociferous quarrel they agreed that French music was free, and that this freedom was one of its main beauties. Indeed, Rousseau had already made this point in his *Lettre sur la musique française*: French music is at its best when performed freely, but even at its best it is but a poor and inferior product. His meaning is clear, though the heavy sauce of sarcasm which he had ladled over his masterpiece of polemic has made it difficult for some scholars and performers to take his statement *au sérieux*:

C'est ainsi que les acteurs contracteroient tellement l'habitude de s'asservir la mesure, qu'on les entendroit même l'altérer à dessein dans les morceaux où le Compositeur seroit venu à bout de la rendre sensible. Marquer la mesure seroit une faute contre la composition, & la suivre en seroit une contre le goût du chant: les défauts passeroient pour des beautés, & les beautés pour des défauts; les vices seroient établis en règles; & pour faire de la Musique au

69. Rousseau, *Dictionnaire*, 153.

70. See: Jean-Baptiste Dubos, *Reflexions critiques sur la poesi et sur la peinture*, nouvelle édition revuë, corrigée, & considerablement augmentée (Paris, 1733), troisième partie, 318. This remark appears already in the 1719 edition.

71. Diderot and d'Alembert, ed. *Encyclopédie*, vol. III, 402.

72. Rousseau, *Dictionnaire*, 153.

73. Rousseau, *Dictionnaire*, 154.

goût de la Nation, il ne faudroit que s'attacher avec soin à ce qui déplaît à tous les autres.⁷⁴

3.3d Laborde, *Essai sur la musique ancienne et moderne* (1780)

Jean-Benjamin de Laborde, in his *Essai sur la musique ancienne et moderne*, begins his entry 'Diderot' as follows:

Diderot, Philosophe connu par sa belle entreprise de l'Encyclopédie, par son courage à l'exécuter, & sa constance à l'achever, célèbre encore par plusieurs autres ouvrages & par son amour pour les arts, qu'il a tous étudiés, n'a pas dédaigné d'écrire sur la théorie de la musique.

Dans ses *Mémoires sur différens sujets de Mathématiques*, il dit que les connaisseurs en musique objecteront contre tout chronometre en général, qu'il n'y a peut-être pas dans un air deux mesures qui soient exactement de la même durée [...].⁷⁵

It is clear that Laborde has taken his information from Rousseau's *Dictionnaire* rather than from either the *Mémoires* or the *Encyclopédie*, for he perpetuates Rousseau's mistaken citation of 'deux mesures' rather than Diderot's original 'quatre mesures'. Laborde's response to this inaccurate suggestion of extreme rhythmical freedom is therefore one based on false (or falsified) information. He notes that Rousseau generally agreed with Diderot, and then repeats the former's assertions about French music being out of time while the Italian is subjected to the strictest possible tempo. Laborde's own response to this is as follows:

Nous lui répondons que la Musique Française exige, autant que la Musique Italienne, la mesure la plus exacte dans les morceaux de mouvement, parce qu'il n'y a pas de musique sans mesure, & que tout ce qui n'est pas mesuré, n'est que du plain-chant. Voilà ce qui fait dire à beaucoup de personnes qui ne se laissent point entraîner par l'enthousiasme de la multitude, que beaucoup de morceaux de nos opéra modernes ne sont point *de la musique*, parcequ'il faut que l'orchestre suive les caprices de l'acteur, & qu'ils n'ont aucune mesure déterminée.⁷⁶

Laborde reacts to the extreme freedom of tempo inherent in the idea that no two bars have the exact same duration by remarking that music which is not at all measured becomes plainchant. He admits that there are those who claim that many pieces in modern French opera are so free that they, by this standard, cannot be called music. Specific blame is placed on the caprices of the 'actors', so we can see that it was believed that the opera singers on stage were determining the flow of the music.

Laborde seems to be in agreement with Rousseau's analysis so far—and he even affirms that 'les Italiens sentent mieux les charmes de la mesure que les Français & que les Allemands'⁷⁷—but he subsequently takes exception both to Rousseau's and Diderot's reasoning about the usefulness of the *chronomètre*:

M. Diderot rejette tous les chronometres proposés jusqu'alors, parce qu'on y fait du *Musicien* & du *Chronometre* deux machines distinctes, dont l'une ne peut jamais bien assujettir l'autre. Il a sans doute raison de croire qu'il n'est point de Musiciens qui pussent conserver l'égalité pendant tout un morceau, & qui, à la fin de ce morceau, se trouvaient avoir battu la même quantité de mesures que le chronomètre; mais aussi cet instrument ne doit pas servir à marquer la mesure de tout le morceau, & ne doit que déterminer le mouvement sur lequel le Musicien doit commencer à la battre; voilà tout ce qu'on peut lui demander; c'est ce que Rousseau n'a jamais voulu comprendre, quoique M. Diderot lui ait prouvé que le Musicien ne pouvant avoir l'œil sur le pendule pendant toute la piece qu'il exécute, doit s'entraîner malgré lui quelquefois, & par conséquent ne jamais se rencontrer exactement avec quelque chronometre que l'on pût inventer. L'objection de Rousseau ne vaut rien, puisque le seul avantage qu'on doive desirer dans le chronometre, c'est d'indiquer au Musicien le mouvement exact dans lequel le Compositeur veut qu'on exécute, & que son objection ne regarde que la fin du morceau; ce qui ne vaut rien à la chose.⁷⁸

Laborde asserts that Rousseau's re-hashing of Diderot's argument is nonsense, and supplies a logical, musical response to the tyranny of the *chronomètre*: the device should be used, not to regulate the tempo of the entire piece, but simply to indicate 'le mouvement sur lequel le Musicien doit commencer à la battre'. This simple argument was repeated in an article in the *Mercure de France* dated June 12, 1784:

Celui qui proposeroit de faire suivre pendant toute la durée d'un morceau de Musique un mouvement d'une préci-

74. Rousseau, *Lettre*, 12.

75. Jean-Benjamin de Laborde, *Essai sur la musique ancienne et moderne* (Paris: 1780), tome troisième, 615.

76. Laborde, *Essai*, tome troisième, 615.

77. Laborde, *Essai*, tome troisième, 616.

78. Laborde, *Essai*, tome troisième, 616.

sion aussi rigoureuse, prouveroit qu'il est entièrement privé du sentiment de cet Art. Il y a tels traits où l'expression du chant & des paroles exige un ralentissement ou une accélération insensible auxquels se prête un Conducteur habile, & que ne permettroit pas un automate; mais il importe de bien fixer d'abord ce mouvement.⁷⁹

And even Meude-Monpas, in his *Dictionnaire de musique* (1787), much of which he copied directly from Rousseau's *Dictionnaire*, takes this same line of reasoning in defining the *chronomètre*:

Instrument qui calcule le degré de mouvement que doit avoir un morceau de musique. Cet instrument ne peut être utile que pour décider le mouvement d'un morceau dont l'auteur est absent, et qu'il aura cependant désigné par un signe connu et de convention; mais il ne peut pas servir à marquer la mesure pendant la durée du morceau; car non-seulement le battement uniforme de cet instrument ne pourroit pas se modifier dans les *doux* et dans les *forts*; mais encore il ôteroit aux exécutants toute l'élégance dont ils pourroient être susceptibles, et à force d'être conduits et réglés par des machines, les Musiciens le deviendroient eux-mêmes.⁸⁰

Yet, even though it seems that by the late 18th-century it was generally agreed that the only proper use of a *chronomètre* should be to fix the tempo at which a piece ought to be started, leaving any adjustments in this basic speed during the rest of the performance up to the musician, one inventor, named Duclos, tried to make his own invention of a metronomic device adjustable in mid-performance:

En 1787, un nommé Duclos, horloger au Palais-Royal, en fit voir un auquel il donnait le nom de rhythmomètre. A l'égalité la plus parfaite dans les oscillations, cet instrument joignait le mérite particulier de pouvoir accélérer ou retarder à volonté ces oscillations, de sorte que, par un mécanisme très simple, le maître ou conducteur pouvait à son gré presser ou ralentir la mesure, sans éprouver, dans ces divers changements, le plus léger retard.⁸¹

This indicates that Duclos still felt it would be desirable to have a metronomic device keeping the time throughout an entire performance, even of pieces in which there were changes of tempo. However, the further pursuit of this curiosity would take us too far away from our subject here.

As to Laborde's *Essai*, it was published in 1780, a year after the final performance of *Thésée* by Lully at the *Académie royale de musique*. Indeed, the repertoire that had caused such a stir during the *Querelle des Bouffons* had already been abandoned before this final revival of *Thésée* in favor of fresher works by composers like Piccini and Gluck. Laborde's entry, therefore, has been mentioned but not given undue retrospective weight here. The source to be examined in the following section, however, even though it is even later in date, has been thought more significant because it looks back to Rousseau's *Dictionnaire* with a sharper critical eye.

3.3e Framery's *Encyclopédie méthodique* entry for 'Chronomètre' [1791]

In 1791 the first of two volumes dedicated to music was published as part of the *Encyclopédie méthodique*. Several editors had been involved in the project but, in the end, it was Nicolas Etienne Framery who was responsible for its completion. Framery was a well-known writer on music, a composer of vocal stage works of moderate success and a reviewer, for the *Mercure de France*, of opera performances in Paris. His taste in composers ran to the Italians: Sacchini was a favorite. The late publishing date of the volumes in question elicits caution: the viewpoint which Framery reflects is that of a generation for whom Lully's music was no longer standard repertoire. Indeed, the old French school was no longer even considered pertinent to the then current operatic discourse. However, I will argue that it is Framery's distance, both temporal and cultural, from the epicenter of the discussions surrounding rubato and the *tragédie en musique* that makes his commentary so interesting, because he specifically addresses Rousseau's anti-Opéra polemic with detachment and impartiality.

The volumes on music in the *Encyclopédie méthodique* are based on a curious plan, that Framery himself defends in his *Préliminaire*:

La Dictionnaire de musique de J. J. Rousseau est l'ouvrage qui nous a servi de base. Nous n'avons pas cru devoir nous permettre d'y rien changer, par respect pour la mémoire d'un homme que sa célébrité rend en quelque sorte sacrée. Nous avons donc laissé subsister ses erreurs, ses omissions, &c., mais en les rectifiant. Quelques personnes

79. *Mercure de France*, June 12, 1784, 87.

80. J. J. O. de Meude-Monpas, *Dictionnaire de musique* (Paris: 1787), 32.

81. *Biographie universelle, ancienne et moderne* (Paris: L. G. Michaud, 1816), tome dix-septième, 522.

nous avoient conseillé de corriger nous-mêmes ses articles, par-tout où nous y appercevrions des fautes. C'étoit à leur avis une plus grande marque de respect de faire disparaître les défauts de son dictionnaire en le publiant de nouveau, que de les conserver pour les combattre & les faire ainsi mieux appercevoir du lecteur.

Ce raisonnement n'est que spécieux. Nous eût-on permis de rien changer au texte de Rousseau consacré par tant d'éditions, & qui se trouve dans toutes les bibliothèques? [...] En le donnant, au contraire, tel qu'il est, & en y opposant notre opinion particulière, nous prenons le publique pour juge; c'est à lui de prononcer.⁸²

It is useful for us today, as our opinion of Rousseau as a musician has fallen so very low, to be reminded of the high esteem in which he was still held at the end of the 18th century. Fortunately for us, Framery's plan of reprinting Rousseau's original articles and following them with complimentary corrective essays is one that makes possible a comparative analysis of certain changes of taste and opinion which took place between the publication of Rousseau's *Dictionnaire* and the *Encyclopédie Méthodique*. Indeed, the entry 'chronomètre' calls forth from Framery a very long and thought-provoking response, which will be given great prominence here, as it both crowns and throws new light on the 18th-century discussion of French music and rhythmical liberties.

Framery begins his discussion of Rousseau's 'chronomètre' entry by expressing his exasperation with certain aspects of Rousseau's style; he gives a social context for the revered author's misbehavior:

On est fâché de rencontrer des plaisanteries de ce genre dans un ouvrage comme le Dictionnaire de Musique. Rousseau en vouloit aux musiciens: il avoit passé parmi eux quelque tems de sa vie, & avoit eu souvent l'occasion de choquer leurs préjugés. Il faut convenir que, sur-tout de son tems, il y avoit dans cette classe beaucoup d'individus qui, fort peu instruits sur tout ce qui ne tient pas à leur art, étoient sans cesse alarmés par leur propre ignorance. Toujours prêts à croire qu'on avoit voulu les offenser, ils s'irritoient aisément, n'entendoient ni raison ni raillerie, & Rousseau les eut tous pour ennemis. La haine devient réciproque; aussi Rousseau ne manquoit-il guère l'occasion d'afficher tout le mépris qu'il avoit pour eux. On en trouve beaucoup de traces dans son Dictionnaire, quoiqu'écrit dans un tems où l'admiration publique avoit dû le venger de ces petits débats, & où les musiciens eux-mêmes, entraînés par l'estime générale, ne se souvenoient plus qu'ils l'avoient haï.

Le sarcasme que nous relevons ici est d'autant plus reprochable qu'il est parfaitement injuste. Assurément *un habile musicien, qui a du goût, qui sait BIEN lire la musique qu'il doit faire exécuter*, & qui sait en battre *la mesure*, est loin d'être une machine. Mais ce musicien, quelque habile qu'on le suppose, ne suaroit en tout point tenir lieu d'un *chronomètre*, comme nous le ferons voir ci-après.⁸³

Here, at a distance of more than 50 years from Diderot's original reference in the *Mémoires*, the Enlightenment man-machine witticism no longer makes sense in the frame of reference of a Revolutionary, pre-Romantic *Zeitgeist*. Framery takes it at face value, ignorant of the original context: being Diderot's witty proposal that a barrel-organ unite the double functions of *musicien-chronomètre* and thus, if its cylinder were properly programmed, beat time both strictly and freely, according to the passions of the music.

Framery, after mentioning more modern attempts to invent a metronome both convenient and accurate, goes on to list Rousseau's objections to all such devices, and of course immediately runs into the 'deux mesures' which had already so deeply disturbed Laborde:

Il n'est pas vrai, comme l'avançoit Diderot, *qu'il n'y ait peut-être pas dans un air deux mesures qui soient exactement de la même durée*; toute musique, même notre ancienne musique françoise, a toujours dû être & étoit en effet soumise à la mesure. Le récitatif seul se précipitoit ou se ralentissoit selon le goût du chanteur; il est vrai que nos opéras, & même les morceaux de concert, n'étoient presque qu'un récitatif perpétuel plus ou moins chargé d'accompagnemens. Mais ce qu'on appelloit l'ariette, mais les airs de mouvement, les airs de danse, les chœurs, les symphonies étoient assujettis à une mesure aussi exacte que le permettoit l'habileté des exécutans.⁸⁴

Framery here links the extreme rhythmical freedom implicit in the idea that no two bars of an air would have the same length to recitative, going on to say that not only French opera, but also what he calls 'les morceaux de concert' (and, sadly, this he does not further elucidate), were a 'récitatif perpétuel', and thus were performed freely. On the other hand, he contends that *ariettes*, dances, choruses and symphonies were all played in time. Having slapped Diderot for his supposed ignorance, Framery now moves on to give Rousseau himself a sharp blow:

82. Nicolas Etienne Framery and Pierre-Louis Ginguené, ed., *Encyclopédie méthodique*, 'Musique' (Paris: 1791), tome premier, vij.

83. Framery and Ginguené, ed., *Encyclopédie méthodique*, 'Musique', tome premier, 280.

84. Framery and Ginguené, ed., *Encyclopédie méthodique*, 'Musique', tome premier, 280-1.

Rousseau a donc tort de dire que *cette objection soit d'une grande force pour la musique française*, & de lui opposer à cet égard la musique italienne. Ni dans l'un ni dans l'autre le récitatif n'a jamais suivi aucune mesure; quand on lui en impose une, il change de caractère; il prend le nom de cavatine, ou s'il ne s'agit que d'une phrase, elle est marquée par le mot mesurée. Le reproche qu'il pouvoit faire à la musique française de son tems, c'est que cet abandon de la mesure étoit presque le seul caractère qui fit distinguer le récitatif des airs.⁸⁵

For Framery, this confusion arises from the imprecision of Diderot's terminology:

Il n'a pas plus de raison lorsqu'il dit que *la musique italienne est soumise irrémisiblement à la plus exacte mesure*, & qu'elle tire son énergie de cet asservissement. Ces deux erreurs viennent du peu de justesse des termes employés par Diderot pour établir sa proposition. Dans les arts comme dans tout, la première chose est de s'entendre. Ici l'un & l'autre paroissent avoir confondu la mesure avec le mouvement.⁸⁶

Indeed, such imprecision among musicians seems to have been irritating to Framery, for he had already noted in his *Préliminaire*:

Aucune science n'a une nomenclature aussi vicieuse que celle de la musique. Le défaut du précision & de clarté qu'on y rencontre à tout moment, en rend souvent les principes difficiles à concevoir & sur-tout à retenir.⁸⁷

This need for clarity leads Framery closely to dissect the subject of metre (*mesure*) versus tempo (*mouvement*) in his entry on the 'chronomètre':

Manquer à la mesure, c'est donner à l'un des tems qui la composent plus ou moins de valeur qu'il n'en doit avoir, de manière que telle mesure ait une durée *sensiblement* plus longue ou plus courte que la suivante. Altérer le mouvement, c'est, en donnant à chacun des tems une valeur respectivement égale, leur en donner cependant ou un peu plus ou un peu moins que dans la mesure précédente, de façon qu'après un certain nombre, le mouvement se trouve nécessairement pressé ou ralenti. On conçoit que cette altération peut être plus ou moins sensible, suivant celle que chaque mesure aura éprouvée partiellement.⁸⁸

Framery describes quite clearly here, using the term *altérer le mouvement*, what we would now call *accelerando* and *ritardando*. He is careful not to use the term *altérer la mesure* but rather *altérer le mouvement*, in order to make clear a difference between unequal beats and changes in the tempo itself. Having established this as a basis for further discussion, he continues:

D'après ces définitions, on peut avancer qu'il n'a jamais été permis dans aucune musique, italienne ni française, de manquer à la mesure. L'oreille en seroit trop choquée: & la preuve que la musique française n'a pas eu ce privilège plus que les autres, c'est que dans tous les orchestres réglés, il y avoit un *batteur de mesure*, dont l'emploi étoit de la faire observer.

Il n'en est pas de même du mouvement: le récitatif n'en est pas susceptible. Sa vitesse varie suivant le degré d'expression que le chanteur veut donner aux paroles. Or, comme nous avons dit que nos opéras étoient presque entièrement composés de récitatifs, il en résulteroit que dans presque toute la durée de l'opéra le mouvement étoit arbitraire, au lieu que les opéras italiens contenant beaucoup plus de morceaux mesurés, les chanteurs y étoient beaucoup plus asservis au mouvement. Ainsi ce que dit Rousseau dans le parallèle des deux musiques se réduit à ceci, que l'italienne employoit plus souvent les morceaux mesurés que la française.⁸⁹

If Framery's article had ended here we would be left in no doubt: both Diderot's and Rousseau's assertions concerning French music were mistakes born of sloppy thought and sloppy terminology. However, Framery now waxes poetic, his imagination catches fire, and, having dealt with the dry definitions, he suddenly paints a very different picture of 18th-century music-making:

Mais nous avons avancé qu'il n'étoit pas vrai que *la musique italienne fût irrémisiblement soumise à la plus exacte mesure*, ou, pour parler plus juste, qu'elle conservât toujours le mouvement avec rigueur. Nous en appelons à l'expérience. Que le plus habile exécutant, chanteur ou instrumentiste, de quelque nation qu'il soit, commence un morceau sur un mouvement réglé au *chronomètre*, qu'il le continue sans ce secours, & que le *chronomètre* soit sous les yeux du seul observateur, il nous paroît impossible que le mouvement n'ait pas été altéré dans le cours du morceau. La nature même y oblige. On sait que le battement du pouls, que la marche de l'homme sont les modèles de la régularité de la mesure. Dans un état de calme parfait le pouls bat également; l'homme qui marche

85. Framery and Ginguéné, ed., *Encyclopédie méthodique*, 'Musique', tome premier, 281.

86. Framery and Ginguéné, ed., *Encyclopédie méthodique*, 'Musique', tome premier, 281.

87. Framery and Ginguéné, ed., *Encyclopédie méthodique*, 'Musique', tome premier, viii.

88. Framery and Ginguéné, ed., *Encyclopédie méthodique*, 'Musique', tome premier, 281.

89. Framery and Ginguéné, ed., *Encyclopédie méthodique*, 'Musique', tome premier, 281.

seul & sans rencontrer d'obstacle ne forme que des pas égaux & régulièrement cadencés. Mais que l'un & l'autre s'animent, que la moindre passion agite & donne à leur sang plus d'activité, le pouls de l'un commence à battre plus vite & l'autre précipite ses pas. Il en arrivent autant à celui qui exécute un morceau de musique; la joie d'avoir bien rendu un passage, la crainte d'en manquer un autre, l'amour même de son art & le charme du morceau qu'il fait entendre, en échauffant son ame, doivent accélérer son exécution; au contraire, un passage intéressant & tendre, dans lequel l'artiste se complaît & dont son ame partage la douce langueur, l'obligera, sans qu'il s'en aperçoive, de retarder le mouvement. Malheur à l'être insensible dont la voix toujours calme ne s'écarteroit jamais des oscillations du balancier! il chanteroit sans émotion & n'en exciteroit aucune; son ennuyeuse perfection ne répandroit que des pavots autour de lui.⁹⁰

Despite its enraptured tone, this passage is cleverly built up around two well-established, human models of tempo: man's pulse and gait. Although the use of the pulse to regulate tempi had been proposed most famously by Quantz in his *Versuch* (and the passage on heartbeat had appeared in a French translation in 1752 under the title *Essai d'une methode pour apprendre à jouer de la flute traversiere avec plusieurs remarques pour servir au bon gout dans la musique*), there were other writers to whom Framery could refer here, for instance François-Nicolas Marquet, whose *Nouvelle Méthode facile et curieuse pour connaître le pouls par les notes de la musique* had been published in 1747.

Walking 5/4ths of a league in an hour had been proposed as a means to calculate tempi by St Lambert in his *Les Principes du clavecin* in 1702, and was later picked up by Boyer in 1767:

On a fixé à la blanche la durée d'a-peu-près une seconde de tems, c'est l'usage qui transmet d'un musicien à l'autre. D'un autre côté, & cela revient au même, on a évalué la noire à la durée du pas d'un homme, de taille ordinaire, qui ferroit 5 quarts de lieue en une heure de tems.⁹¹

Framery cleverly shows how such guides to tempo were highly susceptible to being influenced by the human passions, and concludes that it is natural, indeed, a very dictate of nature ('La nature même y oblige's), that such influence should be felt. By stressing the instability of the human body and its actions when influenced by emotion he carefully prepares his next argument. For Framery goes on to state that it is not changes of tempo for their own sake, but rather the underlying passions, which the listener must experience during performance:

Mais remarquez que cette altération nécessaire ne doit pas être sensible. Comme elle est née d'un sentiment que le goût de l'exécutant a dû communiquer à ses auditeurs, il faut que leur ame ait été entraînée pas les mêmes mouvements & qu'elle n'en ait pas aperçu l'inégalité; il faut aussi qu'elle soit la même pour tout l'orchestre, sans quoi elle n'est plus l'effet de la sensibilité, de l'enthousiasme; elle ne prouve que l'ignorance, le défaut d'oreille; & tout le charme de l'exécution est détruit.⁹²

It is important carefully to examine this passage, and to take note here that Framery's statement fits perfectly with the older tradition of the affects that we have examined in Chapter 2 and which we will encounter in the next section of this chapter in the writings of Rameau and Lallemand: the performer, when warmed or cooled by the act of performance must unavoidably be led to a proportional change of the beat ('cette altération nécessaire'). The contagious nature of the affects will have swept the audience along with the performer into the same affective state:

Comme elle est née d'un sentiment que le goût de l'exécutant a dû communiquer à ses auditeurs, il faut que leur ame ait été entraînée pas les mêmes mouvements [...].⁹³

This will ensure that the change of tempo is perceived only as a change of expression. The danger is, of course, that an orchestra will not be together in making such *rubati*, or, perhaps, will make them mechanically, without feeling; that would spoil the effect entirely ('tout le charme de l'exécution est détruit').

Framery now goes on to address the man-machine argument proposed by Diderot. While admitting that the *philosophe* was essentially correct in asserting that the player's passion must take charge of the tempo after the opening bars, Framery repeats the later arguments about the proper use of the *chronomètre*:

On trouvera peut-être que ces assertions rendent à l'objection de Diderot toute sa force. Il semble que ce soit

90. Framery and Ginguené, ed., *Encyclopédie méthodique*, 'Musique', tome premier, 281.

91. Quoted in Michling, *Das Tempo*, 51.

92. Framery and Ginguené, ed., *Encyclopédie méthodique*, 'Musique', tome premier, 281.

93. Framery and Ginguené, ed., *Encyclopédie méthodique*, 'Musique', tome premier, 281.

convenir avec lui *qu'il n'y a pas dans un air deux mesures qui soient exactement de la même durée*, ou qu'au moins l'expression oblige quelquefois à presser ou retarder le mouvement, & alors le *chronomètre* n'est plus d'aucune utilité. En effet, quoique la proposition de Diderot soit un peu exagérée, son objection seroit suffisante, si l'on proposoit le chronomètre pour régler exactement tout le cours du morceau. Mais il s'agit seulement de connoître le mouvement véritable, celui qu'a conçu l'auteur; de le bien déterminer avant de commencer la pièce, & de le retrouver si, pendant l'exécution, quelque circonstance étrangère en a trop éloigné le sentiment.⁹⁴

Framery's remarks are, of course, retrospective and must therefore be handled with care: he looks back on Rousseau's *Dictionnaire* from the vantage point of an avowedly different cultural situation, and corrects 'mistakes' without always completely knowing the original context in which the remarks were made. However, his commentary remains perceptive and engaging, capping off, as it does, a discourse on metronomic devices, tempo and rubato which ran from the *ancien régime* to the eve of the *Directoire*.

3.4 The *Querelle des Bouffons*

This third and final section based on primary source materials will examine remarks concerning freedom of tempo in French music taken from pamphlets published during the *Querelle des Bouffons*.

In the early 1750s all Paris seemed to be disputing passionately the merits of the *tragédie en musique*. Although the operas of Lully still had a hold on the hearts of French audiences, more up-to-date spirits had long since transferred their support to the Italian style of composers like Leo and Pergolesi. Still others had professed their allegiance to Rameau; long before the *Querelle des Bouffons* there had been an aesthetic conflict between the conservative *Lullistes* and the more progressive *Ramistes*. These two groups joined forces, however, when the *tragédie en musique* itself came under fire. The animosities between the newly-united patriotic partisans of the *Musique Nationale* (read *ancien régime*) and the more 'enlightened' lovers of Italian opera (*philosophes*) led eventually to what is now known as the *Querelle des Bouffons*.⁹⁵

The affair was set in motion in 1752 by performances given at the *Académie royale de musique*, by an Italian opera troop informally referred to as 'Les Bouffons', of a number of Italian *intermezzi*, including Pergolesi's *La Serva padrona* (which, ironically, had been premiered in Naples nearly 20 years earlier and could hardly, at this point, have been considered cutting edge). During the *Querelle*, Italian music and performers were highly praised, much to the detriment of French musicians and the *tragédie en musique*, by those with more progressive musical tastes.⁹⁶

The strident satirical tone adopted by the pro-Italian writers, and the bitterness with which they criticized French opera, unleashed a vicious war of words, some writers defending, others censuring, the great Lully's works and each pamphlet more insulting and outrageous than its predecessor. This 'guerre civile très-vive'⁹⁷ continued until 1754, when the public finally tired of the dispute and the visiting Italian troop left Paris. Indeed, the *Querelle* might have died down sooner had not Jean-Jacques Rousseau published his inflammatory *Lettre sur la musique Française* in 1753.

3.4a Rousseau's *Lettre sur la musique Française* (1753)

In the *Lettre* Rousseau attacks the very basis of French opera, the French language itself; for him, the impossibility of properly notating French syllable lengths (he asserts that Italian is better suited to accurate notation) and the constant adjustments that singers were therefore required to make (as Grimarest had indicated in his *Traité*, see: 3.2c), were more than a mere inconvenience:

[...] il est clair que la Musique Nationale étant contrainte de recevoir dans sa mesure les irrégularités de la prosodie, n'en auroit qu'une fort vague, inégale & très-peu sensible; que le récitatif se sentiroit, surtout, de cette irrégularité; qu'on ne sauroit presque comment y faire accorder les valeurs des notes & celles des syllabes; qu'on seroit contraint d'y changer de mesure à tout moment, & qu'on ne pourroit jamais y rendre les vers dans un rythme

94. Framery and Ginguéné, ed., *Encyclopédie méthodique*, 'Musique', tome premier, 281-2.

95. For a recent examination of the political aspects of the *Querelle* see: T. C. W. Blanning, *The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture: Old Regime Europe 1660-1789* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 357-74.

96. This was not the first time that the intermezzo genre was offered to the audience, nor were the 1752 performances even the first time Paris had been offered *La Serva Padrona*. For more information on the *Querelle*, see: Launay, ed., *La Querelle des Bouffons*, tome I, X-XII.

97. d'Alembert, 'De la liberté de la musique', in *Mélanges de littérature, d'histoire et de philosophie* (Amsterdam: 1759), tome quatrième, 385.

exact & cadencé; que même dans les airs mesurés tous les mouvemens seroient peu naturels & sans précision; que pour peu de lenteur qu'on joignît à ce défaut, l'idée de l'égalité des tems se perdroit entièrement dans l'esprit du Chanteur & de l'Auditeur, & qu'enfin la mesure n'étant plus sensible, ni ses retours égaux, elle ne sauroit assujettie qu'au caprice de Musicien, qui pourroit à chaque instant la presser ou la ralentir à son gré, desorte qu'il ne seroit pas possible dans un concert de se passer de quelqu'un qui la marquât à tous, selon la fantasia ou la commodité d'un seul.⁹⁸

Rousseau attributes the necessity of having a *batteur de mesure* at the Opéra to the freedom of tempo requisite to the proper performance of French-language opera; he argues that indispensable small-scale adjustments of syllable-lengths led, through an insidious obfuscation of the beat, to those larger-scale expressive rubati (concurrent in all the musical parts) which necessitated that a *batteur de mesure* keep the performers synchronized. This French practice was in striking contrast to the Italian style, which, according to Rousseau, was steady in tempo; yet he was far from hoping that French opera singers would imitate their Italian colleagues, for to do so would have been contrary to the rules of the French language itself. This led Rousseau to the following statement, which was examined earlier (see: 3.3b), about the characteristic beauties of each of the two national styles being immutably distinct:

C'est ainsi que les Acteurs contracteroient tellement l'habitude de s'asservir la mesure, qu'on les entendroit même l'altérer à dessein dans les morceaux où le Compositeur serait venu à bout de la rendre sensible. Marquer la mesure seroit une faute contre la composition, & la suivre en seroit une contre le goût du chant: les défauts passeroient pour des beautés, & les beautés pour des défauts; les vices seroient établis en règles, & pour faire de la Musique au goût de la Nation, il ne faudroit que s'attacher avec soin à ce qui déplaît à tous les autres.⁹⁹

These sentiments were repeated, in a different musical context, in the *Dictionnaire de musique* which Rousseau published in the 1760s. Here he writes, in his entry 'Battre la mesure':

Les Musiciens François ne battent pas la Mesure comme les Italiens. Ceux-ci, dans la Mesure à quatre Tems, frappent successivement les [deux] premiers Tems & levent les [deux] autres; ils frappent aussi les deux premiers dans la Mesure à trois Tems, & levent le troisième. Les François ne frappent jamais que le premier Tems, & marquent les autres par différens mouvemens de la main à droit & à gauche.¹⁰⁰

Rousseau's description of national differences in beat patterns (the Italian beats are purely vertical, the French both vertical and horizontal) is but the prelude to an attack on French musical freedom. Rousseau's implication is that the French need clearer beat patterns because their music is so free:

Cependant la Musique Française auroit beaucoup plus besoin que l'Italienne d'une Mesure bien marquée; car elle ne porte point sa cadence en elle-même; ses Mouvemens n'ont aucune précision naturelle: on presse, on ralentit la Mesure au gré du Chanteur. Combien les oreilles ne sont-elles pas choquées à l'Opéra de Paris du bruit désagréable & continuel que fait, avec son bâton, celui qui *bat la Mesure* [...].¹⁰¹

This is followed by a repetition of Rousseau's favorite assertion that Italian music is in time while French music is free; an assertion that would reverberate, as we have seen, well into the 19th century:

Si l'on y fait attention, l'on trouvera que c'est ici l'une des différences spécifiques de la Musique Française à l'Italienne. En Italie la Mesure est l'ame de la Musique; c'est la Mesure bien sentie qui lui donne cet accent qui la rend si charmante; c'est la Mesure aussi qui gouverne le Musicien dans l'exécution. En France, au contraire, c'est le Musicien qui gouverne la Mesure; il l'énérve & la défigure sans scrupule. Que dis-je? Le bon goût même consiste à ne la pas laisser sentir; précaution dont, au reste, elle n'a pas grand besoin. L'Opéra de Paris est le seul Théâtre de l'Europe où l'on *battre la Mesure* sans la suivre; partout ailleurs on la suit sans la *battre*.¹⁰²

Here once again Rousseau makes clear that he is not attacking inept musicians, nor trying to reform the performance practice of a repertoire that would sound better if performed in time: 'le bon goût même' consists of obscuring the beat. Therefore, logically, Rousseau called for Italian operas on French stages: what cannot be reformed might better be abandoned. Is it any wonder that all of musical Paris seemed to rise up against the author of the *Lettre*?¹⁰³

98. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 'Lettre sur la musique française' (Paris: 1753), 10-2, in Launay, ed., *La Querelle des Bouffons*, tome I, 669-764.

99. Rousseau, *Lettre*, 12.

100. Rousseau, *Dictionnaire*, 80-1.

101. Rousseau, *Dictionnaire*, 81.

102. Rousseau, *Dictionnaire*, 80-2.

103. Rousseau was even to claim 'ma vie même fut en danger'. See: 'Confessions', in *Œuvres complètes de J. J. Rousseau* (Paris: 1824), tome II, part. II. Liv. VIII, 197.

3.4b Replies to Rousseau's *Lettre*

The replies to Rousseau's accusations against the *tragédie en musique* are numerous and uneven in quality. Unfortunately, both ignorance of music and an irrepressible lust for insult mar many of these pamphlets. However, we must guard against conceiving a facile and unqualified prejudice against them, for such a stance would jeopardize the proper evaluation of their contents. An attempt will be made here to cite examples representative of the various kinds of arguments concerning the expressive use of rhythmic freedom in French music which these documents contain.

One response was to agree with Rousseau that French performers went too far in their interpretative liberties, but, unlike him, to maintain that this could be corrected. We have already seen that Laborde was of the opinion that French music would sound better if performed more simply (See: 3.3e). Another pamphleteer, Laugier, in his *Apologie de la musique Française, contre M. Rousseau* (1754), felt the same way. He evoked an unspecified past in which French performers behaved themselves:

Il y a eu un tems où nos Musiciens exécutoient avec plus d'exactitude & de goût qu'ils ne font aujourd'hui. Cette vérité paroîtra à nos modernes très-prévenus en leur faveur, un paradoxe plus paradoxe que tout ce qu'a avancé l'adversaire que je combats. Mais ils se rapprocheront malgré eux de mon idée, s'ils comprennent une fois ce que c'est que bien exécuter. On peut avoir la voix très-flexible & très-belle, le jeu très-subtil & très-brillant, & exécuter la Musique d'une manière détestable.¹⁰⁴

Having admitted that a lovely voice and excellent acting skills cannot ensure a good musical performance, Laugier goes on to make a remarkably Modernist statement:

La bonne exécution demande que l'on entre bien dans la pensée du compositeur & dans l'esprit de la chose; qu'on s'attache à donner à chaque note sa valeur précise; qu'on ne s'émancipe point à y ajouter de son autorité privée des ornemens de surérogation; qu'on s'en tienne scrupuleusement à la Lettre, se contentant de mettre l'ame & le feu dont la Lettre ne parle point.¹⁰⁵

The passage here foreshadows, while disagreeing with, Rousseau's (as yet unwritten) entry for 'Exécution' in the *Dictionnaire de musique*. For Laugier, too, it is essential that the performer enter into the spirit of what the composer wrote, but he advocates achieving this, quite unlike Rousseau, with a performance 'à la Lettre'. Laugier is adamant, and his condemnation of contemporary performative excesses—both aural ('du chant') and visual ('du jeu')—is complete:

Autrefois les Maîtres étoient extrêmement sévères à ne rien souffrir de ce qui s'écartoit de l'exécution littérale. Mais depuis qu'on a imaginé que toute la gloire consiste à bien filer un son, à bien marteler une cadence, à faire de très-longues teneues, des roulemens & de fredons de toute espèce, on s'est beaucoup négligé sur la précision du jeu & du chant.¹⁰⁶

Laugier's proposed reforms are radical for the period. His goal is to:

[...] prévenir les libertés irrégulières de ceux qui exécutent. Pour cela il faudroit porter une loi qui défendit à tous les Chanteurs & à tout ceux qui composent l'Orchestre de rien changer à la Melodie dont le caractère leur est tracé, avec ordre de s'en tenir scrupuleusement au noté qu'ils ont devant les yeux.¹⁰⁷

It might be tempting to see in the *Apologie de la musique Française, contre M. Rousseau* a crushing juggernaut under whose wheels the research question of this dissertation must be thrown, for his denunciation of *ad libitum* vocal ornamentation stems from his desire to maintain the rhythms of a piece as notated:

[...] qu'on s'attache à donner à chaque note sa valeur précise; qu'on ne s'émancipe point à y ajouter de son autorité privée des ornemens de surérogation.¹⁰⁸

However, the evidence from Grimarest (who implies that he attended the premiere of Lully's *Phaëton*) suggests that 18th-century French freedom of tempo was not merely a degeneration of the 17th-century tradition, but representative of a performance style that had been created by Lully himself. Moreover, though

104. Laugier, 'Apologie de la musique française, contre M. Rousseau' (1754), 66, in *La Querelle des Bouffons*, tome II, 1145-1226.

105. Laugier, *Apologie*, 66-7.

106. Laugier, *Apologie*, 68.

107. Laugier, *Apologie*, 71-2.

108. Laugier, *Apologie*, 66-7.

Laugier's voice is not unique, it by no means represents a majority view. We shall see that a more common *Querelle* response was to agree that French music had to be performed freely: and that some applauded, while others booed.

Blaming French performers for the excessive style which led to the *Querelle* was, of course, not the polemicist's only option. Some authors simply preferred to point out the comparable sins of Italian singers. For instance, the *Examen de la lettre de M. Rousseau sur la musique Française* (1754) claims that ornamentation should not influence the tempo, but that if it does do so from time to time, it's certainly no greater a transgression than the Italians' use of cadenzas:

Pour ce qui est du goût du chant, il n'engage point à rompre la mesure; si cependant on se permet quelques licences à cet égard, elles sont peu fréquentes, & les endroits où l'on en fait usage ne sont pas plus reprehensibles que les points d'Orgues, sur lesquels les voix Italiennes déploient toute leur beauté & étendue.¹⁰⁹

Another pro-French writer, de Rochemont, speciously chose to commend Italian strictness of tempo. The steadiness both of the beat and of the singers at the Italian opera was a constant source of praise from the pro-Italian camp. Here is an example from Raguene's *La Paix de l'Opéra, ou parallèle impartial de la musique française et de la musique italienne* (1753), a timely reprint of his *Parallèle des italiens et des français* (1702):

On ne bat point la *mesure* dans les Orchestres d'Italie: un seul homme, placé au clavessin, dirige de l'œil les voix & les instrumens: on remarque à peine qu'il préside à l'exécution. Cependant personne ne bronche: tout s'exécute avec la dernière justesse: tant les Italiens sont consommés dans la Musique.¹¹⁰

De Rochemont responded to such arguments, in his *Reflexions d'un patriote sur l'opera français, et sur l'opera italien* (1754) by first agreeing that Italian singers were sound musical scientists:

Une exécution variée à l'infini & pleine de génie, une tournure agréable toujours nouvelle, toujours ingénieuse, toujours piquante, doit faire le caractère de son chant: ce Musicien ne peut être trop sçavant; mais il lui suffit à la rigueur d'être sçavant, et d'avoir l'oreille excellente. C'est la science & l'oreille, & non le goût [footnote: Le goût du chant, relativement à nous, paroît être le juste rapport des grâces de l'organe avec les idées musicales & les pensées poétiques. Il est certain que les Chanteurs Italiens ne se piquent pas d'avoir ce goût-la.], qui rendent ce Chanteur si formidable à l'Orchestre dont il est le tyran, par la facilité avec laquelle il fait, quand il veut, dans la valeur des notes, des changemens imperceptibles, qui sans altérer la mesure, en rendent les différentes parties inappréciables à tout autre qu'à lui-même.¹¹¹

De Rochemont acerbically notes that Italian singers, clever as they are at *tempo rubato* (in which syncopations in the vocal part created 'new', 'ingenious' and 'spicy' dissonances against the bass), have no notion of the French style of ornamentation, that was linked to text and affect. De Rochemont then satirizes the rhythmic infallibility for which partisans of the Italian style praised their vocal heroes:

Ces changemens, dans les différentes parties de la mesure & dans la mesure elle-même, sont opérés quelquefois très-involontairement par les Chanteurs. A force de chercher de nouveaux traits, de nouvelles pensées, & de mépriser souverainement la trop grande simplicité de la note écrite, il arrive de tems en tems qu'ils se trouvent à une distance prodigieuse de l'Orchestre. On a eu grand soin de nous dire que les Musiciens d'Italie étoient si habiles & si fermes dans la mesure, qu'on ne la battoit jamais à l'Opéra. Le fait est vrai. Les Instrumens exécutent avec beaucoup de précision; les Chanteurs, qui paroissent en fort petit nombre sur le Théâtre, sont fort bons Musiciens. Il y a toujours à la tête de l'Orchestre un premier Violon, homme excellent, grand connoisseur en saillies, qui a le talent de les deviner de fort loin, la patience de les suivre avec une résignation parfaite, & dont les inspirations servent à guider les autres instrumens. Mais on ne nous a pas dit que malgré ses avantages, le Maître de Chapelle, Compositeur de l'Opéra, qui tient toujours le Clavessin, est quelquefois si désespéré de la marche irrégulière des uns & des autres, que pour les remettre ensemble, il se lève & se rasseoit cent & cent fois avec une vivacité étonnante, & qu'il frappe avec tant de violence sur les claviers, qu'avant la fin de l'Opéra il brise une bonne partie des sauteraux, & casse la moitié des cordes. On a vu des Clavessins, tenus par Jomelli & par d'autres, être si délabrés après une seule représentation, que ne pouvant être remis en état en moins de trois ou quatre jours, on étoit obligé de substituer un autre Clavessin pour le lendemain. Notre bâton est un bâton tout simple; le bâton Italien est la

109. Bâton le Jeune, 'Examen de la lettre de M. Rousseau sur la musique française', second édition augmentée (1754), 14, in *La Querelle des Bouffons*, tome II, 899-945.

110. Raguene, 'La Paix de l'Opéra, ou parallèle impartial de la musique française et de la musique italienne' (Amsterdam: 1753), 31, in *La Querelle des Bouffons*, tome I, 513-52.

111. [de Roche Mont], 'Reflexions d'un patriote sur l'opera français, et sur l'opera italien' (Lausanne: 1754), 53-4, in *La Querelle des Bouffons*, tome III, 2025-2174.

chûte foudroyante des deux mains sur le clavier.¹¹²

As amusing as such attempts at self-defense may be, the following citation, from Charles Henri de Blainville's *L'Esprit de l'art musical* (1754), is of greater use here, especially as it was to prepare the line of argumentation taken by Jean-Philippe Rameau. Blainville's book, which was written in direct response to Rousseau's *Lettre*, argues that French music is indeed sometimes free and that this freedom is a beauty, not a fault:

Dira-t'on que nos morceaux de chant ne répondent pas à l'exacitude du rythme? Il est à la vérité des situations où le chanteur, pour l'intérêt du geste, ou de certains tours de chant, presse ou ralentit la mesure, mais ce sont de ces situations dont il n'appartient qu'aux gens de goût de sentir tout le mérite.¹¹³

3.4c Rameau's *Observations sur notre instinct pour la musique* (1754) and Lalléman's *Essai sur le mécanisme des passions en général* (1751)

By the time of the *Querelle des Bouffons*, Rameau and Rousseau had already quarreled privately.¹¹⁴ Their later, public exchanges during the *Querelle* are therefore uncomfortably tit-for-tat in tone. However, these *saillies* do contain information of great importance to this dissertation. It is not necessary to follow all the thrust-and-parry here; the quotations chosen apply to this particular research project, and speak clearly enough within the context provided in this chapter.

Rameau must have felt a great deal of pressure to reply to the *Lettre sur la musique française*; not only would he have felt personally attacked by Rousseau—it was after all an air from *Hippolyte et Aricie* that Rousseau claimed had been rejected by an Armenian auditor in favor of an aria by Galuppi—but many of the authors of pamphlets aiming to defend French opera looked towards Rameau as Lully's rightful successor, and the savior of the French style. Indeed, Caux de Cappeval felt that the very name Rameau must send all enemies scuttling:

Au Théâtre, Rameau se montre; c'est assez:
Le Dieu du goût paroît; Bouffons, disparaissez.¹¹⁵

And yet Rameau initially remained silent as the *Querelle* raged around him. It was only in 1754 that he finally entered the fray with his *Observations sur notre instinct pour la musique*. In the preface he makes clear that he intends reprimanding Rousseau for the accusations against the French style made in the *Lettre sur la musique française*. Rameau's text is often obscure and recalcitrant, and it cannot be properly understood outside of the context of the *Querelle des Bouffons*: but it also greatly enriches the current research. Therefore a large section of the preface to the *Observations* will be presented for examination here.

The treatise begins with a claim that man responds naturally and instinctively to music. Thus Rameau prepares his argument that some critics [Rousseau is implied, though not mentioned] cannot be impartial judges of the musical styles in question because their judgements, which are not based on *la Nature* but on their own arrogant authority, must influence their over-all musical perceptions: for, in order to enjoy music's power naturally and instinctively, one must be entirely open to the sensual experience; and in order to judge its merits properly one must be able to focus in on what actually moves the listener, which is *la Nature même*. The ideas put forth here are dense, but the ore is rich and Rameau will work the vein as his argument proceeds:

Pour jouir pleinement des effets de la Musique, il faut être dans un pur abandon de soi-même, & pour en juger, c'est au principe par lequel on est affecté qu'il faut s'en rapporter. Ce Principe est la Nature même, c'est d'elle que nous tenons ce sentiment qui nous meut dans toutes nos Opérations musicales, elle nous en a fait un don qu'on peut appeller *Instinct*: consultons-la donc dans nos jugemens, voyons comment elle nous développe ses mystères avant que de prononcer: & s'il se trouve encore des hommes assez pleins d'eux-mêmes pour oser en décider de leur propre autorité, il y a lieu d'espérer qu'ils ne s'en trouvera plus d'assez foibles pour les écouter.¹¹⁶

112. [de Roche Mont], *Réflexions*, 54-5.

113. Charles Henri de Blainville, *L'Esprit de l'art musical, ou réflexions sur la musique, et ses différentes parties* (Geneva: 1754), 21.

114. In 1745 Rameau had severely criticized Rousseau's opéra-ballet *Les Muses galantes*. See, for a brief and charming overview: P. A. E., 'Review', *Music & Letters*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (Jan., 1963), 92-5.

115. [Caux de Cappeval], 'Apologie du goût françois, relativement à l'opéra' (s.d.), 80, in *La Querelle des Bouffons*, tome II, 1549-1630.

116. Rameau, *Observations sur notre instinct pour la musique* (Paris: 1754), iii-iv.

Rameau next focuses in on Rousseau's contention that Italian melody is more moving than French harmony. Indeed, in the *Lettre sur la musique française* Rousseau had gone so far as to accuse French composers of favoring complex harmony in order to compensate for their inability to create good melodies. Surely Rameau, the master of harmony, would have been infuriated by the following passage from the *Lettre*:

L'impossibilité d'inventer des chants agréables obligerait les Compositeurs [French composers] à tourner tous leurs soins du côté de l'harmonie, & faute de beautés réelles, ils y introduiroient des beautés de convention, qui n'auroient presque d'autre mérite que la difficulté vaincu; au lieu d'une bonne Musique, ils imagineroient une Musique sçavante; pour suppléer au chant, ils multipleroient les accompagnemens; il leur en couteroit moins de placer beaucoup de mauvaises parties les unes au-dessus des autres, que d'en faire une qui fût bonne. Pour ôter l'insipidité, ils augmenteroient la confusion; ils croiroient faire de la Musique & ils ne feroient que du bruit.¹¹⁷

It comes as no surprise, then, that Rameau, in the *Observations*, ridicules his opponent's arguments and vocabulary. In fact, he accuses the Italians of using cheap methods in order to make their melodies more interesting, while ignoring the true basis of musical expression, which is the harmony that in turn is rooted in Nature. He then asserts that Rousseau listens to music with a biased ear, and that it is Italian music, not French, which is mere *bruit*:

Un esprit préoccupé, en entendant de la Musique, n'est jamais dans une situation assez libre pour en juger. Si dans son opinion, par exemple, il attache la beauté essentielle de cet Art aux passages du grave à l'aigu, du doux au fort, du vif au lent, moyens dont on se sert pour varier les bruits, il jugera de tout d'après cette prévention, sans réfléchir sur la foiblesse de ces moyens, sur le peu de mérite qu'il y a à les employer, & sans s'apercevoir qu'ils sont étrangers à l'Harmonie, qui est l'unique baze de la Musique, & le principe de ses plus grands effets.¹¹⁸

Rameau scoffs here at mere changes in tessitura, volume and note values, though he admits they can enliven a melody: however, he will now go on to demonstrate that, though a truly feeling being can be amused by all the tricks of the Italian style, it is harmony that fully satisfies the soul's desire for strong expression in music. The stronger effects of harmony, Rameau implies, will overshadow the lighter stimulation afforded by melody. It is important to remember here that, in the Scholastic system, the sensitive soul was considered to be that part of man which directly experienced those outside stimuli which triggered the affects or passions. The *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* gives the following definition for 'sensibilité': 'Qualité par laquelle un sujet est sensible aux impressions des objets'¹¹⁹ Thus Rameau is not being metaphorical when he speaks of 'une ame vraiment sensible', for if prejudiced reason hadn't influenced and limited Rousseau's sensitive soul, if rather he had been in a state 'of pure abandon', he would naturally have felt the superior effects of harmony:¹²⁰

Qu'une ame vraiment sensible juge bien différemment! Si elle n'est pénétrée par la force de l'expression, par ces peintures vives dont l'Harmonie est seule capable, elle n'est point absolument satisfaite: non qu'elle ne sçache se prêter à tout ce qui peut l'amuser; mais du moins n'apprécie-t'elle les choses qu'à proportion des effets qu'elle en éprouve.

C'est à l'Harmonie seulement qu'il appartient de remuer les passions, la Mélodie ne tire sa force que de cette source, dont elle émane directement: & quant aux différences du grave à l'aigu, &c. qui ne sont que des modifications superficielles de la Mélodie, elles n'y ajoutent pour lors presque rien, comme on le démontre dans le cours de l'Ouvrage pas des exemples frappans, où le principe se vérifie par notre Instinct, & cet Instinct par son principe, c'est-à-dire, où la cause se vérifie par l'effet qu'on éprouve, & cet effet par sa cause.¹²¹

Here Rameau defends the importance of empirical experience, and champions harmony not through dry, intellectual gymnastics, but through the sovereignty of sensation: for Rameau, the proof of the pudding is in the *feeling*. Harmony moves the passions, melody is but an ornament of harmony; and it is the feeling produced, the natural effect which consonant or discordant sounds have on the sensitive soul, that prove that melody cannot satisfy or move with the force inherent in harmony.

117. Rousseau, *Lettre*, 6-7.

118. Rameau, *Observations*, iv-v.

119. *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française*, tome second, 711.

120. For an exploration of the medical basis of Galenist affect theory see Chapter 2. The idea of prejudice limiting affect was not unique to Rameau, and can be traced back to Aristotle's tripartite division of artistic *pisteis* into *ethos*, *logos* and *pathos*. For a concise discussion of this see: Thomas M. Conley, *Rhetoric in the European Tradition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), 13-7.

121. Rameau, *Observations*, v-vij.

E. Cynthia Verba has noted that this passage from the *Observations* is indicative of a hardening of Rameau's thought on the power of harmony:

This statement marks a shift to a more extreme position on harmonic supremacy than Rameau holds in his earlier treatises. In the *Traité* he acknowledges the expressive power of melody despite its source in harmony. For example, in advising how to set words to music he says that musical expression can be achieved "tant par le Chant, & par l'Harmonie, que par le mouvement" (p. 162). And in *Nouveau Système* he continues to recognize melody's effect: "...la *Modulation* doit beaucoup contribuer à la force de l'expression; sans en bannir, pour cela, ni le mouvement, ni les progrès arbitraires du Chant" (p.43). But in *Observations* he seems to consider harmony and melody so inseparable that he can no longer recognize any independent power of melody: "Dès qu'on veut éprouver l'effet d'un Chant, il faut toujours le soutenir de toute l'Harmonie dont il dérive; c'est dans cette Harmonie même que réside la cause de l'effet, nullement dans la Mélodie, qui n'en est le produit..." (pg. 58).¹²²

However Rameau's emphasis on the feelings produced by harmony were not without contemporary scientific underpinning: the link between medical theory and musical stimulation is elucidated in Jean Baptiste Joseph Lallemand's *Essai sur le mécanisme des passions en général* (1751), in which music is but one of several examples of sensual stimulation (alcohol, and dancing are also discussed) used by the author to explain the physical basis for the human passions. In his discussion of music Lallemand, who was a medical doctor, cites the works of Rameau:

«Il est certain[»] (dit M. Rameau, *Traité de l'Harmonie*, Chap. XX. de la propriété des accords) [«]que l'harmonie peut émouvoir en nous différentes Passions à proportion des accords qu'on y emploie.....Les accords consonans se rencontrent par tout; mais ils doivent être employés le plus souvent qu'on le peut dans les chants d'allégresse & de magnificence.....Les langueurs & les souffrances s'expriment parfaitement bien.....avec le chromatique. Le désespoir & toutes les Passions qui portent à la fureur, ou qui ont quelque chose d'étonnant, demandent des dissonances de toute espèce non préparées.»¹²³

Lallemand, having cited Rameau as an authority, goes on to show that the passions felt by the listener are a natural result of the effects of consonant or dissonant intervals on those enablers of the passions, the animal spirits:

La joie qu'inspire la musique est un sentiment gracieux qui affecte l'ame sans la violenter. C'est un mouvement auquel elle est portée naturellement. L'impression que produit sur nos organes la consonance de plusieurs sons heureusement proportionnés y excite une espèce de doux frémissement, & de chatouillement, si on peut se servir de cette expression. Ce mouvement pacifique dans sa nature, ne produit dans les esprits animaux aucun tumulte, & la communication qui en est faite à l'ame, ne peut y exciter qu'un sentiment gracieux.¹²⁴

If consonance creates a gentle tickling¹²⁵ which results in pleasant emotions, increased dissonances cause disturbances in the motions of the animals spirits:

Il n'est pas étonnant que le chromatique, suivant M. Rameau, excite les Passions tristes & douloureuses. L'impression que les sons alliés dans l'ordre du système chromatique doivent produire sur les organes de sens internes, ne diffère presque pas de celle qu'y excitent naturellement les sanglots & les gémissemens. De plus les dissonances ont en soi quelque chose de dur qui ne peut produire sur nos organes qu'un sentiment désagréable. C'est une violence qu'on leur fait. Violence qui approche en quelque maniere de la douleur. En conséquence les esprits animaux sont poussés sur les fibres avec vivacité & confusion. Le passage subit d'une dissonance augmente cette vivacité, parce que l'impression que font sur les sens les objets étrangers, est toujours d'autant plus vive, qu'elle est moins attendue.¹²⁶

If we return to the *Observations*, having verified via Lallemand the broader acceptance of Rameau's ideas about the natural effects of harmony on the soul, we see that Rameau now radically changes tack in refuting Rousseau. Having defended harmony, Rameau goes on to address the *Lettre's* assertion that French music was rhythmically free. Rameau's writing style here is clumsy, and his text must therefore be treated with care:

Si l'imitation des bruits & des mouvemens n'est pas aussi fréquemment employées dans notre Musique que dans l'Italienne, c'est que l'objet dominant de la nôtre est le sentiment, qui n'a point de mouvemens déterminés, &

122. E. Cynthia Verba, "The development of Rameau's thoughts on modulation and chromatics", *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, vol. 26, no. 1 (Spring, 1973), 69-91, 72, fn.

123. Jean-Baptiste Joseph Lallemand, *Essai sur le mécanisme des passions en général* (Paris: 1751), première partie, 29-30. Punctuation here follows the original.

124. Lallemand, *Essai*, première partie, 30-1.

125. For precedents for Lallemand's ticklish imagery see Chapter 2 of this thesis.

126. Lallemand, *Essai*, première partie, 31-2.

qui par conséquent ne peut être asservi par tout à une mesure régulière, sans perdre de cette vérité qui en fait le charme. L'expression du Physique est dans la mesure & le mouvement, celle du Pathétique, au contraire, est dans l'Harmonie & les inflexions: ce qu'il faut bien peser avant que de décider sur ce qui doit emporter la balance.¹²⁷

Confusion is created in this passage by the various possible meanings of the word *mouvement*. In the opening sentence Rameau speaks of 'the imitation of noises and motions' ('mouvemens') as being more frequent in Italian music than in the French, because the goal of the latter is the expression of emotion ('sentiment'), which has no fixed tempi ('mouvemens'; though, admittedly, this word can also mean motion, as above, or emotion in the sense of passion). Therefore French music, according to Rameau, cannot be subjected to a strict meter (in the sense of tempo) without it losing the realism ('vérité')¹²⁸ that makes it charming.

Once again, Lallemand's *Essai* can offer an illuminating context here. Before discussing how meter and tempo can move the passions, he first lays out the basics of affect theory:

Le cerveau dans l'ordre de l'oeconomie animale, est un viscère consacré en grande partie aux opérations de l'ame. Au bas, & entre les deux grands lobes du cerveau, se trouve un corps blanchâtre nommé communément corps calleux. Il paroît composé de fibres transversales qui viennent à droite & à gauche des hemispheres du cerveau. L'usage qu'on attribue ordinairement à ces fibres est de communiquer à l'ame l'impression que font sur le corps les objects étrangers, & d'être l'instrument Physique des différentes opérations de l'entendement. [footnote: On appelle aussi ces fibres, organes des sens internes, & on nomme organes de sens externes, les organes de sens de nature, tels que les yeux, le nez, les oreilles, &c. [...].] Mais comment se fait cette communication? c'est précisément ce que personne ne sçait. Au reste il ne nous convient pas de fonder avec trop de curiosité la profondeur des trésors de la sagesse de Dieu.¹²⁹

Having thus neatly sidestepped the tricky question of *the ghost in the machine*, Lallemand goes on to repeat common knowledge concerning the excitation of the passions, merely stating 'ce qu'on avance pour l'ordinaire de plus probable à cet egard':

Les esprits animaux sont continuellement poussés sur les fibres du corps calleux, ou par leur propre mouvement, ou par le battement des arteres, ou par l'impression des objets étrangers sur les organes extérieurs. Cette impulsion y excite un ébranlement, ou certains mouvemens de vibration plus ou moins violens, à raison desquels l'ame est affectée plus ou moins vivement. Or les Passions sont des mouvemens dont l'ame est violemment affectée. Donc il y aura Passion toutes les fois que ces vibrations seront portées à un point de vivacité excessive. Donc la cause Physique des Passions en général, n'est autre chose qu'une augmentation de vivacité & d'énergie dans les vibrations des fibres du corps calleux.¹³⁰

This exposition of the physical basis for the passions makes it easy to see how meter, and tempo, could move the soul. Lallemand, in order to emphasize the rhythmical component, here chooses instrumental rather than vocal music as his model:

La durée de chacun des sons d'un air a des bornes auxquelles l'Instrument se conforme scrupuleusement. Le commencement & la chute des mesures successives se répétant toujours dans des tems uniformes pendant toute la durée d'un air de mouvement, l'impression que l'ouïe en reçoit se communique aux fibres du cerveau. Les esprits animaux agités par ce mouvement cadencé, se mettent en branle à tems pareils contre ces fibres; & selon que la mesure sera précipitée ou languissante, les mouvemens qui en resulteront dans les organes des sens internes, auront quelque chose de plus ou moins vif.¹³¹

Thus, a regularly returning beat throughout the duration of a piece will bring the soul of the listener into a complimentary affect. Once such basic mechanisms of affect theory are understood, it is easy to see how changes in tempo were believed to easily arouse various specific and distinct passions within the course of a single piece:

La tristesse naîtra de l'impression d'une mesure morne & nonchalante. La joie lui succédera à proportion que les tems de cette mesure reprendront dans leurs périodes successifs quelque chose de plus animé. Enfin l'ame suivant toujours d'un pas égal les mouvemens des fibres consacrées à ses opérations, ces fibres ne pourront être agitées par

127. Rameau, *Observations*, vij-viii.

128. The *Encyclopédie* of Diderot and d'Alembert defines 'vérité' in painting thus: 'ce terme s'emploie en peinture pour marquer l'expression propre du caractère de chaque chose, & sans cette expression il n'est point de peinture.' See article 'vérité'. I have translated it as realism here, to give the sense of 'appropriate characterization'. This aesthetic term will be more fully discussed in Chapter 4.

129. Lallemand, *Essai*, première partie, 1-3.

130. Lallemand, *Essai*, première partie, 3-4.

131. Lallemand, *Essai*, première partie, 18-9.

l'impression d'une mesure excessivement précipitée sans le faire participer à cette vivacité.¹³²

Let us return now to what Rameau said of tempo and affect in his *Observations* (and examine it in the light of Lallemand's explication):

Si l'imitation des bruits & des mouvemens n'est pas aussi fréquemment employées dans notre Musique que dans l'Italienne, c'est que l'objet dominant de la nôtre est le sentiment [...].¹³³

This line of argument had been used in an anonymous *Querelle* pamphlet before Rameau: the *Lettres sur la musique françoise en réponse a celle de Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (1754):

Les plus jolies Ariettes Italiennes n'ont pour objet d'expression que le bruit d'une cloche, d'une Mandolide [sic], d'un Violon, d'un Horloge, des verroux, de l'eau qui bout dans un chaudron, &c. Elles sont presque toujours dans le petit & dans le bas; semblables à ces Peintres qui n'ont d'autre mérite que de peindre des Souris, des Chardons, des Raves, des Mouches, &c. La Musique Françoise ne s'abaisse point à toutes ces puérilités. Elle n'est jamais si belle que lorsqu'elle exprime les grandes passions, & qu'elle parle le langage des Dieux.¹³⁴

However, though the beginning of Rameau's passage repeats an argument that had already been stated anonymously, he follows this commonplace with information unique to his *Observations* and of the highest value to the research in hand. Let us return to the latter part of this quotation:

Si l'imitation des bruits & des mouvemens n'est pas aussi fréquemment employées dans notre Musique que dans l'Italienne, c'est que l'objet dominant de la nôtre est le sentiment, qui n'a point de mouvemens déterminés, & qui par conséquent ne peut être asservi par tout à une mesure régulière, sans perdre de cette vérité qui en fait le charme.¹³⁵

At first sight Rameau's assertion that le sentiment 'n'a point de mouvemens déterminés' makes no sense: according to Lallemand the passions all have distinct tempi related to them. But Rameau seems to be using the word in a wider sense than just a one-on-one of a single tempo to a specific passion. *Sentiment* here seems to mean the realm of feeling in all its shades and varieties. Again, the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* casts light on the usage: 'sentiment' is defined as 'se dit encore De l'action & de la fonction des esprits animaux' as well as 'se dit Des affections, des passions, & de tous les mouvemens de l'ame.'¹³⁶ Rather than the 'noise and motion' which Italian music chose to imitate, it was the inner emotional life of the animal spirits and passions that French music strove to paint for, and to stimulate in, the listener. To reduce the ever shifting emotional landscape to one flat tempo and affect would, according to Rameau, deprive it of that 'realism' that made it charming. It was not the outside, physical world that was the ultimate goal of the French composer, but an inner landscape of feeling:

L'expression du Physique est dans la mesure & le mouvement, celle du Pathétique, au contraire, est dans l'Harmonie & les inflexions [...].¹³⁷

Here meter and tempo are assigned to Italian music, and harmony to French music; and here, too, Rameau craftily introduces a new term, one related not to harmony at all, but rather to melody: *inflection*. I say craftily because, as we will see in the following section of this chapter, imitating the vocal inflections which naturally marked a passion by means of appropriate ornamentation was said to be one of the causes for French performers to slow down the music and break the time. And as we have seen already, Grimarest was quite insistent that if melody can be said to have any affective powers, then surely it is this aspect—the vocal inflection that comes close to spoken declamation—that moves the passions. so too the meter and the tempo in Italian music are implied—here in Rameau's text—to be constant, and are contrasted to the inflections and harmony (both of which could inspire a performer to take time) of French music.

Rameau was not alone in this assertion: Lallemand's *Essai* describes two ways in which melody can inspire the passions: tempo and the vocal inflection of the affect to be expressed. Having already examined the relationship of tempo to affect, we shall concern ourselves now only with the vocal expression of the passions.

132. Lallemand, *Essai*, première partie, 19-20

133. Rameau, *Observations*, vij.

134. [Rousselon], 'Lettres sur la musique françoise en réponse à celle de Jean-Jacques Rousseau' (Genève: 1754), 25-6, in *La Querelle des Bouffons*, tome I, 765-826.

135. Rameau, *Observations*, vij-viii.

136. *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française*, tome second, 711.

137. Rameau, *Observations*, vij-viii.

Lallemant's discussion is preceded by an explanation of the infectious nature of emotion:

Les Passions ont en soi quelque chose de contagieux. L'expression d'un sentiment excite naturellement dans les spectateurs le sentiment exprimé. Le récit d'une histoire merveilleuse, touchante, horrible, excite l'admiration, la compassion, l'horreur. Le représentation d'un fait intéressant sur un Théâtre ou dans les scènes ordinaires de la vie, émeut dans les spectateurs les Passions dont sont agités les Héros de la Pièce.¹³⁸

Lallemant builds on this idea in describing the effects of melody, citing the acting skills, gestures and inflections of orators and singers who are affected by their texts as key factors of emotional contagion:

Premièrement, la mélodie excite les Passions en exprimant le mouvement qu'elle inspire. Nous venons de voir que l'action avec laquelle un Preteur débitoit un discours éloquent pouvoit émouvoir dans ses Auditeurs toutes les Passions dans lesquelles il paroissoit entrer lui-même. Or la mélodie vocale ne diffère du débit Oratoire, qu'en ce que les inflexions de la voix du Musicien ont quelque chose de plus étudié & de plus gracieux que celles de l'Orateur. Du reste c'est de part & d'autre même brillant & même vivacité dans les saillies, même pompe dans l'expression, même énergie dans le geste, dans l'action des yeux, & dans tout l'appareil de la déclamation. Des paroles chantées ne feront d'effet sur le cœur qu'autant que les inflexions de la voix ressembleront à celles que le sentiment auroit suggérées à un orateur ou un Acteur qui auroit déclamé les mêmes paroles. Si donc le Musicien ne diffère de l'Orateur que dans le choix & la douceur des inflexions de la voix, cet art de varier avec intelligence des sons heureusement appropriés aux paroles auxquelles on les associe, est de la part du Musicien un avantage réel qu'il a sur l'Orateur, & un agrément particulier qui bien loin de restreindre son empire sur le cœur des Auditeurs, est un gage de plus du trouble qu'il doit y exciter.¹³⁹

All of this fits in perfectly with Rameau's endorsement of French artistic *vérité*. The passions were mechanically (and naturally) awakened not by beautiful and varied Italian melodies, but by French harmonies, chosen to fit the text. From these well-chosen harmonies grew the melodic, passionate inflections which expressed, and made contagious, the emotions of each word. The tempo of the music would then flow to match the words' affective qualities, resulting in *vérité*. That is why Rameau asserts (to conclude this examination of the *Observations*) that too many of the arguments of the *Querelle* were based on a false premise in comparing *La Serva Padrona* to the *tragédie en musique*; for how could a comic libretto have the same musical realization as a tragic one?

Le genre Comique n'ayant presque jamais le sentiment pour l'objet, il est par conséquent le seul qui soit constamment susceptible de ces mouvemens cadencés dont on fait honneur à la Musique Italienne [...].¹⁴⁰

3.4d Rameau's *Erreurs sur la musique dans l'Encyclopédie* (1755)

In the *Erreurs sur la musique dans l'Encyclopédie* (1755) Rameau, while attacking Rousseau's *Encyclopédie* article 'Accompagnement', continues the line of argument which he had already put forth the previous year in his *Observations*:

Ce n'est donc, à le bien prendre, que la Mesure qui à séduit ici M. Rousseau, attendu qu'elle tient l'un des premiers rangs dans les airs Italiens: aussi s'est-il fort étendu sur cet Article dans la Lettre [*Lettre sur la musique française*] que j'ai déjà citée, jusqu'à reprocher à notre Musique de n'en être pas susceptible, lorsqu'elle n'y pèche que dans le Récitatif, aussi bien que celui des Italiens, encore la Mesure des Vers supplée-t-elle: c'étoit au contraire l'occasion d'en faire l'éloge, puisque les sentimens du cœur, les passions ne peuvent être bien rendus qu'en altérant la Mesure.¹⁴¹

Rameau goes on once again to refute Rousseau's belief in the emotive power of melody:

Ce n'est donc que de l'harmonie, mère de cette Mélodie, que naissent directement les différens effets que nous éprouvons en Musique: non que ses accessoires n'y contribuent, sçavoir la Mélodie, la mesure &c. mais sans elle, ces mêmes accessoires tombent en pure perte: réflexion qui ne doit pas être indifférente.¹⁴²

He then makes an analogy between the aural and visual perceptions, between sounds and colors:

Si le R. P. Castel s'en fût tenu à l'harmonie pour constater son analogie avec les couleurs, je crois qu'il auroit eu

138. Lallemant, *Essai*, première partie, 7.

139. Lallemant, *Essai*, première partie, 14-6.

140. Rameau, *Observations*, viij-ix.

141. [Jean-Philippe Rameau], *Erreurs sur la musique dans l'Encyclopédie* (Paris: 1755), 26-7.

142. Rameau, *Erreurs*, 46.

autant de Partisans que de Lecteurs: en effet, l'harmonie, aussi bien que les couleurs, a besoin d'une certaine durée pour que ses rapports puissent pénétrer jusqu'à l'ame: & de même qu'une succession rapide de couleurs ne forme qu'une confusion qui peut, tout au plus, amuser les yeux, de même aussi une succession rapide de sons, ordinaire à la Mélodie, surtout dans des mouvemens vifs, ne fait qu'amuser l'oreille.¹⁴³

Rameau refers here to Louis Bertrand Castel, the inventor of the *clavecin oculaire*, a color-keyboard that seems never to actually have been made to function properly, but the idea of which excited all of Paris when it was announced in 1725. Thomas L. Hankins has written:

The ocular harpsichord was like a standard harpsichord except that it played colors instead of sounds. The possibility of such an instrument depended on the analogy between the seven spectral colors and the seven tones of the musical scale. [...] According to Castel, it would be the "universal instrument of the senses."

Whether the optical harpsichord was a scientific instrument or not depends on one's point of view. Castel claimed in his announcement that his harpsichord would not merely give a simple impressionistic idea of sound in color, but would really paint sounds by a precise and natural correspondence between color and pitch, so that a deaf listener could enjoy music that was originally written for the ear [...].

Reaction to Castel's announcement of the ocular harpsichord was not generally favorable, but it did cause considerable excitement, enough so that Castel could reasonably ask why his opponents were willing to spend so much time combating what they claimed was a worthless idea. Part of the problem was Castel's independence of mind, which led him to argue with everyone. Voltaire called him the "Dom Guichotte des mathématiques" because of his tendency to attack the giants, including Newton, Leibniz, Réaumur, and Maupertius. Voltaire could have included Rameau, Rousseau, Dortous de Mairan, and Voltaire himself.¹⁴⁴

It is difficult to ascertain if Rameau, in the *Erreurs*, is referring to a specific text by Castel. There are at several passages about color in pamphlets that Castel contributed to the *Querelle*. For instance, in his *Réponse critique d'un académicien de Rouen, à l'académicien de Bordeaux, sur le plus profond de la musique*, Castel discusses the ancient Greek modes and their ability to raise the passions. He compares them to an artist's palette.¹⁴⁵

[...] les Grecs réunissoient nos deux genres de Musique, françoise et italienne, melodieuse et harmonique, avec leurs divers modes propres à exciter ou à modérer toutes sortes de passions.

Le Dorien étoit grave et serieux: aussi c'étoit-ce presque le seul que Platon admit dans sa belle République en idée. Le Lydien étoit colere & violent: le Lydien [sic] triste: Le Myxolydien doux & propre à appaiser la colere. L'Éolien étoit lyrique & chantant: L'Ionien gai, &c. Nous serions trop heureux si nous avions des modes d'un effet si déterminé. Ce seroit comme la palette des Peintres, pour toutes sortes de couleurs, de Peintures, & de discours.¹⁴⁶

However, it seems likely that Rameau, in remarking that 'Si le R. P. Castel s'en fût tenu à l'harmonie pour constater son analogie avec les couleurs, je crois qu'il auroit eû autant de Partisans que de Lecteurs', is addressing more broadly the general color-sound relationship which Castel hoped to exploit with his *clavecin oculaire*. In fact, many of the pamphlets from the *Querelle* make analogies between visual stimuli (like colorful paintings) and aural input (music).¹⁴⁷ We can see what is commonplace in Rameau's argument by comparing it with the following verses taken from *Apologie du goût françois, relativement à l'opéra*:

Ce coloris brillant qu'inventa l'Italie,
Pour orner la nature, ou peindre la folie,
Ne vous cause-t-il pas un invincible ennui,
Par la satiété qu'il entraîne avec lui?
Tout ce feu pétillant d'où s'élance la flamme,
Va-t-il frapper au cœur? Va-t-il échauffer l'ame?
Il s'arrête à l'oreille, & sans la contenter

143. Rameau, *Erreurs*, 46-7. For a discussion of Rameau and Castel see: Thomas Christensen, *Rameau and Musical Thought in the Enlightenment*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

144. Thomas L. Hankins, 'The Ocular Harpsichord of Louis-Bertrand Castel; Or, the Instrument that Wasn't', *Osiris*, 2nd Series, vol. 9, (1994), 141-56, 143-4.

145. This would have resonated with contemporary notions of painterly modes as promoted by the *Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture*, following remarks by Poussin. For more information see: Jennifer Montagu, 'The Theory of the Musical Modes in the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. 55 (1992), 233-248.

146. [le P. Castel], 'Réponse critique d'un académicien de Rouen, à l'académicien de Bordeaux, sur le plus profond de la musique' (s.d.), 30-1, in *La Querelle des Bouffons*, tome II, 1441-1476.

147. For instance, the *Lettre écrite de l'autre monde* compares Lully's art to Poussin's. See: [Suard], 'Lettre écrite de l'autre monde', 24 and following, in *La Querelle des Bouffons*, tome I, 343-79.

L'importune souvent au lieu de la flatter. [...]
 Mais le beau chant Français porte un trait qui vous blesse;
 Et du cœur attendri va chercher la foiblesse.
 Il pénètre, il agite; & cette émotion
 Se soutient, se nourrit, croît avec l'action.¹⁴⁸

However, if Rameau's analogy between colors and music is not a unique contribution to the arguments for French music, his development of the idea in his *Erreurs* in terms of timing and musical perception is. The point Rameau is trying to make is that the harmony must be given enough time in order physically to reach the soul ('pénétrer jusqu'à l'ame'), if it is to do more than amuse or confuse:

Tout Chœur de Musique qui est lent, & dont la succesion harmonique est bonne, plaît toujours sans le secours d'aucun Dessein, ni d'une Mélodie qui puisse affecter d'elle-même: & ce plaisir est tout autre que celui qu'on éprouve ordinairement d'un Chant agréable, ou simplement vif & gai: l'un se rapporte directement à l'ame, l'autre ne passe pas le canal de l'oreille [...].¹⁴⁹

He continues thus:

Allons plus loin, & remarquons que, dès qu'il s'agit de peindre une situation dans une Mélodie dont la vivacité doit répondre à un caractère vif, gai, bouillant, effréné, si l'on n'y rallentit pas le mouvement, ou du moins si l'on ne donne pas à la Note, sur laquelle l'expression doit se faire sentir, une valeur double, triple, quadruple, & même plus, de celle qu'exige le courant du chant, l'effet est manqué: ce qu'on reconnoîtra dans tous les morceaux de Musique, où se trouvent quelques traits sensible d'une expression marquée.¹⁵⁰

This extraordinary passage can be read in several ways. It is possible to see it as advice to performers: in that case the word 'l'on' would refer to the player who, in order to 'paint' a '*situation*'¹⁵¹ or 'perceptible moment of feeling' in a gay air, must slow down the tempo or stretch the note in question up to four times or more its notated value, as determined by the flow of the melody ('le courant du chant'). Such a reading, involving as it does the slowing down of the beat by the performer, seems to have been prepared by Rameau's advice, given earlier in the *Erreurs*, that the reader play a gay air in too slow a tempo in order to test how much of its expression comes from the beat rather than from its melody. If this performance-related reading is correct, then Rameau is suggesting that a comparison of the relative expressive powers of melody and harmony can be made by removing the rhythmic excitement created by the beat. Let us examine this more closely.

As we have seen, Rameau attempts to prove that melody has the weaker power of expression, and suggests that this can be proven by playing a gay air in too slow a tempo. Presumably Rameau in this case is referring to an Italian air. He had already written of:

[...] des airs vifs & gais exempts d'action, d'intérêt, de sentimens, de passions, tels que presque tous les Rondeaux des airs Italiens, où l'on abuse même de cette gaité dans des cas qui y sont opposés. Les Musiciens Italiens ne cherchent en général qu'à amuser l'oreille par des mouvemens qui égaient, qui excitent, qui animent [...].¹⁵²

It is several pages later that Rameau then incites the reader to try playing a gay air too slowly. In doing so he mocks Rousseau's assertions that melody and tessitura are the mainsprings of musical expression:

Tant qu'on ne considérera que la Mélodie comme principal moteur des effets de Musique, on ne fera pas de grands progrès dans cet Art, puisque même elle y a moins d'empire que la mesure, selon ce que j'en ai déjà touché, & ce qu'on peut aisément éprouver d'ailleurs, en exécutant lentement un air qui aura réjoui par sa gaité. Au reste, ce n'est ni du haut ni du bas que naît l'expression, & c'est uniquement du rapport des modes entrelacés par une certaine transition de l'un à l'autre, excepté qu'on n'y veuille jouer le mot, ou qu'il ne s'y agisse de l'imitation de quelques Météores.¹⁵³

If we now go back and compare this passage to the one beginning 'Allons plus loin', we see that Rameau could be contrasting the disappointing experience of hearing a harmonically simple air (Italian?) played too slowly with the passionate and strong expression such slowness would create in an air (French?) that

148. [Caux de Cappeval], *Apologie*, 70-1.

149. Rameau, *Erreurs*, 48-9.

150. Rameau, *Erreurs*, 49-50.

151. The *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* defines '*situation*' thus: 'se dit en parlant des pièces de Théâtre. Il Signifie, Des changemens subits qui surviennent dans l'état des personnages'. See: *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française*, tome second, 732

152. Rameau, *Erreurs*, 39.

153. Rameau, *Erreurs*, 44-50.

displayed a well-managed harmony:

Allons plus loin, & remarquons que, dès qu'il s'agit de peindre une situation dans une Mélodie dont la vivacité doit répondre à un caractère vif, gai, bouillant, effréné, si l'on n'y rallentit pas le mouvement, ou du moins si l'on ne donne pas à la Note, sur laquelle l'expression doit se faire sentir, une valeur double, triple, quadruple, & même plus, de celle qu'exige le courant du chant, l'effet est manqué: ce qu'on reconnoitra dans tous les morceaux de Musique, où se trouvent quelques traits sensible d'une expression marquée.¹⁵⁴

It was just such a performance-oriented reading that I endorsed in my article 'Gaps, Pauses and Expressive Arms', published in the *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* in 2009.¹⁵⁵

However, it also seems possible, on further reflection, to read the entire passage differently. Perhaps Rameau was directing his remarks towards composers? Following such an exegesis, 'l'on' would refer to the composer, who is advised by Rameau to notate the length of the note on which the feeling should occur up to four times longer than that which was otherwise demanded by the 'flow of the melody': this would make most sense if the note on which the feeling should occur were a note in the bass. Indeed, Rameau had just before this remarked that the bass was the foundation for the harmony. Thus, if this composer-oriented reading is the correct one, a long note value in the bass could sustain the desired poignant harmony beyond that which the melody might otherwise have demanded. This would fit well with Rameau's having cited, earlier in the *Erreurs*, the harmonic high point of his 'Amour triomphe' from *Pymalion* as an example of harmony's power. In the passage indicated, Rameau slows the tempo of an otherwise gay air down to 'Lent' and places very long note-values in the bass. However, 'Amour triomphe' is not notated in triple meter, nor is there any real melody at this point in the piece: the character Pygmalion sings mainly long notes here. Rameau, therefore, cannot be alluding to this specific example in the passage beginning with 'Allons plus loin' [see figure 3.3].

Rameau's text remains ambiguous: is it the composer or the performer that is represented by the vague 'l'on' with which it presents us? Are the harmonies lengthened in performance or on the page? Why didn't Rameau, either here or in his other replies to the *Lettre* of Rousseau, make a clear distinction, in defending French music's shifting rhythms, between the composer's notation, the performer's interpretation and the audience's perception?

I shall not presume to reply for Rameau, but I do feel that his failure to make these distinctions is significant: can it not be that no such differentiation was found necessary because all three factors—composer, performer, audience—were seen as belonging to a single system of affective musical theory? In 'Gaps, Pauses and Expressive Arms', I have argued that Rameau described musical expression as a quality of inspiration on the part of the singer/performer that could only be fully experienced in the souls of unprejudiced listeners. Basing my assertions on various of the composer's writings, I there put forward that Rameau endorses the following model: the composer interprets the words and 'paints' them with affective harmonies; the singer, inspired in turn by these harmonies, then gives both the words and the music their proper feeling in performance. This feeling, in order to be naturalistic or 'true' (*vérité*) would have to correspond to the timing of the affect as it naturally manifests itself in the human frame. As a result the audience would be moved, without perceiving the resulting rhythmic freedom as a change of tempo so much as a change of feeling.

Obscure though it be, one thing is clear about the passage from the *Erreurs* that we have been examining: Rameau insists that harmonies need to be given time in order to produce feeling in the soul of the listener. This kind of musical freedom, if it is to occur in performance, seems to be linked to *perdre la mesure*, a musical term that appears as a kind of 'stage direction' in a suite for *la flûte traversière* and basso continuo by Pierre Philidor [see figure 3.4]. The term *perdre la mesure* itself had already been mentioned at the beginning of the 18th-century in manuscript annotations made by Étienne Loulié in preparation of a new edition of his *Eléments ou principes de musique*. Albert Cohen has the following to say about the legacy of Loulié, who was the inventor the *chronomètre*:

Among MSS attributed to Étienne Loulié currently in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, fonds fr. n. a. 6355 is the largest and appears to contain the most unique material. [...] This MS is known to have formed part of a set of *Mémoires* bequeathed to Brossard at Loulié's death, a result of a pact made between the two theorists, who were close friends. [...] the third part of item XVII is a *Supplément* to the *Eléments ou principes de musique* of 1699, evidently an incomplete draft of a reëdition of the printed work, since there are page references to this edition in

154. Rameau, *Erreurs*, 49-50.

155. See: Jed Wentz, 'Gaps, Pauszes and Expressive Arms: Reconstructing the Link between Stage Gesture and Musical Timing at the Académie Royale de Musique', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol. 32. no. 4 (2009), 607-622.



Figure 3.3 Harmony triumphs over melody in 'Amour triomphe' from Rameau's *Pigmalion*.

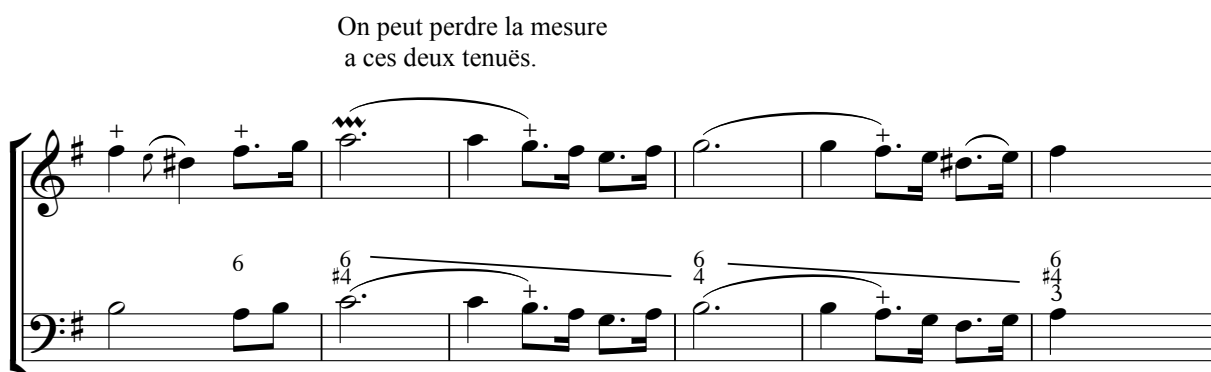


Figure 3.4 A section from the courante from Pierre Philidor's *Deuxième Œuvre, Neufième Suite* marked *On peut perdre la mesure a ces deux tenuës*.

the source, with suggested alterations.¹⁵⁶

It is in this *Supplément* that Loulié's definition of *perdre la mesure* can be found, in a list of terms relating to the beating of musical time which includes speeding up and slowing down the beat. Cohen cites the passage only in translation (and his transcription of the list seems inconsistent):

Exact and Strict Meter (*mesure exacte et rigoureuse*) indicates that each note comes precisely on its beat. [...]

Marked Meter (*mesure marqué*) is that in which the beats are strongly accented, as [are those] in *Airs de dances*.

Recitative Meter (*mesure de recitatif*) [is one] where only the beginning of the first beat is exactly [in time].

Meter of *Airs à chanter* [is one] where attention is paid more to the length and shortness of the syllables than to those of the notes.

"To alter the meter" (*alterer la mesure*) is to beat time, or to sing or play, with inequality, making one beat shorter and another longer [than indicated].

"To hurry the meter" (*presser la mesure*) is to sing, play or beat time more quickly.

"To dwell on the meter" (*traitter la mesure*) is to sing, play or beat time very slowly.

"To be in meter" (*être en mesure*) is to sing or play the notes in time.

"To sing or play in meter" (*chanter ou jouer de mesure*) is to observe exactly the note values while singing or playing.

"To follow the meter" (*suivre la mesure*) means not to sing or play too quickly or slowly.

"To lose the meter" (*perdre la mesure*) is to lose one's place [in the music] while singing or playing.¹⁵⁷

Here we have a list of various kinds of rhythmic freedoms and exactitudes. Some of them are familiar, such as those related to the performance of recitative and syllable lengths. Others are intriguing but obscure, like *alterer la mesure* and *perdre la mesure*. It is not entirely clear from Loulié's description what *perdre la mesure* might mean: however, the specific, written out example which can be found in Philidor's 'Neufième Suite' from his *Deuxième Œuvre* occurs on long notes and dissonant harmonies. Published in Paris in 1718, the courante of this collection contains the following remarkable printed annotation: 'On peut perdre la mesure a ces deux tenuës'. It seems most unlikely that Philidor is here requesting his performers to lose (*perdre*) their places in the music; rather, some performative expressive device must be intended, one that Philidor felt would result in a more favorable reception of his piece. Perhaps the composer wishes to indicate that the player should destroy the meter (*perdre la mesure*) by consciously stretching the tied over notes, thus elongating their expressive harmonies?

It cannot, however, be confirmed with certainty that the term *perdre la mesure* is being used in the same way by Loulié and Philidor, or that it is exactly what Rameau was referring to in his *Erreurs*.

To return to the *Erreurs*, Rameau felt liberties with the beat did not move the listener by lengthening notes of the melody, but rather by emphasizing the underlying harmonic progression from which the melody sprang:

Croit on pour lors que l'effet éprouvé naisse de la Mélodie? On se trompe: ce repos forcé, dont je viens de parler, n'a lieu que pour faire sentir à l'ame le rapport des deux harmonies qui se succèdent, la dernière empruntant toute sa force de la première par le plus ou moins de rapport qu'elles ont entr'elles.¹⁵⁸

But even here Rameau is in line with Lallemand's explanation of the harmonic, physical mechanics of the passions. Lallemand had written in his *Essai*:

La consonance & la dissonance résultante essentiellement des sons différemment combinés étant une fois démontrée, il est naturel de penser que ces sons venant ensemble à frapper l'ouïe, l'impression qu'ils y feront sera plus ou moins agré-

156. Albert Cohen, 'Étienne Loulié as a Music Theorist', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, vol. 18, no. 1 (Spring, 1965), 70-2, 70-1.

157. For the complete list see: Étienne Loulié, *Eléments ou principes de musique* (Paris: 1696), trans. Albert Cohen (Brooklyn: Institute of Medieval Music, 1965), 64.

158. Rameau, *Erreurs*, 50-1.

able à raison de la convenance ou de la disproportion qu'il y aura de l'un à l'autre: & cette impression étant communiquée à l'ame y excitera un sentiment gracieux ou révoltant relativement à cette convenance ou à cette disproportion.¹⁵⁹

So Rameau and Lallemand both affirm that the relationship between two harmonies is essential to their musical expression: indeed, Lallemand's further remark that 'cette impression *étant communiquée à l'ame* [editorial italics] y excitera un sentiment gracieux ou révoltant relativement à cette convenance ou à cette disproportion' seems to support Rameau's assertion that the harmony needs a 'certaine durée pour que ses rapports puissent *pénétrer jusqu'à l'ame* [editorial italics]'.¹⁶⁰

On this point of the relationship between perception, time and harmony even such bitter enemies as Rousseau and Rameau were in concord. Rousseau, as we have seen, quoted Diderot's claim (in the *Mémoires sur différens sujets de mathématique*) that:

Il n'y a peut-être pas dans un air quatre mesures qui soient exactement de la même durée, deux choses contribuant nécessairement à ralentir les unes et à précipiter les autres, le goût et l'harmonie dans les pièces à plusieurs parties, le goût et le presentiment de l'harmonie dans les solo. Un musicien qui sait son art n'a pas joué quatre mesures d'un air qu'il en saisit le caractère et qu'il s'y abandonne: il n'y a que le plaisir de l'harmonie qui le suspende; il veut ici que les accords soient frappés; là qu'ils soient dérobés; c'est-à-dire qu'il chante ou joue plus ou moins lentement d'une mesure à une autre, et même d'un temps et d'un quart de temps à celui qui le suit.¹⁶¹

Moreover, in his *Dictionnaire* Rousseau gives the following advice to composers, in defining expression:

Une observation que le Compositeur ne doit pas négliger, c'est que plus l'Harmonie est recherchée, moins le mouvement doit être vif, afin que l'esprit ait le tems de saisir la marche des Dissonances & le rapide enchaînement des Modulations; il n'y a que le dernier emportement des passions qui permette d'allier la rapidité de la Mesure & la dureté des Accords. Alors quand la tête est perdue & qu'à force d'agitation l'Acteur semble ne savoir plus ce qu'il dit, ce désordre énergique & terrible peut se porter ainsi jusqu'à l'ame du Spectateur & le mettre de même hors de lui. Mais si vous n'êtes bouillant & sublime, vous ne serez que baroque & froid; jetez vos Auditeurs dans le délire, ou gardez-vous d'y tomber: car celui qui perd la raison n'est jamais qu'un insensé aux yeux de ceux qui la conservent, & les foux n'interessent plus.¹⁶²

So, when we step back from the most vitriolic passages of the *Lettre* and compare Rousseau's position with Rameau's, we see that they were in agreement on a number of key points. Both would agree that French music was more likely to be performed freely than the Italian, and that this was one of French music's beauties. They also agreed that harmony needed time to penetrate the soul or spirit of the listener. Rousseau simply stridently proclaimed that Italian music was the better of the two styles. This attack from someone he considered a musical simpleton appears to have galled Rameau to the end of his days. In the *Code de la musique*, published in 1760, four years before his death, Rameau kept up the quarrel long after the *Querelle* had fizzled out:

N'oublions pas que l'expression d'un sentiment, & sur-tout de la passion, ne produit aucun effet qu'en altérant la mesure & changeant du Ton.¹⁶²

To which was added the following scathing footnote:

Vouloir faire l'éloge de la Musique italienne, en ce que la mesure y est toujours observée, c'est lui refuser l'expression, qu'il ne faut pas confondre avec des images & imitations.

3.4e Summing up of part 3.1-3.4

I have attempted to give an overview of French musical sources from the late 17th century onwards that deal in some way with the notion of a freely beaten meter in France. Ample evidence has been found, though not in tutors or practical manuals (except for de La Chapelle), that suggests that both instrumental and vocal music was performed freely, and that the singer and player were expected to deliver more than simply a correct representation of the score. This free, rich, and varied performance style—characterized on many occasions as being charming by virtue of its *vérité*—was considered, even by bitter enemies of Lully's *tragédie en musique*, to be one of the beauties of French music.

159. Lallemand, *Essai*, 28-9.

160. Diderot and d'Alembert, ed. *Encyclopédie*, vol. III, 402.

161. Rousseau, *Dictionnaire*, 335.

162. Jean-Philippe Rameau, *Code de la musique* (Paris: 1760), 170.

It also seems clear that Galenist views (such as those that were examined in Chapter 2) of sensory perception and affect made it nearly impossible for Frenchmen to think of music in any other terms than those of affect theory.

I consider it to be particularly significant that Rousseau and Rameau, the two most famous combatants involved in the *Querelle*, agreed, in spite of their bitterness, on the following three points:

1. that French music was free,
2. that harmony needs time to affect the soul, and
3. that a free and passionate performance style (which expressed the words through harmony rather than melody) formed the main beauty of the *tragédie en musique*.

Having examined the primary sources, I will now turn to two secondary sources related to my research topic, which I consider to be exemplary of attitudes expressed at the end of the last century towards the place of rhythmic freedom in historically informed performances French Baroque music.

3.5 On French music being in time

As a performer I can testify that, at least since the 1980s, when I was studying at the Royal Conservatory in the Hague, early music performance practice has been characterized by a strong antipathy toward rubato as an expressive device.¹⁶³ Received wisdom on the topic among my fellow students at that time was that Italian music was more susceptible to alterations of tempo than the French, but that rubato was an essentially 19th-century device and its application to earlier repertoire an anachronism.

This antipathy to changing the beat in the performance of Baroque music is, to great extent, still in place, though perhaps less rigidly so than 20 years ago. It is an underlying assumption which has been little questioned by my fellow performers, and which urgently needs to be re-evaluated as the older generation of Early Musicians passes on the baton to a younger one.

With this in mind, I here look at two scholarly articles from the 1980s (dealing with vocal and choreographed French repertoire respectively). I maintain that they represent attitudes prevalent during the youth of, and still generally unquestioned by, the generation of Early Musicians that now teaches at major conservatories around the world. The first of these articles (which will be treated rather extensively here) is Mary Cyr's 'Eighteenth-century French and Italian Singing: Rameau's Writing for the Voice'; the second, which will be reviewed more briefly, is Patricia Ranum's 'Audible Rhetoric and Mute Rhetoric: the 17th-century French Sarabande'.

3.5a 'Eighteenth-century French and Italian Singing: Rameau's Writing for the Voice'

Mary Cyr's career has embraced both scholarship and performance: she received a Low Countries Early Music education, studying Baroque cello with Anner Bylsma (Amsterdam) and viola da gamba with Wieland Kuijken (Brussels). She has also conducted performances of vocal music from before 1800. Her article on 18th-century French and Italian singing techniques, published in 1980 in *Music & Letters*, falls into two parts: the first sketches the activities of Italian singers in France in the first half of the 18th-century and in particular the Italianate singing style of Marie Fel, while the second is devoted to an examination of Jean-Antoine Bérard's vocal treatise *L'Art du chant* and the application of its contents to vocal works by Rameau. It is this latter section of Cyr's article which I will examine here, and it will be closely dissected with a specific purpose in mind. It is not my intention to berate Cyr for not writing the same article in 1980 that I would write today on the subject. Rather, I hope to show that a then-pervasive idea of refinement of taste

163. The roots of this dislike go back much further, of course. For my vision of the aesthetic development of the Dutch Early Music scene in the first half of the 20th century and its indebtedness to Modernism see my article: 'De hoge hoed en de nachtspiegel: Is Satie de grondlegger van de oude muziek?', *Tijdschrift voor Oude Muziek*, 1. 2008.

and strictness of tempo as essential to the French 18th-century aesthetic blocked Cyr from seeing aspects of Bérard's treatise which are crucial for understanding not only my work in this dissertation, but also the nature of the polemic of the *Querelle des Bouffons* and, indeed, the very essence of the French operatic style. As a starting point for my examination of Cyr's article I would like to cite a passage from it which occurs just before, and serves as a segue to, her discussion of Bérard's *L'Art du chant*. In it Cyr establishes, using the writings of contemporary witnesses de Brosses and Rochemont, certain aspects of the French vocal style, and most especially the ornament known as *filer le son*:

Debrosses, though a partisan of Italian music, maintained a preference for the French manner of singing and, like de Rochemont, stressed its subtle dynamic nuance according to the meaning of each word:

Italian women's voices are also of a similar type to those of the castrati: light and flexible to the last degree; in a word, they have the same character as their music. Don't ask fullness [*la rondeur*] of them: they don't know what it is; don't speak to them about those admirable sounds of our French music: swelled, sustained, swelled again and diminished by degree, on a single note; they would no more be capable of understanding you than of performing such sounds.

Although Debrosses denies it, we know from Pier Francesco Tosi and other Italian writers that the *son filé* or *messadi voce* was well known for its expressive value on long notes. Debrosses seems to suggest, however, that the degree of nuance and shading was far greater in French singing and that the music demanded it. As for the mysterious 'fullness' that Italian voices lacked, perhaps Debrosses was referring to an even tone cultivated by Italian singers with little if any change of color between registers: the range demanded by most French music, on the contrary, was less great and permitted changes of color between registers combined with these delicately nuanced sounds. Though perhaps not exclusive to French music, these subtle dynamic inflections, closely bound up with the language and the sentiment expressed, were among the demands the French style of singing imposed. They were frequently misunderstood by foreigners—for instance even as late as 1789, when Charles Burney remarked at the 'vocal outrages' of Marie Fel's pupil Sophie Arnould as Télite in a revival of *Castor et Pollux*.¹⁶⁴

Here we have two different subjects worthy of study, de Brosses' passage characterizing French vocal practices, and Cyr's exegesis of the same passage. Let us begin with de Brosses. He contrasts Italian lightness with French 'rondeur', which was defined in 1762 in the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* as:

On dit figurément en termes de Musique, qu'Une voix est ronde, pour dire, qu'Elle est pleine, égale & unie.¹⁶⁵

Thus the fuller, rounder voice is French, which implies that their singers were less concerned with flexibility than with volume. However, the kind of Italian flexibility de Brosses means here must be what we would now call coloratura, for French voices were, by his own account, extremely flexible in terms of dynamic shading: he speaks, referring to the ornament called *filer le son*, of a single note 'swelled, sustained, swelled again and diminished by degree'.

Cyr, in interpreting this for us, paints a delicate picture of French vocal technique. She speaks of 'its subtle dynamic nuance', of 'delicately nuanced sounds' and 'subtle dynamic inflections' which 'were frequently misunderstood by foreigners'. As exemplary of such a bemused visitor she cites Burney, who criticized, in his *A General History of Music from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period* (1789), Sophie Arnould's performance for its 'vocal outrages'. If we were to take Cyr's characterization at face value we would easily imagine that the subtleties of the French performance style escaped the untuned ears of visitors like Burney. We come, however, to a very different assessment when we look at what Burney actually says about French singing. The critique of Arnould's performance in *A General History* is limited to the words 'vocal outrages'. However, Burney had already written more extensively about French singing in his *The Present State of Music in France and Italy*. Here are the relevant passages from his section devoted to Paris:

1. But the French voice never comes further than from the throat; there is no *voce di petto*, no true *portamento*, or direction of the voice, on any of the stages.¹⁶⁶

2. [...] Mademoiselle Delcambre screamed out *Exaudi Deus* with all the power of lungs she could muster [...].¹⁶⁷

3. Madame Philidor sung a motet next, of her husband's composition, who drinks hard at the Italian fountain; but

164. Mary Cyr, 'Eighteenth-century French and Italian Singing: Rameau's Writing for the Voice', *Music & Letters*, vol. 61, no. 3/4 (Jul. - Oct., 1980), 318-337, 323-4.

165. *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française*, tome second, 653.

166. Charles Burney, *The Present State of Music in France and Italy*, the second edition, corrected, (London, 1773), 19.

167. Burney, *The Present State*, 25.

though this was more like good singing and good music than any vocal piece that had preceded it, yet it was not applauded with that fury, which leaves not the least doubt of its having been felt.¹⁶⁸

4. [...] the whole was finished by *Beatus Vir*, a motet, in grand chorus, with solo and duet parts between. The principle counter-tenor had a solo verse in it which he bellowed out with as much violence as if he had done it for life, while a knife was at his throat. But though this wholly stunned me, I plainly *saw*, by the smiles of ineffable satisfaction which were visible in the countenances of ninety-nine out of a hundred of the company, and heard, by the most violent applause that a ravished audience could bestow, that it was quite what their hearts felt, and their souls loved.

5. One thing I find here, which makes me grieve at the abuse of nature's bounty, the voices are in themselves really good and well toned; and this is easily to be discovered, in despite of false direction and a vitiated expression.¹⁶⁹

Here we see that Burney, far from having misunderstood a hyper-delicate French singing style, is in fact displeased with its lack of subtlety, its use of force. The emphasis placed on volume, the avoidance of mixing the chest and head voice and the lack of success with French audiences for singers performing in the Italian style all shocked the pro-Italian Englishman. It is of course true that he here describes a different set of performers working in different conditions on a different repertoire: he does not here specifically refer to Arnould. However, if her vocal outrages had been so very different from what Burney clearly felt was a national style, surely he would have mentioned this?

Other foreign and anti-French writers corroborate Burney's claims: Quantz for instance in his *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte Traversiere zu Spielen* (1752) mentions that French singers do not unite the chest and head voice (he says that the result is a 'disagreeable scream'¹⁷⁰), and we have seen that Rousseau, in his *Lettre sur la musique française*, affirms that singers were applauded for their *sons filés* (which he characterizes as 'dragging' and 'screaming', see Chapter 3.1). Now, I admit that if one compares Burney's perception of French vocal art with what Bérard says that French singers are attempting to do, one sees that he has entirely missed the point of the vocal expression that the French audience so loved. But surely he cannot be thought to have been so poor as critic as to have mistaken soft and subtle singing for loud screams?

However, it is not only the relationship between Burney's criticisms and the realities of the French stage that interests me: what is more important here is that Cyr has not mentioned any of this in her article. On the contrary, she miscasts the nature of Burney's criticism of French singing, even though she had already cited his *The Present State of Music in France and Italy* earlier in the article and therefore must have known all of the above quotations. The same tendency can be read in her odd choice of the word 'elaboration' to translate 'pousser [...] leurs voix' in a quotation taken from de Rochemont's *Réflexions d'un patriote sur l'opéra français, et sur l'opéra italien*:

De Rochemont blamed the performer's desire to sing continuously rather than adopt a more declamatory manner when the text demanded it:

One further thing ruins our singers, both male and female, namely their passion for elaboration and brilliance [*la fureur de pousser et de faire briller leurs voix*].¹⁷¹

Surely the phrase 'their passion for elaboration and brilliance' is very different in tone to *la fureur de pousser et de faire briller leurs voix*, which could better be translated 'their mania for pushing and showing off their voices'¹⁷². Elaboration vaguely implies the addition of notes where as *pousser* clearly indicates an increase in volume. Cyr's remarks create a highly misleading context in which her analysis of Bérard's *L'Art du chant* is subsequently placed.

Now before proceeding I must clarify my aims here: I do not intend to embark upon a full-blow inquiry into the sources for the so-called *cri français*. I am well aware that French writers during the *Querelle des Bouffons* used this trope for a number of polemical ends. However, I feel that the evidence strongly supports the idea that these parodies of French 'screams' had a basis in fact: we shall see that this strong volume of French singers, which Cyr is at some pains to disavow, was often linked to the technique of *filer le son*, which in turn led to stretching the length notes in order to accommodate the singer's swells.

168. Burney, *The Present State*, 26.

169. Burney, *The Present State*, 32.

170. See: Johann Joachim Quantz, *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte Traversiere zu Spielen* (Berlin: 1752), chapter IV, 17.

171. Cyr, 'Eighteenth-century French and Italian singing', 334.

172. See the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française*, tome second, 441, where *pousser la voix* is defined: 'On dit, Pousser la voix, la pousser davantage, pour dire, Parler plus haut'. See, also, Chapter 3.2b for my discussion of the entry 'pousser' in Brossard's *Dictionnaire*.

Before continuing to Cyr's analysis of Bérard, I would like to pause to examine a concrete example of the link which I have just postulated between text, affect, vocal volume and rhythmic freedom. A very clear instance showing how these factors could work together for expressive purposes can be found in the printed score of François Colin de Blamont's *cantate française* entitled *Le Charme de la voix*. Here, in an air notated in 3/2 meter for flute, voice and continuo, the text describes how the singing of 'la belle Florisse' outdoes that of the birds of the forest. In a showy passage, Colin de Blamont paints the rapturous flight of the enchanted fowl around the bewitching sylvan siren:

Les oyseaux aiment sa voix tendre
Autour d'Elle on les voit voler,
L'un meurt du plaisir de l'entendre,
Et l'autre de l'effort qu'il fait pour l'égaler.

Here [see figure 3.5] we see that the composer sets the text for maximum effect: the singer, having made a *tirade* upwards terminating in a trill on the word *voler*, lands on f'' at the top of her range (the tessitura for the entire *cantate* is d'-g''). This whole note is marked *fillé le son* [sic] while the half note in the accompanying flute part is marked *filé*. The flute then imitates the voice's *tirade*-and-trill combination at double speed and the singer continues with the next line of text.

This is a very useful and concrete example of a long, high note being swelled by the vocalist in order to express the flight of the birds, but even more remarkable is the word *Demeuré* above the dotted half note in the bass. Here we see that even though the swell takes place on a long note, the bass still must wait for the singer to accomplish the full amplitude of her ornament before progressing, after the impulse given by the flute, to beat three.

I cannot fault Cyr for not knowing, in 1980, this obscure *cantate* by a composer whose work even today is but little known. However, there are numerous indications from original sources which Cyr herself cited in her article that point to there being a link between volume, *filer le son* and rubato on the French stage. For instance, she notes that Rousseau:

[...] also criticized the sort of singer who 'suspend le récit hors de propos pour *filer de beaux sons* sur des syllabes qui ne signifient rien et qui ne forment aucun repos dans le sens'.¹⁷³

which is a clear condemnation of an anti-rhetorical use of rubato associated with the ornament *filer le son*. This stretching of words 'hors du propos' is just what disturbed Burney about French opera. He wrote, in the same passage of his *General History* which contains the above quoted complaint about Arnould's 'vocal outrages', that:

[...] the hanging on every note, as if unwilling to relinquish it, checks and impedes the motion of the air, and gives it a slow and languid effect, however lively the theme on which it is composed. Every passage in such melody resembles a French heroic verse:

"[...] That like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along."¹⁷⁴

Though Burney makes no mention of *filer le son* in relationship to this 'hanging on', there is no dearth of such swells in the ornamented monologues printed as an appendix to Bérard's treatise, and not only on long notes. This brings me to my final criticism of Cyr's article: her treatment of the subject of *sons filés* in Bérard's book. In qualifying de Brosses' remark that Italian singers know nothing of the technique, Cyr writes:

Although Debrosses denies it, we know from Pier Francesco Tosi and other Italian writers that the *son filé* or *messa di voce* was well known for its expressive value on long notes.¹⁷⁵

She further comments on Bérard's annotations to 'Lieux Funestes' from Rameau's *Dardanus*:

Long notes also frequently show a swell, or *son filé* [...].¹⁷⁶

173. Cyr, 'Eighteenth-century French and Italian singing', 334.

174. Charles Burney, *A General History of Music*, volume the second (New York: Dover, 1957), 967.

175. Cyr, 'Eighteenth-century French and Italian singing', 323-4.

176. Cyr, 'Eighteenth-century French and Italian singing', 327.

Finally, in discussing Bérard's ornamented version of 'Ciel, quelle vapeur m'environne' from Lully's *Atys*, she notes:

Bérard treats the passage in a similar manner to the monologues which surround it, adding appoggiaturas, trills and a few swells on long notes, or occasionally a vibrato (*flatté*) [...].¹⁷⁷

No exception can be taken to these remarks, which are just, as far as they go, in asserting the happy application of *messa di voce* and *son filé* to long notes; it is what Cyr doesn't mention that is interesting here. For of the 20 examples of pieces taken from French operatic repertoire ornamented by Bérard, eight have *sons filés entiers* marked on note values smaller than a half note, and two of them even show swells on eighth notes. Furthermore, none of these pieces is notated in a meter sign associated with a slow tempo; five are in *triple simple*, two are in *binair*e and one is in 2/4 meter.¹⁷⁸ Now, if we realize that Bérard's own definition of the *son filé entier* is:

Le Son filé entier est un Son continué sur le même degré: on le commence doux & en dedans, on l'étend jusqu'à son dernier période de volume, sans cependant le crier ou le forcer: on le ramene ensuite insensiblement au point de douceur, d'où l'on étoit parti.¹⁷⁹

then it will become clear that nearly half of the airs in Bérard's collection must be performed freely if one is to accommodate the full amplitude of this ornament. As we have seen in the Colin de Blamont example, even whole notes could be stretched in order to render a singer's *sons filés* more brilliant, so surely shorter note values like quarter notes and eighth notes must have been stretched as well. The case studies in Chapter 5 include a reconstruction one of Bérard's ornamented monologues ('Du plus charmant espoir' from Jean-baptiste Stuck's *Polidore*), with the *sons filés* being stretched for maximum effect.

Interesting, too, is Bérard's warning that, although the singer must reach the maximum strength of his voice at the highpoint of the swell, 'screaming' was not permitted. It would seem, from the many critical voices of visiting foreign musicians, that this rule was often broken by French performers, perhaps due to 'la fureur de pousser et de faire briller leurs voix'?

So, if there is compelling evidence for freedom of tempo in Bérard's treatise, even though rubato is never explicitly mentioned by him, then there is equally compelling evidence that Cyr, whether consciously or not, has overlooked it.

3.5b 'Audible Rhetoric and Mute Rhetoric: The 17th-century French Sarabande'

Cyr's implicit advocacy for in-time performance was give more explicit support six years later in Patricia Ranum's influential *Early Music* article 'Audible Rhetoric and Mute Rhetoric: The 17th-century French Sarabande'. Ranum leaves no stone unturned in her ambitious attempt to probe to the very heart of passionate expression in French Baroque dance: visual, musical and rhetorical sources are brought to bear on the question in an unusually thorough way. Pride of place is given to syllable lengths and poetic theory, and the speed and rhythm of the dancer's steps are related directly to the expression of lines of verse in vocal music:

Syllable lengths and rhythmic units combine in various ways to create the rhythms of the passions. A run of long syllables, especially if broken into short units, makes a speech seem to move slowly. A run of short syllables in long units is heard as moving rapidly, while a unit of similar length with numerous long syllables seems dragged out and suspenseful. Shifts from one passion to another are often revealed by a series of words with 'feminine' endings [...].¹⁸⁰

As fascinating and enlightening as this all is, Ranum immediately after makes a series of untenable, sweeping statements:

177. Cyr, 'Eighteenth-century French and Italian singing', 328.

178. Of course, all of these meter signs could be beaten more quickly or slowly depending on a number of contextual factors: but they are none of them associated with slow tempi. For instance, a *triple simple*, even if marked *très lentement*, would never be as slow as 3/2 meter. For a thorough discussion see: Miehling, *Das Tempo*.

179. Bérard, *L'Art*, 120.

180. Patricia Ranum, 'Audible Rhetoric and Mute Rhetoric: The 17th-century French Sarabande', *Early Music*, vol. 14, no. 1 (Feb., 1986), 22-39, 27.

These, then, are the passionate rhythms that create the ‘movement’ of a French Baroque dance song. They ‘move’ the audience by arousing a variety of passions, and they create the effect of changing the ‘tempo’ at which the words are sung within the inflexible musical beat. They are the key to the performance of all French Baroque music, for they are inseparable from the figures of speech and the body gestures of the art of rhetoric.¹⁸¹

Here Ranum not only equates the performance practice suitable to vocal dance forms with that of music for dancing, she takes the remarkable further step of exaggerating the importance of sung syllable lengths until they become the very ‘key to performance’ of all of French Baroque music. Thus, to draw the logical conclusions from such a statement, all French music must be performed in time, encased within Ranum’s ‘inflexible musical beat’. It is not only adequate, but advisable, simply to realize the notated rhythms on the page.

I bring this up here because Ranum’s article does not represent work done in isolation. It was, by her own admission, based on a meticulous examination of ‘meter upon meter of oscillogram print-outs’ marked with long and short syllables by a fellow scholar,¹⁸² and she was, moreover, able to put her theories to the test in the mouths of arguably the most important French period singers of the day:

I am especially indebted to William Christie and all the members of ‘Les Arts Florissants’ for their encouragement, their judicious observations and their willingness to test my findings.¹⁸³

Thus, Ranum worked intensively with specialist scholars and performers, and presumably discussed her theories with them in detail. Her article must, therefore, to some extent be seen an important manifestation of ideas more generally at play within 1980s Early Music scholarship and performance practice. How remarkable, then, that she should invoke, in an article that boldly asserts that the French expressed the passions within the framework of an ‘inflexible musical beat’, not only Bacilly’s *L’Art de bien chanter*, but also Grimarest’s *Traité du récitatif* and Rameau’s *Erreurs sur la musique dans l’Encyclopédie*. As we have seen, all three of these treatises contain strong statements supporting the use of rhythmical liberties in the performance of French music. In addition, Bacilly makes clear that sung and danced songs ought to have differing performance practices, the vocal version being much freer, rhythmically, in performance than the choreographed one. Ranum thus cites three sources which unequivocally explode her basic premise. How could this have happened?

We seem to see, both here in and Cyr’s article, evidence of a collective blind spot of the Early Music movement, an inability to recognize those sources that argue not against, but rather very much in favor of a free beat in the performance of French vocal music. Cyr, for instance, had noted Lecuyer’s statement that monologues were freer in performance than other types of pieces. So too, Ranum specifically mentions Grimarest’s text as supplying ‘details about tone of voice, speech rhythms and gestures’¹⁸⁴, so one can hardly imagine she hadn’t read his clear exhortations to the singer to break the musical time wherever possible in order to express the words and make said gestures. It seems that it was the *Zeitgeist* that made it difficult for scholars to recognize this particular aspect of performance practice when looking at the sources. I therefore hope that this thesis may contribute in some way to a continuing dialogue between scholars, performers and audience about the place of free expression in our contemporary performances of the *tragédie en musique*.



181. Ranum, ‘Audible Rhetoric’, 27.

182. Ranum, ‘Audible Rhetoric’, 34.

183. Ranum, ‘Audible Rhetoric’, 34.

184. Ranum, ‘Audible Rhetoric’, 36.

Chapter 4

Affect, gesture and timing at
the Opéra: contributory sources

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will examine a number of primary sources related to affect and gesture¹ that have been used in preparing the case studies in Chapter 5, and will therefore aid the reader in situating my gestural interpretations and experiments within the investigative framework that I have created from both primary and secondary sources.

Section 4.2, entitled ‘The importance of *actio* in the performance of the *tragédie en musique*’, deals with French sources specifically relating to acting at the Opéra. I felt that it is important to establish at the outset just what contemporaries themselves wrote about the role that acting played in the experience of French opera, both on its own terms and in comparison to other genres like *opera seria* or the reform operas of Gluck.

Section 4.3, entitled ‘Selected written sources used in the reconstruction of *actio*’ lays before the reader the logic behind my use of various 17th- and 18th-century sources in reconstructing an *actio* acceptable to the purposes of this research. I shall therefore focus on what I have chosen to use from various French sources (in 4.3a), as well as my justification for using English treatises like Gilbert Austin’s *Chironomia* (in 4.3b) and Aaron Hill’s *An Essay on the Art of Acting* (in 4.3c); by being very open about my use of these sources I hope to make my work more transparent for future scholars. I close this section with an examination of the prescriptions for vocal color and *actio* in Jean-Antoine Bérard’s *L’Art du chant* and Jean Blanchet’s *L’Art ou les principes philosophiques du chant*, (both in 4.3d).

Section 4.4, entitled ‘The visual arts as an aid in reconstructing *actio*’ is devoted to my use of writings and paintings by artists of the period—particularly Charles Le Brun (4.4a), Gerard de Lairese (4.4b), Antoine and Charles-Antoine Coypel (4.4c), and Cornelis Troost (4.4d)—as sources for appropriate gestures, postures and attitudes in both tragedy and comedy.

Section 4.5, entitled ‘Music and *vérité*’, brings together in a new context many of the ideas presented in Chapters 2 and 3. The importance to contemporaries of creating an emotional contagion through the realistic representation of the passions on stage and the consequent use of a freely beaten meter to express affect and words, will here be more specifically related to the body of the performer.

4.2 The importance of *actio* in the performance of the *tragédie en musique*

Charles de Brosses, writing from Rome in a letter dated ‘Octobre 1739—Février 1740’, devotes his epistolary talents to enumerating some of the differences between French and Italian opera. He mentions that a chamber performance of two acts of Lully’s *Armide* was given in Rome during his stay there which left the Italians yawning. Although he counted himself among the enthusiasts for Italian opera, de Brosses loved the French style as well and took great care to explain differences between the two genres without unfairly criticizing the *tragédie en musique*. One of its most powerful charms, he makes clear, was extra-musical, namely the place it afforded for the singers to act:

J’ajouterai encore ici que je vous ai toujours soutenu, que la scène d’opéra ne voulait pas être séparée de l’action théâtrale qui lui donne une grande partie de son expression et de sa force, et qu’elle n’était point propre aux concerts de chambre.²

In fact, de Brosses was not the only one to remark on this, Rousseau was to use the same argument in criticizing ‘Enfin il est en ma puissance’ in his *Lettre sur la musique française* (1753):

Cependant ce monologue a toujours fait, et je ne doute pas qu’il ne fit encore un grand effet au théâtre, parce que les vers en sont admirables et la situation vive et intéressante. Mais, sans les bras et le jeu de l’actrice, je suis

1. By gesture I mean any bodily movement made consciously by the performer on stage in order to underline the specific significance of important words of the text. Facial expression, eye movements, and shifts of weight are, for me, as much gestures as are motions of the arms and hands.

2. Charles de Brosses, *Lettres familières sur l’Italie* (Genève: Éditions de Crémille, 1969), 314.

persuadé que personne n'en pourrait souffrir le récitatif, et qu'une pareille musique a grand besoin du secours des yeux pour être supportable aux oreilles.³

Indeed, the importance of acting to French opera was a common theme in 18th-century writings on music. Jean Blanchet, whose *L'Art, ou principes philosophiques du chant* will be treated in the following section, remarked of the opera 'ces sortes de spectacles sont également faits pour les yeux & les oreilles'.⁴ Travenol, in writing his *Querelle* pamphlet entitled *La Galerie de l'Académie royale de musique* (1754), felt he had to defend even the two most famous and respected performers at the Opéra from accusations of charming the eye more than the ear:

Oh! la plaisante chose, continueront-ils: ce sont les bras de Jéliote, & de Mlle Fel qui font tous leurs talens. S'il cessoient de remuer les bras, nous ne les écouterions plus, ou s'ils remuoient les bras sans chanter, ils nous raviroient encore. Pourquoi les entendons-nous avec tant de plaisir dans un Concert, où ils ne s'en servent pas? Que deviendra le Concert Spirituel, ce spectacle si suivi. si couru, si enchanteur, que les bras ne soutiennent point?⁵

But the trope was widespread and deeply rooted: even foreigners had commented upon the (in their estimation unhealthy) relationship between *actio* and singing at the Opéra. For instance, Johann Mattheson noted in his *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (1739) that:

Man betrachte die Französische Sänger und Sängerinnen, mit welcher Inbrust sie ihre Sachen vorbringen, und fast allemahl dasjenige wirklich bey sich zu empfinden scheinen, wovon sie singen. Daher kömmt es auch, daß sie die Leidenschafften der Zuhörer, zumahl ihrer Landsleute, sehr rege machen, und durch ihre Geberden und Manieren ersetzen, was ihnen sonst an gründlichem Unterricht, an Festigkeit, oder an der Stimme abgehet.⁶

Mattheson here praises French operatic singers for infecting their audience with strong passions, a feat that they achieved by seeming to be truly affected by the passion of the text they are singing; but, despite this talent, the German author doesn't lose the opportunity of censuring their musical capabilities. Mattheson's compatriot Johann Joachim Quantz wrote something very similar in his *Versuch einer Anweisung, die Flöte traversiere zu spielen* (1752):

Ihre [...] Arien werden mehrentheils, wegen Mangels der guten Sänger, so gesetzt, daß sie ein jeder, wer nur will, nachsingen kann: welches zwar solchen Liebhabern der Muzik, die nicht viel davon verstehen, ein Vergnügen machet; den Sängern aber keinen sonderlichen Vorzug giebt. Es bleibt ihren Sängern nichts besonders eigen, als die gute Action, welche sie vor andern Völkern voraus haben.⁷

Quantz' starting point here is the poor quality of French singers, which, he feels, has ensured that composers write for them appropriately simple music. The only remarkable aspect of French opera, then, for Quantz, is the national acting style, which is superior to that of other countries.

The two different yet equally damning arguments of these Germans observers—namely, that only the acting could make the audience forget how bad were the singers, or that the music was so weak that only acting could save it—together formed a double-pronged pitchfork with which many a pro-Italian devil tormented the lovers of French opera during the *Querelle des Bouffons*. However, it must be noted, before continuing this line of inquiry, that François Raguenet, in his *Parallèle des italiens et des françois en ce qui regarde la musique et les opéra* (1702), actually condemned both acting and singing at the Opéra:

[...] ce qui fait qu'ils [the Italians] chantent mieux que nous, étant aussi cause qu'ils sont meilleurs Acteurs; car, se faisant un jeu de la Musique et chantant avec toute la justesse possible sans être obligés à faire attention ni à la mesure ni à aucune autre règle, il arrive de là qu'ils peuvent mettre toute leur application à bien accommoder leur extérieur à l'action; et que n'étant attentifs qu'à entrer dans les passions et à composer leurs gestes, il leur est bien plus aisé d'être bons Acteurs qu'aux François, qui ne sachent pas si bien la Musique, sont souvent obligés à s'occuper entièrement du soin d'en exécuter les règles. Nous n'avons pas un seul homme capable de faire le personnage d'un Amant passionné, dans nos Opéra, à la réserve de Dumény; mais outre qu'il chante extrêmement faux et qu'il sait

3. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 'Lettre sur la musique française' in *Œuvres de J. J. Rousseau, citoyen de Genève* (Paris: 1827), tome neuvième, 311. http://books.google.nl/books?id=U7QaAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA243&dq=intitle:lettre+intitle:sur+intitle:musique+inauthor:rousseau&hl=nl&ei=SV-LTIBvyos47P-Z6go&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CCsQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q&f=false. Last accessed 8-9-2010.

4. Jean Blanchet, *L'Art ou les principes philosophiques du chant* (Paris: 1756), 52.

5. [Travenol], 'La Galerie de l'Académie royale de musique, contenant les portraits, en vers, des principaux sujets, qui la composent en la présente année' (1754), 14-5, in *La Querelle des Bouffons: texte des pamphlets* (Genève: Minkoff Reprint, 1973), Denise Launay, ed., tome II, 1487-1548.

6. Johann Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (Hamburg: 1739), 36.

7. Johann Joachim Quantz: *Versuch einer Anweisung, die Flöte traversiere zu spielen* (Berlin, 1752), 316.

tres-peu de Musique, il s'en faut bien que sa voix soit aussi agréable et aussi belle, que celles des Castrati d'Italie.⁸

Raguenet criticizes not only the musical incompetence of French singers, he asserts that their preoccupation with just trying to get through the music distracts them from acting well. If we bear in mind the kind of arguments that were used during the *Querelle des Bouffons* by the pro-Italian camp, we cannot fail to recognize in Raguenet's analysis the opening skirmishes of the pamphlet war itself, as the following passage from the *Parallèle* demonstrates:

Les Italiens n'étudient la Musique qu'une fois, mais ils l'apprennent dans la dernière perfection: Les François l'étudient tellement quellement, mais aussi faut-il qu'ils l'étudient toute leur vie; car, à chaque nouvelle Pièce qui se présente en France, il faut que les Musiciens l'étudient et l'apprennent, pour la bien chanter; il faut faire une infinité de répétitions particulières d'un Opéra pour le mettre en état d'être représenté en public; celui-ci commence trop tôt, celui-là trop tard; l'un chante faux, l'autre manque à la mesure; le Maître de Musique se tourmente de la main et de la voix, il fait cent contorsions de tous les membres de son corps, et avec cela il a bien de la peine à en venir à bout. Les Italiens, au contraire, sont si consommez, et pour ainsi dire, si infaillibles dans la Musique, que tout un Opéra s'exécute chez eux avec la dernière justesse, sans même qu'on y batte la mesure [...].⁹

We are here presented with an image of out-of-time and out-of-tune singers marshaled by a desperate *batteur de mesure*, tropes of French opera which would resurface 50 years later in the pamphlets of the *Querelle* (for more on this, see Chapter 3). It is impossible to know how fair Raguenet is being here: were French singers at the opera in this period rhythmically weak, or were they singing freely in order to express the passions? Were they, perhaps, singing out of tune for the same reasons? Claude-Joseph Dorat, in a much later publication (the fourth edition of his *La Déclamation théâtrale*, which I am using here, was first published in 1771), defended the French vocal practice of making unmusical sounds in order to represent strong passions. As he noted, looking back to the famous "Enfin il est en ma puissance" from Lully's *Armide*:

Que ces emportemens son mêlés de tendresse!
Quel contraste frappant de force & de foiblesse!
Que de soupirs brûlans! que de secrets combats!
Que de cris & d'accens, qui ne se notent pas!
A l'ame seule alors il faut que j'applaudisse:
La Chanteuse s'éclipse, & fait place a l'Actrice,
Il échappe souvent des sons à la douleur,
Qui sont faux à l'oreille & sont vrais pour le cœur.¹⁰

Thus, according to Dorat, the listener's heart is satisfied with out-of-tune singing because it corresponds naturally to the Armide's heightened passion. The singer makes room for the actress, and cries and inflections that cannot be notated are applauded as being the soulful expressions Armide's suffering. It must be kept in mind, when evaluating references to musically unskilled French singers, that they seem consciously to have made use of a range of special effects that pro-Italian listeners found unbearable.

Even as late as 1781, after Gluck-mania had swept through Paris, the older French school was mocked for this very combination of unmusical sounds and strong acting:

Comme la Musique de Lulli, ainsi que celle de presque toute l'Ecole François, ne faisoit rien pour les Acteurs, les Acteurs avoient tout à faire pour la Musique; de-là ces remuemens de tête, de bras, de sourcils, ces ports de voix langoureux, ces cadences molles, ces cris inhumains, ces sons arrachés du fond des entrailles & accompagnés de longs râlemens, & tout cet immense amas d'affectations & de minauderies qu'on avoit la bonté de prendre pour de l'expression.¹¹

Indeed, the *Archives littéraires de l'europe ou melanges de littérature, d'histoire et de philosophie* (1807) contains Antoine-Chrysostome Quatremère de Quincy's *Dissertation sur les opéras bouffons italiens* (1789), which has the following to remark about *opéra comique*, which shows that the French emphasis on acting while singing survived the demise of *tragédie en musique*:

[...] dans nos spectacles de musique, m'a-t-il toujours semblé [...] qu'il y règne une sorte d'équivoque de plaisir. Ne

8. François Raguenet, *Parallèle des italiens et des français en ce qui regarde la musique et les opéra* (Paris: 1702), 94-7.

9. Raguenet, *Parallèle*, 89-91.

10. [Claude Joseph Dorat], *La Déclamation théâtrale: poème didactique*, quatrième édition (Paris: 1771), 141.

11. Anonymous, 'La Soirée perdue à l'opéra' in *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de la révolution opérée dans la musique par M. le Chevalier Gluck*, ed. Gaspard-Michel Leblond (Naples and Paris, [1781]), 46-61, 49-50. This point of view was presaged by Laugier in his *Apologie de la musique française, contre M. Rousseau* (1754), for a discussion of which see Chapter 3.4b.

prend-on pas souvent l'expression du jeu pour l'expression du chant, l'esprit du poète pour le talent du musicien, l'intérêt dramatique pour l'intérêt musical? L'acteur n'y reçoit-il pas plus de bravo que le chanteur? Je n'en sais rien; mais j'entends toujours louer les chanteurs sur leur jeu, applaudir la scène à place de l'air, et le spectacle pour la musique; on diroit que l'acteur chante par les gestes, et que le peuple n'écoute qu'avec les yeux.¹²

The point I am making here is that acting was considered by many writers, over a long period of time, to be essential to, perhaps overly dominant in, the *tragédie en musique*, and that the beloved tradition of *vérité* in *actio* even lived on in subsequent genres. I therefore felt that it was very important for me to establish, for myself, clear guidelines as to style, timing and frequency of gesture before undertaking any experimental reconstructions. The following sections of this chapter will elucidate the logic behind my choices, and prepare the reader to evaluate their application in my case studies (Chapter 5).

4.3 Selected written sources used in the reconstruction of *actio*

An overview of the acting and rhetorical treatises used in this research trajectory has been given in my Introduction to this thesis; however, it is my intention here to expand upon that information. I wish to clarify what kinds of sources have contributed to the *actio* I devised for the scenes recorded in the case studies, and further to concentrate on arguments in favor of using certain sources whose application to this repertoire might at first glance seem injudicious.

4.3a Various treatises from Sabine Chaouche's *Sept Traités*: building up a language of gesture

The treatises republished in Sabine Chaouche's invaluable *Sept Traités sur le jeu du comédien et autres textes: de l'action oratoire à l'art dramatique* (1657-1750) have been listed in the Introduction to this thesis, and therefore will not be re-inventoried here. All seven of these works have contributed in some way to my understanding of stage action in France during my chosen period. I have followed a general plan of accepting movements described in older treatises into the *actio* of my case studies, the idea being that 17th-century oratorical gestures might still fit into the stage language of the 18th century in certain cases. Thus, for example, René Bary's *Méthode pour bien prononcer un discours et pour le bien animer* (1679) has been very important to my work, not only as a mine to be worked in terms of specific gestures, but as a touchstone for appraising the usefulness of gestures from later periods (more will be said about this in the next section, where Austin's *Chironomia* is discussed). My goal was to find a generic acting style that would be suitable to reconstructing affective performances of the *tragédie en musique* in either the late 17th or the early 18th century. My reasoning has been laid before the reader at several points in this thesis, and will not be repeated here.

Here follows a sampling of the kinds of information I have gathered from *Sept Traités*:

1. From Michel Le Faucheur's *Traité de l'action de l'orateur ou de la prononciation et du geste* (1657) I have taken many basic precepts of movement. Le Faucheur discusses both oratory and stage action, and I have taken care to evaluate as best I could the differences between the two that he presents.

Le Faucheur pleads eloquently for a naturalistic representation of the passions in the voice and gestures of the speaker, 'naturalistic' in their conformity to Galenist principles of the physical manifestations of affect:

Car la corde sonne selon qu'elle est touchée; si on la touche doucement, elle rend un son doux; si fermement, elle en rend un fort & vigoureux. Il en est de même de la parole. Si elle procède d'une affection véhémence, elle produit une Prononciation véhémence; si d'une pensée paisible, elle produit une Prononciation qui est paisible tout de même. Il accommodera donc le ton & l'accent de sa voix à la nature de chacune des passions dont il est touché en soi-même, & dont il désire toucher les autres.¹³

Basics of oratorical posture and stance are also described (which corresponds well with figure of the tragic actor in the painting by Watteau that was discussed in Chapter 1 (see: <http://www.wga.hu/index.html>, Jean-Antoine Watteau, page 2, *Actors at the Comédie Française*). His recommendation to speak straight out to the audience has influenced my reconstructions significantly:

12. Antoine-Chrysostome Quatremère de Quincy, 'Dissertation sur les opéras bouffons italiens' in *Archives littéraires de l'europe ou melanges de littérature, d'histoire et de philosophie* (1807), tome seizième, 3-32, 7-8.

13. Michel Le Faucheur, 'Traité de l'action de l'orateur ou de la prononciation et du geste' (1657) in *Sept Traités sur le jeu du comédien et autres textes: de l'action oratoire à l'art dramatique* (1657-1750), ed. Sabine Chaouche (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2001), 91-2.

Pour le corps entier, il ne doit changer ni de place, ni de posture à tout moment[...] Qu'il ne faut pas aussi qu'elle se remue incessamment, ni qu'elle branle ou qu'elle s'avance souvent dans la contention du discours, comme il arrive à divers personnes; mais qu'il faut qu'en fuyant ces extrémités, elle se tourne doucement sur son col, quand il n'est besoin, comme la Nature l'y porte elle-même, pour ne regarder pas seulement ceux qui sont devant ses yeux au milieu d'une assemblée, mais jeter aussi la vue de fois à l'autre sur ceux qui sont à ses côtés, tantôt d'un côté, tantôt de l'autre; & après cela se tenir ordinairement en la posture où la voix peut être plus aisément entendue de la plus grande partie de ses Auditeurs, c'est-à-dire, regardant le l'auditoire. À quoi j'ajoute, qu'elle se doit toujours tourner du même côté que le Geste, hormis aux choses que nous refusons [...].¹⁴

Le Faucheur also describes the basic position of the arms and hands:

Enfin, il faut que vos yeux voient toujours vos mains, qu'elles environnent toujours votre tête, qu'elles s'en écartent le moins qu'il se peut soit au-dessus, soit au dessous, afin que ceux à qui vous parlez voient tout ensemble votre bouche, vos yeux & vos mains concourant à leur signifier une même chose, chacun en sa façon, & qu'ils s'en fasse une tant plus grande & plus agréable impression en leurs sens & en leurs esprits.¹⁵

Various gestures of the eye and hand, and their appropriateness to specific affective situations, are also discussed.¹⁶ The timing of the gesture to the words is made explicit (though not all French sources would agree with Le Faucheur on this):

Il faut que le Geste aille de la gauche à la droite, & qu'il finisse à la droite, non comme en frappant, mais comme en la posant doucement. Il doit commencer avec la parole, & finir avec elle. Car ce serait chose ridicule que votre Geste commençât avant que vous eussiez ouvert la bouche, ou qu'il continuât après que vous auriez cessé de parler.¹⁷

However, what is most interesting to me, especially in the context of my attempt to understand the place of *vérité*, or 'naturalism' in French acting styles, is Le Faucheur's remark on the need for the speaker to feel the passions in order to make them contagious:

C'est pourquoi l'Orateur se doit former en lui-même une forte idée du sujet de sa passion, & ainsi cette passion s'émouvra infailliblement, & paraîtra aussitôt dans ses yeux, & même dans les esprits des autres, comme en regardant une personne qui a grand mal aux yeux, nous en souffrons bien souvent aux nôtres.¹⁸

This remark, foreshadowing by nearly one hundred years aspects of Aaron Hill's *An Essay on the Art of Acting* (1753), has strongly influenced the style and intensity of the gestures devised for my case studies.

Finally, Le Faucheur makes clear one essential difference—in terms of preparation—between the public speaker and the actor on stage:

Je n'entends pas non plus que toutes les fois qu'il [the orator] a à parler en public, il étudie dans son cabinet tous les Gestes desquels il doit user, ou en la Chaire ou au Barreau, comme ce Rosius dont les Anciens disent, qu'il ne faisait jamais de Geste devant le peuple qu'il n'eût étudié en son particulier. [...] Car, comme l'a très bien remarqué Antoine, dans Cicéron, les Auditeurs n'exigent pas en cela la même exactitude & les mêmes soins d'un Orateur que d'un Acteur, parce que quand ils écoutent un Acteur au Théâtre, ils n'attachent pas leur esprit aux choses qu'il représente, lesquelles ils savent être fausses & fabuleuses, mais seulement à la belle manière de les représenter, c'est-à-dire ou à l'élégance de l'élocution, ou à la grâce de la Prononciation & du Geste, en quoi s'ils ne contentent leurs sens, ils sont mal satisfaits de lui: au lieu que quand ils entendent un Orateur, ils s'attachent principalement aux choses sérieuses & importantes dont il discourt; & quant à l'Action, ils se contentent qu'il l'ait raisonnable, & qu'elle ne choque ni leurs oreilles ni leurs yeux.¹⁹

For this I have drawn the conclusion that, though 'natural' and contagious, the actors delivery and *actio* was also graceful and studied; and that this peculiar mixture of *vérité* and artificiality was required by the nature of the text.

2. René Bary's *Méthode pour bien prononcer un discours* (1679) contains a list of gestures which will be briefly discussed in section 4.3c. However, I would here like to present a text taken from the second edition of another treatise by Bary that Chaouche has included in *Sept Traités*, entitled *La Rhétorique française*

14. Le Faucheur, 'Traité' in *Sept Traités*, 123.

15. Le Faucheur, 'Traité' in *Sept Traités*, 134.

16. See: Chaouche, ed., *Sept Traités*, 177-184.

17. Le Faucheur, 'Traité' in *Sept Traités*, 133-4.

18. Le Faucheur, 'Traité' in *Sept Traités*, 128.

19. Le Faucheur, 'Traité' in *Sept Traités*, 138-9.

(1673). I used this passage as an exercise in fitting gesture to words:

L'on doit accomoder l'action aux diverses flexions de la voix, & aux divers sense des paroles, & toutes les fois qu'on observera ce précepte, l'on sera en état d'avoir une favorable attention. Quand l'on représente quelque action modeste, l'on doit baisser la tête, & humilier le regard. Quand l'on représente le ciel ou la terre, l'on doit hausser ou baisser le bras, selon les chose hautes ou basses. Quand l'on représente quelque naufrage, les bras élevés & abaissés & mus à droit[e] & à gauche en forme de cercle, doivent mettre devant les yeux le bouleversement des choses. Quand l'on représente quelque chose [de] méprisable, la main en s'avancant doit représenter le rejet qu'on en fait. Quand on représente quelque justification, l'on doit mettre durant quelques moments les mains sur l'estomac. Quand l'on représente quelque contestation, l'on doit avancer le corps & ouvrir extraordinairement les yeux. Quand on représente quelque mouvement de colère, l'on doit pencher le corps, l'on doit mouvoir les yeux, l'on doit branler les paupières, l'on doit grincer les dents. Quand l'on représente quelque combat l'on doit tourner la tête a droit[e] et à gauche, l'on doit avancer le corps & le retirer un peu, & l'on doit lever le bras l'un après l'autre en forme d'estramaçon. Quand l'on représente quelque préoccupation, l'on doit tourner la tête en la branlant, l'on doit exprimer le refus des raisons avec le repoussement des mains. Quand l'on représente quelque remontrance, l'on doit simplement pencher le corps. Quand l'on représente quelque moquerie, l'on doit avancer le bras & darder le doigt. Quand l'on représente quelque distribution, l'on doit tourner la tête à droit[e] & à gauche, & rendre par ce moyen le dénombrement plus remarquable. Quand l'on représente quelque imploration, l'on doit lever la tête vers le ciel & croiser les bras. Quand l'on représente quelque posture rêveuse, l'on doit pencher la tête du côté de l'épaule gauche, & l'on doit tout ensemble lever les paupières & fixer les regards. Enfin quand l'on représente quelque exhortation, l'on doit adoucir le visage & avancer un peu le corps.²⁰

I tried here to find a balance between *vérité* and art, while following Bary's prescriptions and matching action to word (with the notable exception of grinding my teeth; there are limits to my enthusiasm as a researcher of Baroque gesture) [see video 4.1]. I have realized the text in a highly theatrical manner, as I felt befit my needs for an exercise in stage *actio* based on a 17th-century text. It was very difficult for me to pay sufficient attention to my *pronuncio* and my *actio* at the same time: French-speakers are requested to be indulgent of my inflection and accent in a language not my own. This *étude* was very useful to me in establishing a language of gesture for the case studies in Chapter 5.

3. Jean Poisson's *Réflexions sur l'art de parler en public* (1717) advocates a slightly different timing for the gestures than does Le Faucheur:

Le Geste doit toujours précéder d'un instant le discours, & finir avec lui. Cela se fait naturellement: L'Action doit être noble, naturelle, gracieuse, important, animée, vive & légère, tout cela à propos: Elle ne doit point être trop étudiée, ni trop recherchée, point outrée. Porter les mains plus haut que la tête, frapper des poings, ou les mains l'une dans l'autre, mettre les poings sur les côtés, montrer des doigts, les écarter, étendre les bras en croix, avoir trop de Gestes, ce qui s'appelle gesticuler, observer une certaine action régulière d'une main à l'autre, n'agir que de la main gauche seule, sont tous gestes vicieux qui ne seront pas supportables sur la Scène tragique, & qui ne peuvent convenir qu'à une Comique, & qui par conséquent, ne peuvent être reçus dans un Orateur grave. Je dirai pourtant que ces gestes-là étant ménagés, seraient soufferts dans des fureurs & d'autres passions véhéments: surtout dans un homme gracieux.²¹

Here Poisson advocates that the gesture should precede to some extent the beginning of the text, but finish together with it. Of great interest is his remark that forbidden gestures could be acceptable in the context of violent emotions, especially if the speaker has presented himself as a cultured person beforehand: the audience might be disgusted by a peasant enraged, or laugh at him, but 'un homme gracieux' could break the rules with success. This passage has inspired me to allow Armide to lift her dagger up above her eyes in 'Enfin il est en ma puissance', for instance.

Poisson also believes that real feeling will result in a pleasing and persuasive style:

Quand on est touché de son discours, le Visage, la Voix & le Geste se prêtent, & se conforment aux mouvements intérieurs, & pour peu qu'on ait quelques grâces naturelle; avec cela seul, sans beaucoup de recherches, on peut plaire & persuader, qui est le seul but de l'Éloquence.²²

This emphasis on the natural flow from the inner experience of an affect to its outward signs is probably why he finds rules useless for actors and orators:

20. See: Chaouche, *Sept Traités*, 242.

21. Jean Poisson, 'Réflexions sur l'art de bien parler en public' (1717), in *Sept Traités*, 416-7.

22. Poisson, 'Réflexions', in *Sept Traités*, 416.

Il est inutile de dire, que le Superbe élève sa vue, que l'Humble la baisse, que le Mérisant & le Colère tourne les yeux de côté; car, La Nature d'elle-même dans la Passion, fait toutes ces choses & on n'a pas besoin d'avie là-dessus. Il suffira de dire, que la Vue fixe, ferme & assurée, est une chose à laquelle doit s'attacher l'Orateur. C'est dans l'œil qu'est l'action & la force de la Déclamation.²³

This emphasis on the eyes was not unique to Poisson's thought, nor indeed to France, as we shall see when we look at the writings of Aaron Hill.

4. Luigi Riccoboni's *Pensées sur la déclamation* (1738) is more precise on the question of timing, and prepares certain remarks by Gilbert Austin on the same subject:

Si l'Orateur est profond dans son Art, il ne sera pas content d'accompagner seulement la parole avec l'expression des yeux, il fera que celle-ci précède l'autre d'un instant; par exemple, dans une Période qui doit commencer par l'éclat d'une violente colère, si l'Orateur, dans la petite pause qu'il a fait à l'Art avant que de parler, d'exprimer la colère par un seul regard, il prévient si bien le Spectateur de ce qu'il va lui dire, qu'il le fera entrer tout d'un coup dans des dispositions, qui par suite du discours, lui feront recevoir plus aisément les impressions que l'on demande. C'est la même chose de toutes les autres passions.²⁴

Here it is the speaker's eye and facial expression that must precede the spoken word, and uses an example of a strong passion ('colère') to explain that a small pause must precede the text in order to clue the audience into the emotion that will follow. These little pauses and gaps, so dear to the heart of Aaron Hill, will be further explored in the case studies in Chapter 5.

I believe these remarks will suffice to show here the kind of information with which Chaouche's *Sept Traités* has provided me. It is not my intention to list here every possible citation, but to show several lines of inquiry which these treatises have inspired. These lines will now be more extensively drawn in order to include remarks from arguably the most important source extant on historical acting techniques: *Chironomia or, a Treatise on Rhetorical Delivery*.

4.3b Gilbert Austin's *Chironomia or, a Treatise on Rhetorical Delivery* (1806): of timing and style

The merits of Gilbert Austin's *Chironomia* are well known to any serious scholar of the historical stage: not only is the book a rich source of theoretical and practical information on rhetorical and theatrical gesture in late 18th-century Britain, its drawings and ingeniously annotated poems offer the most precise information we have, from any period before the advent of the 'talkies', about how exactly theatrical movement was fitted to words. However, as the style of acting in late 18th-century Britain was almost certainly different to that of France before 1760, I have tried to compare Austin's remarks to those by the treatises represented in the *Sept Traités* in order to establish the applicability of Austin's words to French stage *actio*.

Before examining the influence of the content of *Chironomia* on my work, I must briefly explain the importance of Austin's notational system to this thesis: without the ability to preserve variously gestured versions of a scene by means of notation I would not have been able to compare the effects of different gestures on a given passage of text and music; this would have greatly hampered my efforts to look critically at how gesture was affecting the timing of the performance of the words, whether sung or spoken. It would have been possible to do some work by recording everything on video, but actually notating differently gestured passages made the changes to movement and timing much clearer, and more concrete.

Austin's notational system is simple and brilliant. A step-by-step guide can be found in Appendix 1 of this thesis, but I will here explain briefly that all motions of the upper body are notated above the words, motions of the feet below them. The arm gestures are plotted using a system of latitude and longitude [see figure 4.1]: One therefore can notate nearly any kind of gesture using Austin's system, and not only the gestures he himself makes use of in his treatise. Sometimes I have had to invent my own symbols for certain gestures, an innovation of which Austin himself would have approved. He saw his presentation of his notational system in *Chironomia* as being a first attempt, one that his followers could adapt to their own needs.²⁵ For more details, please see Appendix 1.

23. Poisson, 'Réflexions', in *Sept Traités*, 416.

24. Luigi Riccoboni, 'Pensées sur la déclamation' (Paris: 1738), in *Sept Traités*, 456.

25. See: Gilbert Austin, *Chironomia or, a Treatise on Rhetorical Delivery*, (London: 1806), Chapter 10.

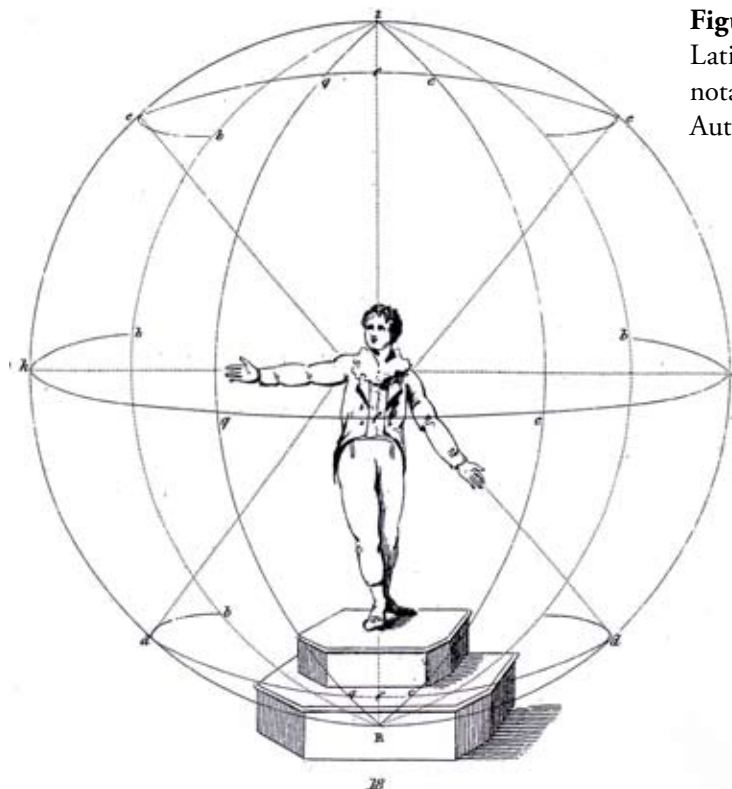
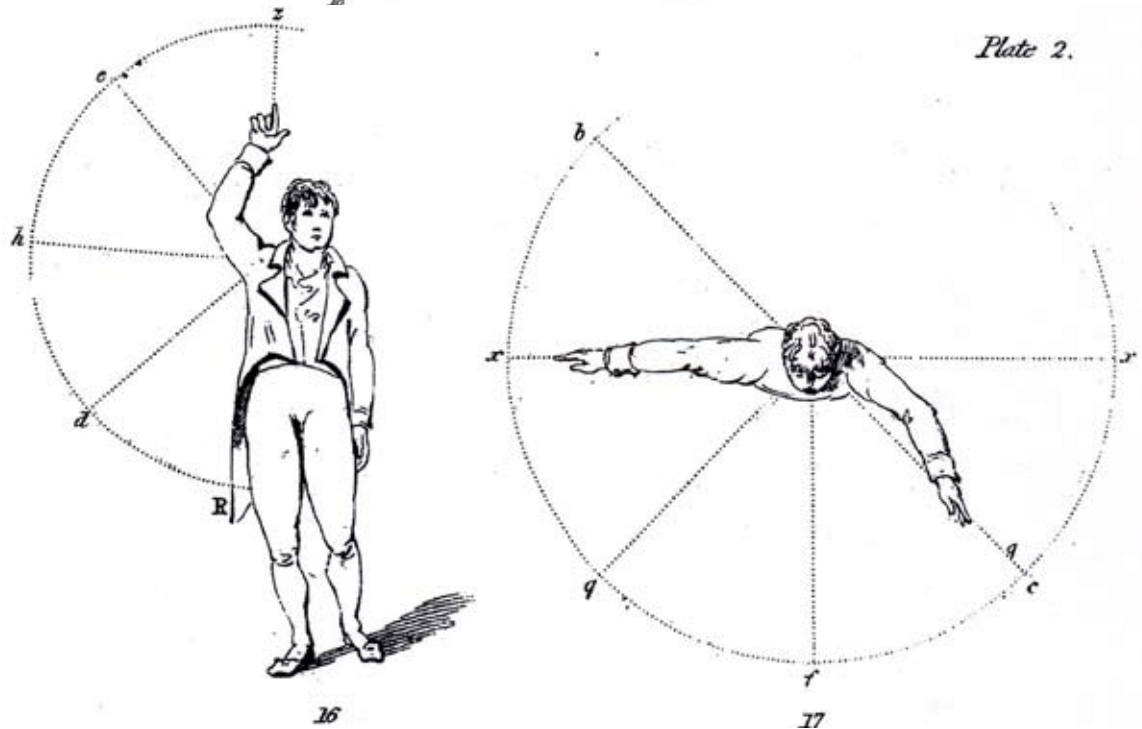


Figure 4.1
Latitude and longitude in the art of gestural notation: a plate from *Chironomia*.
Author' collection.



Thomas Aquinas 11 Concupiscible & Irascible Passions (in pairs, except for anger)	René Descartes 6 Primitive Passions (<i>De Passionibus animae</i>)	Aaron Hill 6 Dramatic Passions (<i>The Prompter</i>)	Aaron Hill 10 Dramatic Passions (<i>An Essay on Acting</i>)
love/hatred (concupiscible)	wonder	joy	joy
desire/aversion (concupiscible)	love	sorrow	grief
joy/grief (concupiscible)	hatred	fear	fear
hope/despair (irascible)	desire	scorn	anger
courage/fear (irascible)	joy	anger	pity
anger (irascible)	sadness	amazement	scorn
			hatred
			jealousy
			wonder
			love

Table 4.1 The affects or passions according to Aquinas, Descartes and Hill.

A critical factor in my work on the combined use of rhythmic freedom and gesture at the Opéra, namely how gesture and words were coordinated, were timed, by the actors, receives detailed attention in *Chironomia*. I have already prepared Austin's remarks by citing various French authors on the topic; but Austin is by far the most clear writer to deal with the subject. He begins by discussing the proper finish to an arm movement:

When gesture is used and not marked by the precision of the stroke in the proper places, the arms seem to wander about in quest of some uncertain object, like a person groping in the dark; and the action is that faulty kind, which is called sawing the air; which though suitable for some particular expressions (as doubt or general rejection of means proposed), is very offensive when frequently and injudiciously used. Even graceful motions, as they may sometimes be seen, particularly among singers on the stage, unmarked by the precision of the stroke of the gesture, lose much of their force and effect; and their soft flowing quickly ceases to afford pleasure. Gesture used for mere display of the person without reference to any other particular or decided meaning in its movements and changes, very soon disgusts.²⁶

We have already seen Le Faucheur note, in his *Traité de l'action de l'orateur* that 'Il faut que le Geste aille de la gauche à la droite, & qu'il finisse à la droite, non comme en frappant, mais comme en la posant doucement', a statement that Sabine Chaouche has traced back to Quintilian's *Insitutio oratoria*: 'Le meilleur effet est de mouvoir la main droite en partant de la gauche et de la baisser à droite, mais de manière qu'elle semble se poser, non frapper'.²⁷ This idea of ending the gesture with a gentle but firm 'placement' is reaffirmed by Austin, who is disgusted by this wandering about 'in quest of some uncertain object', a bad habit which he says is particularly prevalent among opera singers. In working through Austin's notated texts, it became clear to me that traveling gestures in particular were terminated with a movement that corresponded to the meaning and affect of the words on which there were notated. As he himself put it:

And in general, the gesture will be found to follow the voice implicitly, as nearly as possible, by marking for the eye every idea, which that distinguishes for the ear, and by reserving its most forcible action for that word or syllable which the voice marks by the strongest emphasis.²⁸

My initial experiments concerning the timing of gestures to words showed me that, indeed, the effect of the gesture was strengthened when it corresponded precisely to the accented syllable of the word it was meant to illustrate or emphasize [see videos 1.1-4]. More importantly, I quickly realized that it was very often this precise coincidence of word to action which necessitated the use of rhythmic freedom in the music when applying gesture to operatic repertoire. It became clear that, in many cases, one could either only use a few simple gestures, or a number of very imprecise ones (in terms of their timing to the words) if the music were always played strictly in time. Moreover, when performed in time the meaning of the gesture did not register with the audience, resulting in a comical, rather than a pathetic, effect. Austin himself remarked on this phenomenon, as shall be seen at the end of this section.

The consequences for gesture of a strictly in-time musical performance are visible on the DVD recordings of both the Opera Atelier production of Lully's *Persée* and Le Poème Harmonique's *Cadmus et Hermione*. The gesture used in both these productions, though different in style, is, one regrets to say, generally generic and repetitive and often more resembles a vague waffling in the air than a crisply timed expressive motion to stress the meaning of a particular word. I feel strongly that the rigid tempo of the performance made it impossible for the singers to do better; they simply weren't given enough musical time in which to make physical gestures.

Therefore, having seen that earlier French sources did not contradict, but rather reinforced Austin's standpoint, I chose to use not only statements on timing taken from the text of *Chironomia*, but also information gleaned from the notated passages of poetry that his book contains in reconstructing the scenes in the case studies in Chapter 5. It was enlightening to compare written descriptions taken from the text of his book—as well as some taken from the French sources consulted—with the actual feel, in the body, of gestures aligned with the words of his annotated poetry. The following passage from Austin well summarizes the conclusions which I myself reached during this process:

The writers upon gesture, in general desire that it should accompany the words, that is, that it should neither precede nor follow them. The rule, if applied to the calmer parts of a discourse, will be found very nearly correct. But

26. Austin, *Chironomia*, 377-8.

27. Chaouche, *Sept Traités*, 133, footnote 196.

28. Austin, *Chironomia*, 380.

if the speaker be warmed or excited, some difference of time, however small, will take place between the gesture and the language. The order of the different actions or movements of the speaker will best be determined by instigating the rise and progress of the ideas which he has to recommend to his audience.²⁹

I have generally held to this rule in the case studies. In them, only strong affect has displaced the gesture to entirely precede the word; mostly the gesture and the word coincide, with the stroke of the gesture corresponding to the accented syllable; sometimes, however, the gesture commences before and ends with the word; in a few cases, as mentioned, the gesture entirely precedes the word; but in one case, it follows (in 'Enfin il est en ma puissance', at the words 'Quel trouble me saisit?' This aberration of timing will be further discussed in the case studies). Whatever the timing of the hands or feet may be, however, the facial expression consequent to and indicative of a new thought always precedes both gesture and word, and any passion of force should register in the eye and facial expression before the word is spoken, resulting in pauses in the spoken/sung line. This will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

These principles have been fundamental to the style of *actio* used in my research. Other aspects of *Chironomia*, however, have been treated with circumspection. It is, after all, an early 19th-century British publication reflecting, to some extent at least, post-Garrick acting styles. It is, therefore, exemplary of the stage action of the last quarter of the 18th century—by which time the *tragédie en musique* had become obsolete. Moreover, the nature of most of the annotated texts in *Chironomia* is decidedly un-theatrical: the descriptive beauties of Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* must necessarily demand a different kind of gesture than a monologue like 'Enfin il est en ma puissance'. My method, then, has been to attempt to abstract an older acting practice from Austin's work by comparing specific gestures from his notations to the earlier French sources.³⁰ I have concentrated on his version of 'Brutus' Speech' from Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, which has the distinct advantage of being a true theatrical piece, the only such one that was notated by Austin. Three examples of gestures found both in *Chironomia* and earlier works will suffice here.

Firstly, René Bary, in his *Méthode*, writes:

Du geste de la Franchise

La Franchise veut qu'on éloigne les bras l'un de l'autre, & qu'en ouvrant les mains, on les tourne en dehors, parce que la franchise déploie les plis de l'âme, & que les mains tournées en dehors marquent ce déploiement.³¹

If we compare that to the following lines from Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, as notated by Austin we will immediately be struck by the similarity of intention and gesture [see video 4.2a]:

If then that friend demand, why Brutus rose against Caesar, this is my answer [...].³²

Here Brutus makes a gesture to indicate his honesty on the words ‘this is my answer’ which almost exactly corresponds with Bary’s ‘geste de la Franchise’.

Secondly, we have seen in my performance of the passage from *La Rhétorique française* that Bary there suggests ‘Quand l’on représente quelque moquerie, l’on doit avancer le bras & darder le doigt.’ This is exactly what Austin notates in ‘Brutus’ Speech’ when Brutus mocks the angry Roman mob for their servility:

pef— pdf st— ihf rc
If any, speak; for him have I offended.

Of which passage Austin notes:

“Him have I offended,” noted on “him” *ihfrc, recoiling*: in this action the finger is pointed suddenly and scornfully, and then is then immediately withdrawn.³³

29. Austin, *Chironomia*, 379-80.

30. The emphatic style which Austin chose for this passage from Shakespeare, which is intermixed from time to time with striking but relevant attitudes, seemed to me more suitable to my purposes than the melodramatic display of, for instance, Austin's version of Gay's *The Miser*. See Appendix 1 for more on Austin and how his *The Miser* was viewed by contemporaries.

31. Bary, 'Méthode', in *Sept Traités*, 223-4.

32. Austin, *Chironomia*, 540.

33. Austin, *Chironomia*, 542.

Surely scorn and mockery are closely related, and perfectly matched in this line of Shakespeare's text [see **video 4.2b**]? The third example of links between 17th-century French *actio* and *Chironomia* concerns Michel Le Faucheur's remark that:

Il est necesssaire particulièrement en jurant, de les élever [the eyes] vers celui par laquelle on jure, comme on y lève la main en cete même action.³⁴

This corresponds with Austin's notation of the line 'If there be any in this assembly, any dear friend of Caesar's, to him I say, that Brutus' love to Caesar was no less than his'. At the moment Brutus declares his love for the man he helped to murder, he makes a motion associated with taking an oath, just as Le Faucheur suggested:

vef sp—
to him I say

These three examples [see **video 4.2a-c**] show Austin to have drawn on earlier styles of *actio* for his 'Brutus' Speech' notation, and I have tried, in following this style, to develop a suitable *actio* for France by a careful comparison of the Irishman's work to French treatises.

One remark of Austin's has been extremely important in my work:

Pride braces the nerves and muscles, and valour in a higher degree. Submission relaxes them, and fear relaxes then still more. If the nerves and muscles assume the degree of tension suited to any passion, the mind will sympathize with the bodily action. And if the mind is affected by a particular passion either involuntarily or by choice, as when actors endeavour to conceive it strongly; the muscular action and nervous sensibility excite to the expression of gesture: such is the effect of their mutual sympathy. Hence strong feelings seldom fail to shew themselves in gesture, unless some stronger feelings operate to suppress them, as fear or a sense of decorum, and hence fine or forcible gestures without a correspondent elevation or energy of feeling are most incongruous.³⁵

Austin here draws a correlation between muscle tension and passion: the physical manifestation of emotion in the body of the actor will result in varying degrees of muscle tension. I immediately recognized, upon reading this passage, that it would be of great consequence to my work, for as a performing musician I was well aware of how muscle tension determines, to a greater or lesser extent depending on its intensity, the musical phrasing during performance. I already had years of performing experience using the ebb and flow of tension in my body as a positive force of musical expression, and I realized that a purely decorative use of gesture, one in which no real changes of body tension occurred, could not have been Austin's goal. Gesture, for Austin, was no passionless choreography carried out by unaffected flesh, but an intense manifestation of emotion in the performing body.³⁶ Indeed, he makes clear that the stronger the emotion the greater the extension or contraction of the gesture depending on the nature of the passion felt and its inherent muscle tension.³⁷

Before leaving Austin, I will touch briefly on yet another important influence his *Chironomia* has had on my research: on the frequency of the gesture. Of this he writes:

In discourses, or particular parts of discourses, admitting freer gesture, the frequency of it will be determined, in general, by the number, the novelty, and the discrimination of ideas. In every well constructed sentence some new idea is advanced which may be marked by a suitable gesture [...]. And the new gesture will be forcible according to the importance of the new idea or modification introduced, and will fall on the accented syllable or the word which contains it. [...] In a sentence where each word is important, if gesture be used, each should be marked with a gesture. Sentences of this kind are generally moral observations, which condense in a short compass valuable information, and should therefore be strongly enforced and marked with precision. The indispensable requisite for the proper production of the desired effect, is that the sentence be delivered most distinctly and deliberately: if it be so, the gestures will have a good effect, but if hurried on rapidly, the gestures confuse the sentiment, and may even cast a degree of ridicule upon it: as may be found, by pronouncing the following serious observation with different degrees of rapidity and gravity.

34. Le Faucheur, 'Traité' in *Sept Traités*, 129.

35. Austin, *Chironomia*, 294, footnote 2.

36. Several salient examples of this tension, and the time it takes to release it, can be seen in my reconstruction of Bary's text in video 4.1, most notably after the words 'en forme de estremaçon'.

37. These extremes can be notated by those using his system with the letters 'x' (for extended) and 'c' (for contracted).

shf— nef— shf st
Man is born to trouble.³⁸

I have reconstructed this sentence in various tempi [see video 4.3], and the results have influenced my reconstruction of the line 'Je vais percer son invincible cœur' from 'Enfin il est en ma puissance' in Chapter 5.

4.3c Aaron Hill's *An Essay on the Art of Acting* (1753): of passions and pauses

Aaron Hill's theories of acting deserve to have received more attention than they have been granted by current actors and stage-directors using historical techniques. Hill was, after all, a person of some consequence in London's 18th-century theatrical world. As Kalman A. Burnim has pointed out:

[...] during his lifetime Hill was generally regarded with respect. Pursuing a variety of careers he was at once a theatre manager, opera impresario, dramatist, poet, translator of classics, world traveler, and agriculturalist.³⁹

His theory of acting, then, is one that was not purely philosophical or theoretical, but rather based on a close association with actors and the theater. The particular source that I will examine here is a late one, published posthumously in 1753, entitled *An Essay on the Art of Acting*, but its content is clearly presaged by, and indeed cannot be properly understood without a knowledge of, earlier works written by Hill on the subject. Paul Goring's recent treatment of Hill's theories points out that:

From a verse prologue of 1733 to an expansive prose 'Essay on the Art of Acting', posthumously published in 1753, Hill's literary treatment of acting techniques underwent considerable transformation and revision.⁴⁰

We will look only at two of these treatments: that published in numb. CXVIII of Hill's theatrical paper called *The Prompter* (1734-1736), and the one from the posthumous *Essay*. But even such a limited examination of Hill's work will be sufficient for understanding the main points of his system and its import for my work here.

Of the earlier essay in *The Prompter* Earl R. Wasserman wrote:

The source of his [Hill's] 'system' is obviously the materialistic analysis of the imagination and the emotions that Descartes developed in his *Passions de l'Âme*. The first requisite of an actor, according to Aaron Hill, is a 'plastic imagination', a 'flexible Fancy', for he must first fix upon his imagination the idea of the emotion to be portrayed. Therefore he must have an extensive knowledge of the human passions. Once the plastic imagination has conceived the idea, the body is forced to adapt itself sympathetically to the emotion, and the consequence is that true players do not act, but in reality are 'the happy, or the wretched which we are to think 'em'.⁴¹

Wasserman's analysis is essentially correct, though his prose perhaps hints at an unnaturalness in the process ('the body is forced to adapt itself sympathetically to the emotion') which Hill's original does not possess: for him nothing could be more natural, easy or immediate:

[...] the *Look, Air, Voice, and Action*, proper to a Passion, preconceive'd, in the *Imagination*, become a *mere, and mechanic*, NECESSITY; without Perplexity, Study, or Difficulty.⁴²

As to the rationalization of these passions, Hill had, in a previous edition of *The Prompter*, stated that:

There are but SIX *Dramatic Passions*, which are capable of being strongly *express'd*, by the LOOK: and which, intermingling their Differences, on the *Visage*, give us all the *Soul-moving Variety*, of *Pain, Pleasure, or Suspension*, which the Heart can be, strikingly touch'd by—These Six Passions are Joy, Sorrow, Fear, Scorn, Anger, and Amazement.

It is worth noting, however, that these are not the same six primitive passions which Descartes cites in his *De*

38. Austin, *Chironoma*, 435-6.

39. Kalman A. Burnim, 'Aaron Hill's The Prompter: An Eighteenth-century Theatrical Paper', *Educational Theatre Journal*, vol. 13, no. 2 (May, 1961), 73-81, 73.

40. Paul Goring, *The Rhetoric of Sensibility in Eighteenth-century Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 3.

41. Earl R. Wasserman, 'The Sympathetic Imagination in Eighteenth-century Theories of Acting' in *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, vol. 46, no. 3 (Jul., 1947), 264-272, 266-7.

42. Aaron Hill, *The Prompter*, numb. CXVIII.

Passionibus animae [see table 4.1]. This discrepancy between philosopher and playwright underscores Hill's commitment to create a system of acting that could give birth to 'a plain *practical*, ART, to remove, for the future, all *Uncertainty*, or *Difficulty*'.⁴³ Here Hill uses theory to elucidate practice, not for its own sake; he certainly doesn't want to turn a passionate art into an abstract one. On the contrary, he hopes to reform actors so that they become capable of stimulating real emotions in the audience. He had already, in an earlier edition of *The Prompter*, described the goal of the passionate actor in musical terms:

The *Passions* are, (in a Tragedy where well *mark'd*, and *expressed*) what the *Keys* are, in a *Harpsichord*—If they are aptly and skillfully *touch'd*, they will *vibrate* their different *Notes*, to the Heart and awaken in it the *Musick* of *Humanity*.

So, if Hill rationalized his theory of the passions, as anyone must who wishes to propose a comprehensible method of expressing emotion in the arts, I would stress at the same time that the resulting manifestations of the passions themselves, the '*Musick of Humanity*' that Hill hoped to awaken both in actor and audience through sympathetic vibration, were the physical exhibitions of strongly imagined emotion.

In the 1735 version of his theory published in *The Prompter*, Hill described passion as flowing out from the imagination (in the pineal gland) into the body by means of the animal spirits, modifying the performer's body as it progresses down- and outwards. The eyes, muscles, and voice are all affected:

[...] without entering into the Disputes of *Philosophers*, concerning the SEAT of the *Soul*, It will suffice for my present Intention, to assign a Throne to the IMAGINATION, upon her little *Gland*, in the Middle of the *Brain*: whence, the *Animal Spirits*, (surrounding her, like *Life-Guards*) are *detach'd*, for Execution of her *Orders*, into Every Part of her Empire, the *Body*, by a Conveyance, with the *Blood*, and the *Humours* [...].

The first, and obvious Effect, of such a Surplus Effusion of *Spirits*, about the *Brain*, is a sparkling Impression of the Purpose, breaking into the eyes, as the *nearest* Remove, from their *Master*.

But, the *Eyes*, wanting *Space*, to retain so redundant a Tide, The Face becomes (all over) stamp'd, with Marks of the *same Character*, by a Receipt, (into its *Muscles*) of those *Spirits*, so charg'd by the Imagination, with Execution of that *Specific* Purpose.

CONTINUING to make way, by the *Thorax*, They next descend, through the *Muscles* of the *Breast*, where, by an assimilated Modulation, they impress the *Organs* of SPEECH, with a TONE, correspondent to the Intention.

Crowding on, into Every Part of the Body, with a Rapidity, as *sudden as Thought*, and, Swelling, as they go, Every Nerve, and adapted *Fibre*, They reduce the Whole concurrent Frame into *one, brac'd, agitated*, TENDENCY, to operate, for Execution of *That Purpose*, which is what we call the PASSION, to be acted.⁴⁴

This model of expanding spirits sweeping passion outwards through the body was reversed for passions like fear, grief or pity, in which the spirits pulled themselves back into the heart and brain, thus occasioning:

[...] a *Relaxation* or *Unbracing*, in the Nerves, *forsaken*, by a *Retreat* of the Spirits, from the *Muscles*, and *outward Parts*, to the Center.—But, *This Effect*, [...] being the immediate and necessary Consequence, of an *Idea*, pre-conceiv'd in the *Imagination*, and, producing, by the *Langour*, and *Dejection*, it occasions, in the Muscles, the *Sound* of the Voice, and *Modification* of *Gesture*, natural and proper to the Passion [...].⁴⁵

Thus, Hill's 1735 acting system (as propounded in *The Prompter*) makes use of a mainly Cartesian model to explain how the body expands or contracts—how its muscles brace or grow slack—while suffering the unnatural emotional state known as a passion. It was the actor's imagination that made the manifestation of the passions a reality in his body; without imagination any physical changes made in the actor's frame were mere studied posturing. This is clarified in his attack on the use of Le Brun's *Conference* as an acting school of facial expressions:

[...] *Actors*, calling in the *Painters* to their Assistance, have expected to succeed, by Observation of certain *Lineal*, and *expressive*, Distinctions, of the *Passions*, as they vary on the *Visage*; but, should a *Player* endeavour to form his Countenance, by the too *minute*, and *individual*, Particularities, which have been enumerated by the Masters of the *Pencil*, for the Instruction of their *Scholars*, They wou'd attain but the Art of *making Mouths*, and *distorting*

43. Hill, *The Prompter*, numb. CXVIII.

44. Hill, *The Prompter*, numb. CXVIII.

45. Hill, *The Prompter*, numb. CXVIII.

their Faces, into a *Scholastic*, and *technical* Confusion, between the *Ridiculous*, and the *Horrible*.

IDEA, then, is the Great *First Mover*: And, an *Actor*, by That Single Principle, *secures* a consequent, and necessary, Perfection, in *Look*, *Voice*, and *Action* [...].⁴⁶

My own use of Le Brun's drawings will be discussed later in this chapter.

This basic idea of vocal inflection and muscle tension together expressing, automatically and unavoidably, a strongly imagined passion in the body would be re-introduced in a new and less specifically Cartesian form in Hill's posthumously published *An Essay on the Art of Acting*.

In *An Essay* Hill no longer speaks of the pineal gland, nor is his emphasis on the animal spirits quite as pronounced, but the basic flow of his earlier system is still in tact:

To act a passion well, the actor never must attempt its imitation, 'till his fancy has conceived so strong an image, or idea, of it, as to move the same impressive springs within his mind, which form that passion, when 'tis undesigned, and natural.

This is absolutely necessary and the only general rule. [...] And, the truth of its *foundation*, that it is wholly built on nature, is evident, beyond dispute, upon examining its effects, in this deduction, from their causes:

1st, the imagination must conceive a *strong idea* of the passion.

2dly, But that idea cannot *strongly* be conceived, without impressing its own form upon the muscles of the *face*.

3dly, Nor *can* the look be muscularly stamp'd, without communicating, instantly, the same impression, to the muscles of the *body*.

4thly, The muscles of the body, (brac'd, or slack, as the idea was an active or a passive one) must, in their natural, and not to be avoided consequence, by impelling or retarding the flow of animal spirits, transmit their own conceiv'd sensation, to the sound of the *voice*, and to the disposition of the *gesture*.

And this is a short abstract of the Art, in its most comprehensive and reduced idea.⁴⁷

Hill then proceeds to list ten, rather than six, dramatic passions [see table 4.1] 'which can be distinguished by their outward marks, in action'.⁴⁸ Hill's preferred first step is still to imagine strongly the passion in the mind, indeed to become one with the emotions of his character, to lose himself in his *rôle*:

[...] it would be his natural, tho' most difficult, way, to endeavour the effacement of all note, or image of himself, and forcibly bind down his fancy to suppose, that he is, really, *Torrismond*—that he is in love with *Leonora*, and has been bless'd, beyond his hope, by her kind declaration, in his favour.⁴⁹

But he now offers a '*shorter road*' to the thespian, one that could aid an actor to find in his body, with greater ease and speed, the proper affect by assuming the muscle tension and facial expression proper to it at the same time as he awakens it in the imagination. Just as Austin would note after him, Hill makes clear that the imagination can affect the muscles, and, *visa-versa*, physical expression of the passion can aid the actor to its conception:

But, because difficulties wou'd arise, in the practice of so strong a conception, before fancy is become ductile enough, to assume such impressions, at will, [...] the actor taking the *shorter road*, [...] may help his defective idea, in a moment, by annexing, at once, the *look* to the *idea*, in the very instant, while he is bracing his nerves into springiness: for so, the image, the look, and the muscles, all concurring, *at once*, to the purpose, their effect will be the same, as if each had succeeded another, progressively.⁵⁰

Hill then insists that such changes in muscle tension and facial expression, when linked to a lively actor's imagination, awaken the passion in the performer and thus strongly infect his audience:

46. Hill, *The Prompter*, numb. CXVIII.

47. Aaron Hill, 'An Essay on the Art of Acting' in *The Works of the Late Aaron Hill, Esq*; in four volumes (London: 1753), vol. IV, 353-419, 355-6

48. Hill, 'An Essay' in *The Works*, 357.

49. Hill, 'An Essay' in *The Works*, 359.

50. Hill, 'An Essay' in *The Works*, 361-2.

But, still—This caution, let the thinking Actor forever take care to remember—That he is not to begin to utter, even so much as a single word, till he has first reflected on and felt the idea; and then adapted his look, and his nerves to express it. But as soon as this pathetic sensation has strongly and fully imprinted his fancy, let him, then—and never a moment before—attempt to give the Speech due utterance.—So shall he always hit the right and touching sensibility of tone, and move his auditors, impressingly: whereas, should he with an unfeeling volubility of cadence, hurry on from one over-leap'd distinction to another, without due adaption of his look and muscles, to the meaning proper to the Passion, he will never speak to hearts; not move himself, nor any of the audience; beyond the simple and unanimating, verbal sense; without the *spirit* of the writer.⁵¹

Hill also notes that, as a side benefit, the proper observation of these physical changes in the actor's body will result a natural and beautiful declamatory equivalent to a musical rubato:

Besides the reputation of a fine and a pathetic speaker, and a feeler, and inspirer, of the Passions, he will derive another benefit and grace, from such a natural practice; for, the time, which it must necessarily take, so to conform his look and nerves to the successive change of the Passions, will preserve his Voice, at every turn, by giving it due *Rests*: allowing frequent and repeated opportunities for a recovery of its wasted strength, in easy and un-noted *Breathings*; And yet, all such beautiful and pensive pausing places, will at the same time, appear to the audience, but the strong and natural attitudes of thinking; and the inward agitations of a heart, that is, in truth, disturb'd and shaken.—Whereas the glib, round, rolling, emptiness of an unpausing insignificance in speaking (far from painting, or resembling, nature) represents no image at all, to a discerning audience, but that of a full Player's memory; pouring out its over-measure with no meaning, from a Voice that neither touches, nor is touch'd by, character.⁵²

The usefulness, or rather, necessity of such pauses to the actor had already been addressed by Hill in *The Prompter* and it is worth looking back to what he had said earlier because these pauses will be of great importance to my work here, being affective, text-based theatrical *rubati* that can directly be related to acting on the operatic stage.

For Hill had already noted, in 1735, that these pauses should not be inexpressively dead, or as he would put it 'COLD', but must correspond to the conflicting passions flowing deep within the actor's body:

To *pause*, as some Actors do, at the End of Each Word or two, is to speak, like the Minute Hand of a *clock*, that measures TIME, not MEANING.—All the *Pauses*, in Utterance, shou'd, like the *Pointings*, in Reading, serve to *mark out the sense*, and give Harmony and Force, to the *Cadence*: and, to do This effectually, the Pause, in the SOUND, must be accompanied with *no* Pause in the ACTION; but fill'd out, by such agitated Perturbation, in the *Look*, and the *Gesture*, as may (instead of *interrupting* the course of the Passion) seem but the *Struggling*, of its inward *Emotion*; *preparing* for the *Utterance* of what arises to the *Conception*. It is with a view of this expressive *Discontinuance* of Speaking, that the Author makes use of the Word WARM, after *pausingly*: the Art of COLD *Pausing* being too commonly practis'd already, to stand in need of his Recommendation.⁵³

This shows that, for Hill at least, gesture—in the broadest sense of the entire physical expression of the actor—was not a decorative element applied, last-minute, to a text, but rather the essential exhibition of the emotions that were the original wellspring of the words spoken by the character on stage. No matter how stylized certain aspects of historical acting technique—gestures, postures, attitudes—may seem to us, no matter how un-naturalistic and idealized they may look to our eyes, 18th-century acting still involved *acting*. The skilled performer, far from moving from one graceful position to another with an ever-beautiful voice and with muscles always in a state of unaffected, gentle relaxation, in fact actively represented, for the audience, the physical manifestations of his passion in muscle tension, vocal inflection and facial expression. Shifting gears emotionally by moving from one passion to another meant changing the muscle tension appropriately, and this took time to accomplish physically. The resulting pauses were considered essential, expressive and natural.

Hill's clear advocacy—he goes so far as to note that 'there is nothing so beautifully necessary, as this Knowledge, of *pausing, significantly*⁵⁴ —of this phenomenon of strong affect coinciding with clear phrasing has had an enormous impact on my work here, for it offers an explanation for one of my most piquant research questions.

51. Hill, 'An Essay' in *The Works*, 366-7.

52. Hill, 'An Essay' in *The Works*, 367-8.

53. Hill, *The Prompter*, numb. CXIII.

54. Hill, *The Prompter*, numb. CXIII.

In the Introduction to this thesis I brought to the reader's attention the puzzling fact that the kinds of gestures used on stage in the period during which the *tragédie en musique* flourished would not have been so extreme that their performance would necessarily have forced the singer to break the musical time: a sweep of the arm, a turning of the hand and toss of the head, these kinds of movements can be accomplished within a strict musical beat. But Hill makes clear that the actor needs time to generate the proper idea of a passion in his imagination and to embody the correspondent muscle tension; this then seems to me to be a legitimate model for an important aspect of the relationship between rhythmic freedom and gesture. If the actors at the Opéra tried to embody the passions and to present them as natural manifestation in their bodies, they could only do so, according to Hill, by taking time or '*pausing, significantly*'. Thus, in order to match word, gesture and affect with precision, and in order to grant the actor time to express realistically the inner struggle of his soul, time had to be taken in the musical performance.

I should now briefly like to examine the applicability of Hill's *An Essay* to the *tragédie en musique*. This may seem questionable, given its appearance in print in mid-century London, which was dominated at that time by the new acting style of David Garrick. However, even though its (posthumous) publishing date is 1753, we have seen that Hill's theory was already well-developed by 1735 (the year *The Prompter* was published), and therefore pre-dates Garrick's debut on the London stage in 1741. Thus, we can be fairly certain that those aspects of Hill's work that are important for my work here were not significantly influenced by the specific mid-century Englishness of the "Garrick Revolution".

Indeed, an earlier English source, Charles Gildon's *The Life of Mr. Thomas Betterton* (1710), points very much towards Hill's key points. Before proceeding let me stress that Gildon admits that there is a strong French influence on his book:

I should not have troubled the Reader with a Preface to this little Treatise, but to prevent an Objection, which may be made, and that is, that I have been a Plagiary, and deliver'd Rules for my own, which are taken out of other Authors. I first allow, that I have borrow'd many of them from the French, but then the French drew most of them from Quintilian and other Authors. Yet the Frenchman has improv'd the Ancients in this Particular, by supplying what was lost by the Alteration of Custom, with Observations more peculiar to the present Age.⁵⁵

Gildon, as Hill would after him, advocates a strongly stirred imagination to create naturalism in the actor's look and tone:

[...] the Player therefore, nay and the Orator too, ought to form in his Mind a very strong Idea of the Subject of his Passion, and then the Passion it self will not fail to follow, rise into the Eyes, and affect both the Sense and Understanding of the Spectators with the same *Tenderness*. [...] by working your self up by a strong Imagination, that you are the very Person and in the very same Circumstances, which will make the Case so very much your own, that you will not want Fire in Anger, nor Tears in Grief: And then you need not fear affecting the Audience, for Passions are wonderfully convey'd from one Person's Eyes to another's; the Tears of *one* melting the Heart of the *other*, by a very visible Sympathy between their Imaginations and Aspects.⁵⁶

So here we have an earlier English source, influenced by France, which very much resembles the key points of Hill which I will use in my case studies. Furthermore, we know from Mattheson that French singers seemed to really feel the passions expressed by the music and the text:

Man betrachte die Französischen Sänger und Sängerinnen, mit welcher Inbrust sie ihre Sachen vorbringen, und fast allemahl dasjenige wirklich bey sich zu empfinden scheinen, wovon sie singen.⁵⁷

Of course, the notion that an orator must himself feel that which he hopes to transmit to the audience goes back to Classical times, and we have seen that both Wright (see Chapter 2) and Lallemand (see Chapter 3) agreed with such Ciceronian precepts about the infectious nature of the passions. We have even seen Le Faucheur, who influenced Gildon, write:

C'est pourquoi l'Orateur se doit former en lui-même une forte idée du sujet de sa passion, & ainsi cette passion s'émouvra infailliblement, & paraîtra aussitôt dans ses yeux, & même dans les esprits des autres, comme en regardant une personne qui a grand mal aux yeux, nous en souffrons bien souvent aux nôtres.⁵⁸

55. Charles Gildon, *The Life of Mr. Thomas Betterton* (London, 1710), ix-x. The French writer who had influenced him was Le Faucheur.

56. Gildon, *The Life*, 70-1.

57. Johann Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (Hamburg: 1739), erster Theil, 36.

58. Le Faucheur, 'Traité' in *Sept Traités*, 128.

In the next section I examine two closely related treatises from mid-eighteenth-century France, Bérard's *L'Art du chant* (1755) and Blanchet's *L'Art ou les principes philosophiques du chant* (1756). Their close relationship to the basic principles of Hill's *An Essay* will further support the appropriateness of including the Englishman's theories in this work. But let it suffice here to note once again that Jean Poisson's remark, made in his *Réflexions sur l'art de parler en publique* (1717), is also very close to Hill's system:

Toutes les Règles de Cicéron, de Quintilien, & des Illustres Modernes qui ont pu écrire sur la Déclamation, sont inutiles à l'Orateur, s'il ne suit la première, qui est, de bien comprendre ce qu'il dit & de le sentir fortement soi-même, pour le rendre sensible à l'Auditeur. Quand on est touché de son discours, le Visage, la Voix & le Geste se prêtent, & se conforment aux mouvements intérieurs, & pour peu qu'on ait quelques grâces naturelles; avec cela seul, sans beaucoup de recherches, on peut plaire & persuader, qui est le seul but de l'Éloquence.⁵⁹

4.3d Jean-Antoine Bérard/Jean Blanchet: *actio*, inflection and the Opéra

Anyone wishing to make use of the intertwined treatises *L'Art du chant* (1755) by Jean-Antoine Bérard and *L'Art, ou les principes philosophiques du chant* (1756) by Jean Blanchet must first confront their authors' complicated and acrimonious history. Edward P. Shaw mentioned the case as exemplary of 18th-century authorial disputes in his *Problems and Policies of Malesherbes as Directeur de la Librairie in France (1750-1763)*:

Authors quarreled more vehemently among themselves than with booksellers. If these disputes involved administration or execution of regulations, Malesherbes felt impelled to investigate, but he remained careful to decline responsibility whenever literary squabbles reached the point of legal contention. [...] In 1756, after obtaining a privilege, a man named Bérard printed a book supposedly of his own composition, called *L'Art du chant*. But

Le nommé Blanchet s'est présenté un an après avec un autre manuscrit portant le même titre et dont il a dit être l'auteur. On luy a nommé un censeur et sur l'apporrbation il a pareillement obtenu un privilege et a fait imprimer.

Il faut seulement remarquer qu'il y a ajouté un avertissement qui n'est pas paraphé du censeur. Il convient dans cet avertissement que son ouvrage est le même que celui du Sr Berard avec des changements et des corrections, mais il prétend que l'ouvrage est de luy et que bien loin de l'avoir composé, Berard n'est pas même en état de l'entendre.

Berard a demandé que cette édition fut arrêtée et dans les différentes conversations que j'ay eues avec l'un et avec l'autre, j'ay reconnu que le Sr Berard maître à chanter a rédigé par écrit ses principes sur le chant, que comme son métier n'est point d'écrire, il a eu recours pour en faire un livre au Sr Blanchet qui alors sortoit des jésuites, que le Sr Blanchet luy a proposé non seulement de reformer le stile, mais d'y ajouter un traité phisique et anatomique de l'organe de la voix d'après les principes de M. Ferrein, et d'y joindre aussi des réflexions qu'il prétend être métaphisiques sur la théorie de l'art du chant. Le Sr Berrard a accepté cette offre avec empressement, a promis à Blanchet 100 livres par mois pour tout le tems qu'il travailleroit à cet ouvrage et luy a promis ou fait espérer de plus que par ses protections il lui feroit avoir un employ; promesse dont Blanchet s'est laissé leurrer, dit il, d'autant plus aisément qu'en homme nouvellement sorti des jésuites il ignoroit quelle étoit l'espece de considération d'un maître à chanter et étoit ébloui de l'avis qu'avoit Berrard chez les grands.

Bérard did not keep his promises, and Blanchet printed his own edition. When Bérard wished to seize it, his former friend determined to resist. The affair reached a 'contentious' stage, and thus Malesherbes was happy to be able to turn it over to Maboul, who was in charge of 'affaires contentieuses de la librairie'.⁶⁰

It is not my intention to follow this dispute any further here, as it would lead us far from our topic (Blanchet was still complaining about the affair as late as 1761, when he published a long and bitter letter in the *Mer-cure de France*). Let it suffice for the moment to me to state that much identical material is shared by the two books. As to the differences between them, the Blanchet is the more coherent and longer of the two works, but only Bérard's version contains notated examples of highly ornamented monologue airs from the Opéra repertory.⁶¹ It should therefore be clear that one must in fact take both works in hand in order to understand either text fully.⁶²

59. Poisson, 'Réflexions' in *Sept Traités*, 418.

60. Edward P. Shaw, *Problems and Policies of Malesherbes as Directeur de la Librairie in France (1750-1763)* (Yellow Spring: Antioch Press, 1966), 85-6.

61. These airs contain very interesting information about the actual sound of French opera, and one of them, 'Du plus charmant espoir' from Jean-Baptiste Stuck's *Polidore*, will be reconstructed in the case studies in Chapter 5.

62. If I cite Blanchet, I do not necessarily thereby mean to imply that similar information cannot also be found in Bérard, or indeed *visa-versa*.

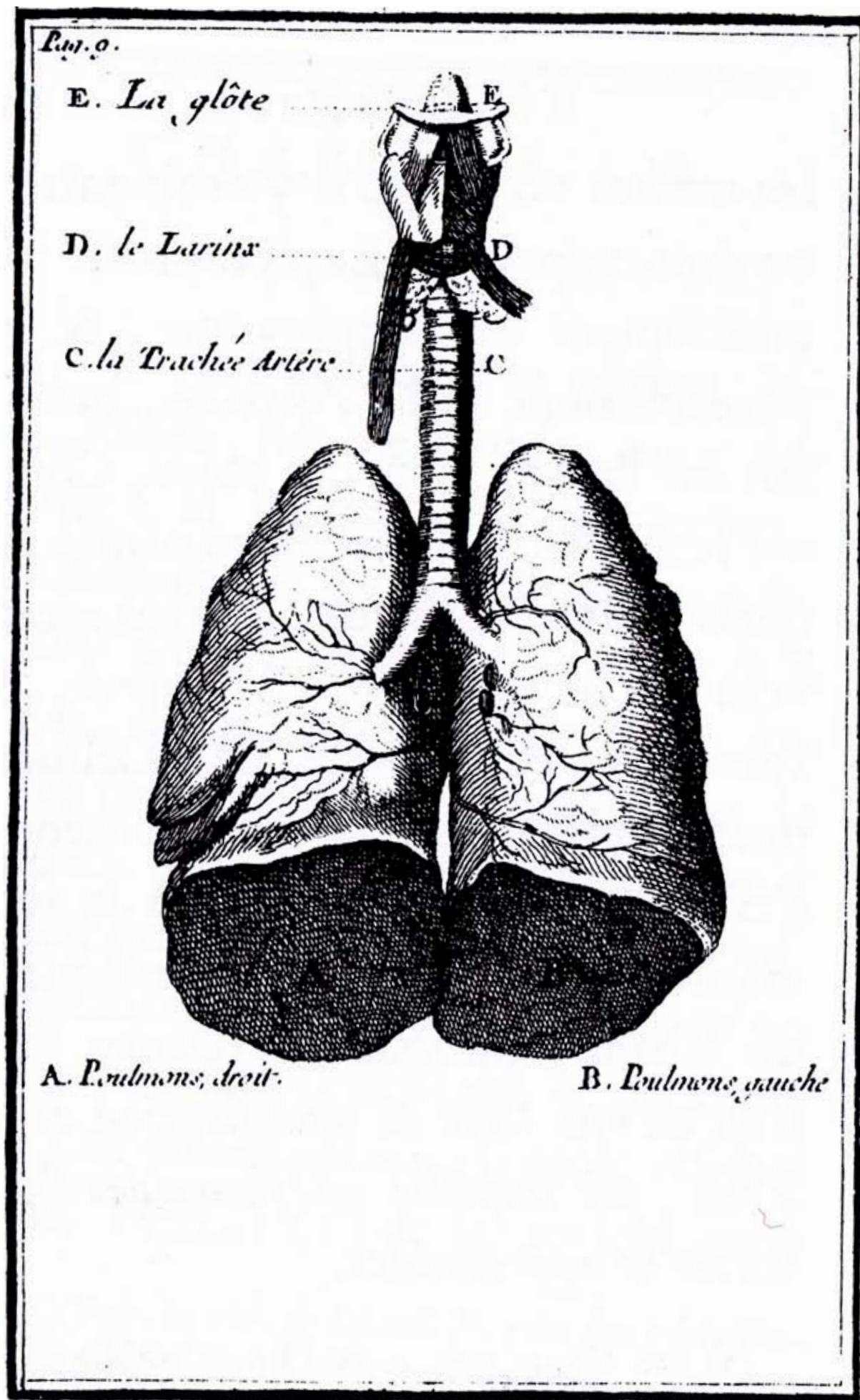


Figure 4.2 An illustration, from Blanchet's *L'Art*, of the vocal instrument. Author's collection.

Before we proceed to the texts themselves, however, it is worth noting that Bérard not only wrote about the Opéra's repertoire, but actually worked there. His career at the *Académie royale de musique* was perhaps not the smoothest. Graham Sadler has written of him:

Jean-Antoine Bérard, who later wrote the invaluable *L'Art du chant*, had been slow to gain public approval; having 'entered and left at Easter 1733', he returned after three years at the Théâtre-Italien, and was tried out in solo roles, only to be 'totally booed and hissed' in Rameau's *Les Indes galantes*. He was later 'to astonish the entire audience, surpassing himself to an amazing degree', and this led to his promotion.⁶³

Bérard's career, however checkered, certainly lends credibility and importance to his vocal treatise; the ornamented airs taken from the *tragédie en musique* are precious documents, drawn up by someone closely related to actual Opéra performances. No matter how bitter the relationship was between Bérard and Blanchet, it is clear that the musical material in both of their books must stem, ultimately, from the former's experience on the various stages of Paris.

Blanchet, however, does seem to have been acutely aware that he lacked a musician's credentials, and stressed in his *préface* that, though he was a ghost writer and not a performer, he had done his homework:

La plupart des règles contenues dans ce traité auront, comme j'espère, le mérite de la vérité; ce n'est qu'après un sévère examen, & qu'après avoir consulté les gens à talent & les amateurs les plus éclairés, que je les ai confiées au papier. MM Rébel, Francœur, Chéron, La Motte, Duché, Jéliotte & Mlle Fel, ainsi que MM. de Cahusac, Diderot, De Lagarde & Rameau, tous gens d'une autorité infinie dans l'empire du Chant, se sont prêtés de la meilleure grace du monde à résoudre mes doutes: j'ai eû le plaisir délicat de voir qu'ils me confirmoient dans mes opinions, & que leurs idées courroient quelquefois audevant des miennes.⁶⁴

Indeed, Blanchet was ambitious enough to feel he was writing for posterity:

J'ose me flatter que si ces foibles productions vont aux siècles, elles y feront passer la méthode de nos fameux chanteurs.⁶⁵

Both Bérard and Blanchet divide their books into three parts. The first deals with the physical mechanics of singing and includes a plate showing the human lungs and larynx [see figure 4.2]. This section contains an extensive discussion of 'Sons à caractère', which could be described as six (Blanchet) or seven (Bérard) different vocal colors appropriate to the expression of different kinds of passions. These are arranged in two classifications. To the first belong: 'Sons violens', 'Sons Entrecoupés', 'Sons Majestueux' and 'Sons Etouffés'. The second class encompasses gentler sounds: 'Sons Légers', 'Sons Tendres' and 'Sons Manières' (Blanchet has only two: 'Sons Légers' and 'Sons Délicats'). Each category has its own proper articulation and, most especially, its own proper use of the breath. For example:

Pour former un son violent, il faut chasser l'air avec une extrême rapidité par la glotte: son action sur les cordes vocales les déterminera à des vibrations fort profonds, & en tirera des sons violens.⁶⁶

At the other end of the expressive spectrum were the 'Sons Délicats' (or as Bérard calls them, the 'Sons Manières'):

Expirez le plus doucement qu'il vous sera possible, ensorte que les rubans sonores soient réduits à de foibles vibrations, ou à des demi-vibrations, & vous formerrez des sons délicats.⁶⁷

The second part of the Bérard/Blanchet treatise treats aspects of declamation:

Comme la déclamation chantante renferme dans son idée, l'articulation, la prononciation & les gestes, je traiterai de tous les trois, considérés par rapport au Chant.⁶⁸

63. Graham Sadler, 'Rameau's Singers and Players at the Paris Opera: A Little-known Inventory of 1738', *Early Music*, vol. 11, no. 4, Rameau Tercentenary Issue (Oct., 1983), 453-467, 460-1.

64. Jean Blanchet, *L'Art ou les principes philosophiques du chant*, IIe Edition, corrigé & augmentée (Paris: 1756), xl-xlj.

65. Blanchet, *L'Art*, xlvij.

66. Blanchet, *L'Art*, 26.

67. Blanchet, *L'Art*, 28.

68. Blanchet, *L'Art*, 44.

Among the techniques to improve the intelligibility of the text are the proper pronunciation and articulation of the words. Pronunciation refers to the formation of the sounds, articulation refers to their being made both intelligible to a large audience and expressive of the passions. Both Blanchet and Bérard also discuss the effect of doubled consonants. The former puts it thus:

Les personnes émues par quelque passion doublent, ou (ce qui est le même) préparent ou retiennent ordinairement les consonnes dans l'Articulation, soit que le sentiment veuille se peindre, non seulement, dans chaque mot & chaque syllabe, mais encore dans la plupart des lettres; soit qu'il régné alors en certain trouble dans les organes, qui fait que les mouvemens qui donnent les consonnes persévèrent trop long-temps, seul & vrai moyen de les rendre deux fois. [...] Dans les passions sérieuses & violentes, comme la terreur, le désespoir, l'amour de la gloire &c. il régné un trouble extrême & une grande agitation dans nos organes; c'est pourquoi la continuation des mouvemens dont nous venons de parler sera cause que les lettres seront doublées fortement & pendant un temps considérable. Dans les passions tranquilles & aimables, comme l'amitié & l'amour, il ne régné que peu de trouble & d'agitation dans nos organes; aussi la persévérance de leur jeu fera que les consonnes seront retenues avec douceur & très-peu de temps: car, dans ces derniers cas, comme dans les premiers, la durée de la préparation des lettres doit justement répondre aux degrés des passions.

De ce que je viens de dire, on peut déduire cette règle: *On doit doubler les consonnes plus ou moins fortement, plus ou moins de temps, selon que l'exigent les diverses espèces des passions, leurs degrés & leur mélange.*⁶⁹

If we interpret these passages in the light of previous chapters of this dissertation, it will be clear that a naturalistic compatibility is being sought between the degree and kind of passion required by the text and the physical aspects of vocal production of the performer. Bérard/Blanchet advocate that the singer choose a properly characterized tone color and articulation, one which resembles the natural level of agitation ('trouble') in the human frame. This is in line with what we have already seen Le Faucheur had written in the 17th century:

Car la corde sonne selon qu'elle est touchée; si on la touche doucement, elle rend un son doux; si fermement, elle en rend un fort & vigoureux. Il en est de même de la parole. Si elle procède d'une affection véhémence, elle produit une Prononciation véhémence; si d'une pensée paisible, elle produit une Prononciation qui est paisible tout de même. Il accommodera donc le ton & l'accent de sa voix à la nature de chacune des passions dont il est touché en soi-même, & dont il désire toucher les autres.⁷⁰

Blanchet's chapter—which is more ample than Bérard's—entitled '*De l'Action propre au Chant*' extends this idea of correspondences to apply to gestures and facial expression:

L'Action en général, telle qu'on doit l'entendre ici, est l'art de peindre le sentiment, par le mouvement de certains de nos membres, par l'air du visage & par-tout le maintien du corps. [...] L'Action chantante est l'art dont il s'agit, appliqué aux paroles mises en musiques: aussi le jeu des Acteurs doit varier autant que ces dernières, ou plutôt autant que les passions exprimées par les paroles, & elle doit emprunter leur caractère: c'est pourquoi l'on doit faire briller sur nos théâtres lyriques, tantôt des grâces fières, tantôt des grâces ingénues, tantôt des grâces sérieuses, tantôt des grâces enjouées: quelquefois des grâces vives & piquantes, & d'autre fois des grâces négligées & tendres.⁷¹

Blanchet emphasizes the variety of passions which must be made both audible and visible at the Opéra, but also lays great significance of the idea of grace. However, strong passions could legitimately lead the actor to affect brusque and shocking movements, as long as they retained nobility. Blanchet feels a need to strike some kind of balance between idealism ('graces') and realism in the livelier passions:

Les passions vives exigent des mouvemens rapides; il régné alors dans l'ame une agitation extrême, qui doit se peindre au-dehors: on ne doit point toutefois s'abandonner à des mouvemens violens ou brisés; ils entraînent de trop grands efforts, & font fuir les grâces qui doivent tout leur être à une heureuse aissance.

Ce n'est que dans le passage brusque d'une passion à une autre, dans le conflit des passions, ou quand elles sont arrivées à leur comble, qu'on peut, & qu'on doit s'écarter de cette règle. L'Auteur du premier article *Déclamation*, dans l'Encyclopédie, étoit bien convaincu de cette vérité, lorsqu'il s'est exprimé de la sorte: «Quand les passions sont à leur comble, le jeu le plus fort est le plus vrai: c'est-là qu'il est beau de ne plus se posséder ni se connoître; mais les décences? Les décences exigent que l'empportement soit noble, & n'empêchent pas qu'il ne soit excessif.»⁷²

69. Blanchet, *L'Art*, 53-4.

70. Le Faucheur, 'Traité' in *Sept Traités*, 91-2.

71. Blanchet, *L'Art*, 77-8.

72. Blanchet, *L'Art*, 79-80.

So nature must always be improved, and, in the strongest passions, raised to a noble excess. This elevated excess surpassed decorative prettiness in its attempt to paint realistically, yet without ugliness, the strongest human emotions. Ideally, such passions would be poured, boiling hot, into the noblest of attitudes. Blanchet takes the agony of Hercules as his example:

Si Hercule devenu la victime de la jalouse vengeance de Déjanire, exprime en chantant sa rage & ses douleurs, que le son de sa voix soit dur & entrecoupé, que ces sourcils soient menaçans, que ses yeux étincellent; qu'on y lise sa fureur contre Déjanire, sa passion pour Iole, & les effroyables douleurs causées par les flâmes secretes qui le devorent: que l'air féroce & terrible de sa physionomie; que les mouvemens mâles & violens de ses membres, enfin, que toute sa personne presente aux yeux épouvantés, Alcide furieux.⁷³

Here vocal quality ('dur & entrecoupé'), facial expression ('qu'on y lise sa fureur') and gestures ('mâles & violens') all combine to express the passionate, heroic horror of Hercules' death throes. This passage has inspired me to break with certain general rules of *actio* in my reconstruction of 'Enfin il est en ma puissance', as will be discussed in Chapter 5.

If we think back to Hill's acting system as presented in *An Essay*, which was only published three years before Blanchet's *L'Art*, we recognize this same search for a totality of theatrical expression. Hill stressed that vocal quality, facial expression and muscle tension were all awakened in the body by a strongly imagined passion in the player's brain. Blanchet nowhere made this link as explicitly as Hill did, but it is implicit in his advice to singers seeking inspiration for their *actio*: for though he, like many others, proposes that they train their eyes by looking to painting and sculpture, he gives particular attention to the utility of stimulating the inner eye through reading:

La poësie ouvrira un champ immense à leurs [les Artistes] réflexions; la lecture de l'Iliade, de l'Enéide & de la Henriade leur apprendront à imaginer fortement & a sentir vivement; ils y acquerront une prodigieuse facilité à varier leur jeu; ils y puiseront une certaine fierté d'ame nécessaire pour réussir en quelque genre que ce soit, & ils s'accoutumeront à n'envisager les objets que dans le grand.⁷⁴

So, a thorough knowledge of the Classics is here advocated as beneficial to the development of a noble and a varied acting style, for thus the singer can learn 'to imagine strongly and to feel keenly'. I, at any rate, felt that both Blanchet's methods and his goals were close enough to Hill's to authorize the combined use of these treatises in my research.

4.4 The visual arts as an aid in reconstructing *actio*

Painting and sculpture are relatively straightforward sources for the researcher of historical theatrical style, as long as they are used in the way Blanchet and others advised: the actor should look to art in order to improve nature, to refine his/her posture and gestures:

Nos célèbres déclamateurs chantans ont sçavamment étudié les chef-d'œuvres de peinture & de sculpture: ils doivent à leurs observations fines & profondes en ce genre la belle entente de leurs vêtemens, la noblesse de leurs gestes, les nuances de leur expression, les graces & la variété de leur jeu.⁷⁵

It should not surprise us to see actors encouraged to do what the upper classes took for granted in everyday life. Twenty years before Blanchet published his book, Kellom Tomlinson had recommended to those studying dance:

[...] let us imagine ourselves, as so many living Pictures drawn by the most excellent masters, exquisitely designed to afford the utmost Pleasure to the Beholders: And, indeed, we ought to set our Bodies in such a Disposition, when we stand in Conversation, that, were our Actions or Postures delineated, they might bear the strictest Examination of the most critical Judges.⁷⁶

Actors at the *Académie royale de musique*, however, would then further need to adjust the insights and inspirations gained from the visual arts to fit the realities of the stage. For example, the actor's orientation to

73. Blanchet, *L'Art*, 85.

74. Blanchet, *L'Art*, 91.

75. Blanchet, *L'Art*, 92.

76. Kellom Tomlinson, *The Art of Dancing Explained* (London: 1735), 3-4,

the audience was to a great degree determined by the fall of the light from the footlights, and the need to reveal his facial expressions to the audience. Gildon, for instance, is very clear in his comparison of these theatrical necessities to painting:

As in a Piece of History-Painting, tho the Figures direct their Eyes never so directly to each other, yet the Beholder, by the Advantage of their Position, has a full View of the Expression of the Soul in the Eyes of the Figures. Thus in the *Psyche* and *Cupid* of *Coypel*; Her Eyes are directed to him as he descends on the Wing, and his to her glowing with Love and Desire, and yet all this is seen in him by those, who view the Picture.⁷⁷

Furthermore, conventions of blocking could not be ignored, and an actor's spoken text needed to be clearly audible, declaimed straight out to an often noisy audience. Such factors must have been taken into account when incorporating attitudes taken from works of art into stage performance.

Although I have sought inspiration for my reconstructions in many different kinds of art—from porcelain miniatures to grandly conceived fountains and statuary groups, from the frontispieces to plays and opera scores to ceiling paintings and frescos—I shall only discuss the work of a select number of artists here: my commentary on Charles Le Brun's *Conférence sur l'expression générale et particulière*, Gerard de Lairese's *Groot Schilderboek*, Antoine Coypel's *Discours prononcez dans les conférences de l'Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture* (published 1721), and the paintings of his son, Charles-Antoine Coypel is followed by some reflections of the work of the Dutch artist Cornelis Troost.

4.4a Charles Le Brun: passions and painting I

It is not my intention to go into Le Brun's work and its importance in detail here: those interested in a thorough study of the history and reception of the *Conférence sur l'expression générale et particulière* are referred to Jennifer Montagu's excellent *The Expression of the Passions: The Origin and Influence of Charles Le Brun's Conférence sur l'expression générale et particulière* (1994). I here only wish to assure the reader that I am aware of Le Brun and his importance for my topic.

I am however, ambivalent about the application of Le Brun's treatise to my practical work here. Le Brun's *Conférence*, though tremendously influential, was not universally accepted even in the 17th century: as Julia K. Dabbs has shown, a serious challenge was made to Le Brun's supremacy as a theorist of the passions by the sculptor Michel Anguier, whose own rather old-fashioned Galenist approach was more strictly humoral than that of Le Brun.⁷⁸ Nor was Le Brun controversial only in the world of art. Both actors and theorists of acting held diverging views on the usefulness of the *Conférence*. On the one hand, the inclusion of facial expressions that can be traced back to Le Brun in Johannes Jelgerhuis' *Theoretische lessen over gesticulatie en mimiek* (1827), taken together with the famous anecdote that David Garrick could, as a party piece, 'perform' all of Le Brun's facial expressions one after the other, shows that Le Brun's ideas influenced actors throughout the 18th and well into the 19th century. On the other hand, we have already seen that Aaron Hill condemns the idea that actors should copy the facial expressions of artists without consulting their own personal inner feelings, as being a sure way to:

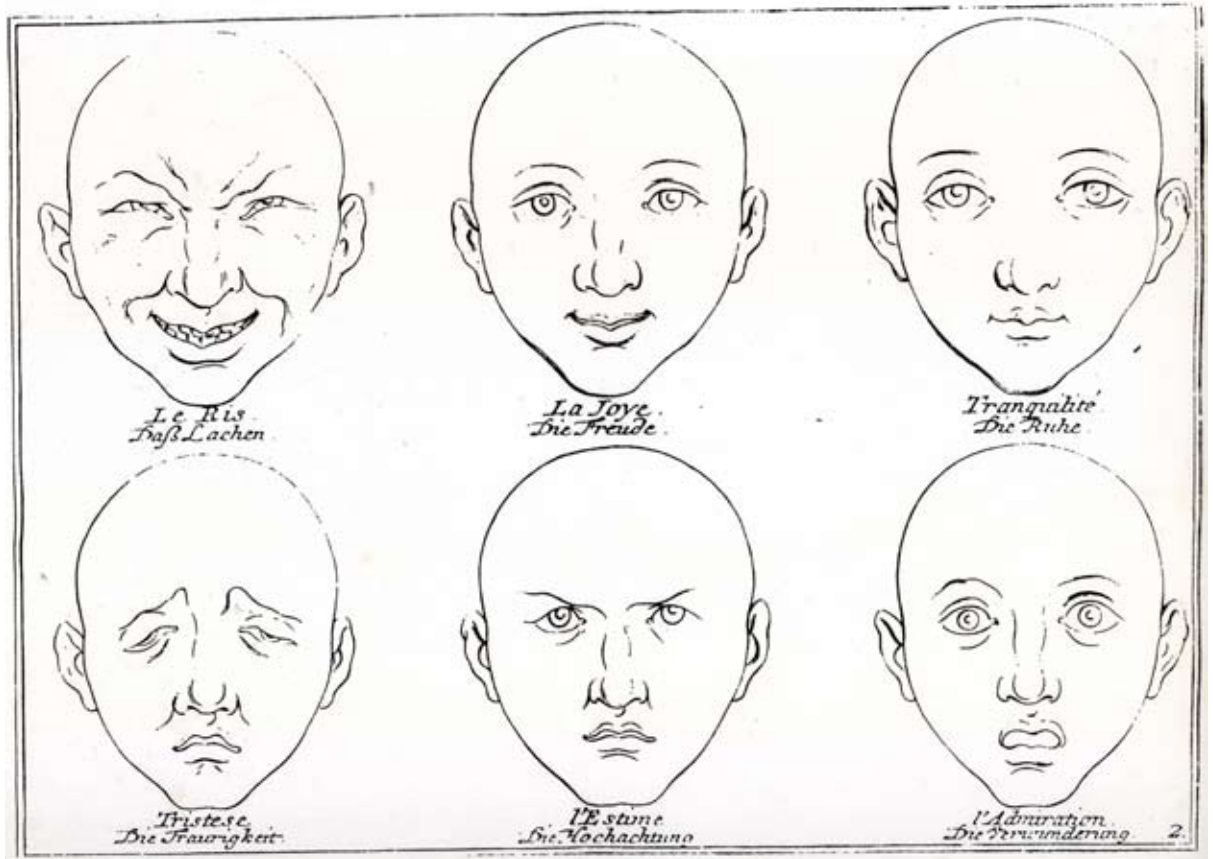
[...] attain but the Art of *making Mouths*, and *distorting* their Faces, into a *Scholastic*, and *technical* Confusion, between the *Ridiculous*, and the *Horrible*.⁷⁹

My approach, therefore, has been two-fold: I have studied the Le Brun drawings, and practiced counterfeiting the facial expressions he proposes, but when acting I have not attempted to 'scholastically' recreate them but have rather allowed my feeling to influence my face [for some examples see figures 4.3-6]. Thus, when practicing a scornful face I have worked on jutting my lower lip forward and upwards, and contracting my brows; but when acting scorn, I have tried to allow my body to get there by itself, without conscious intervention. However, I certainly have been comforted to see the great strength, even exaggeration, of the expression in Le Brun's drawings, which corresponds, in Hill's system, to a very strongly imagined affect on the part of the player in performance.

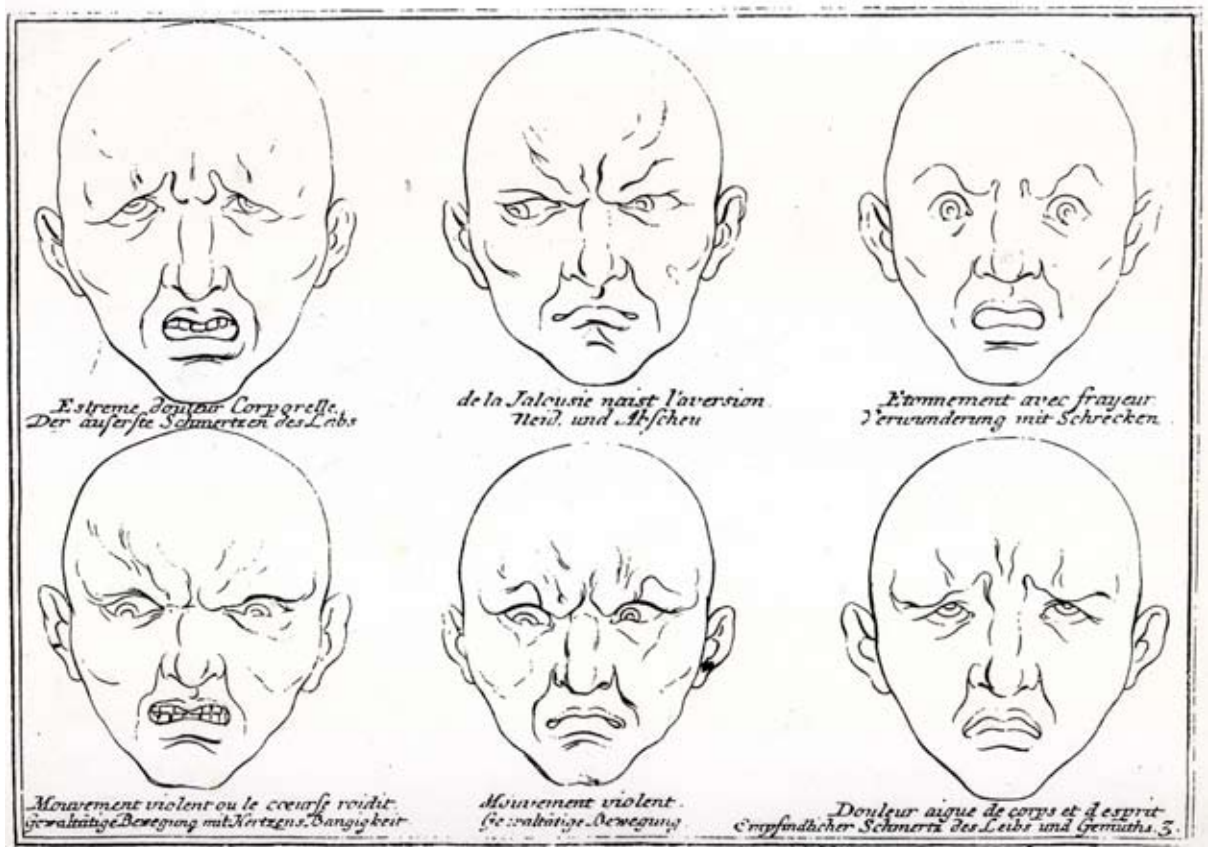
77. Gildon, *The Life*, 67.

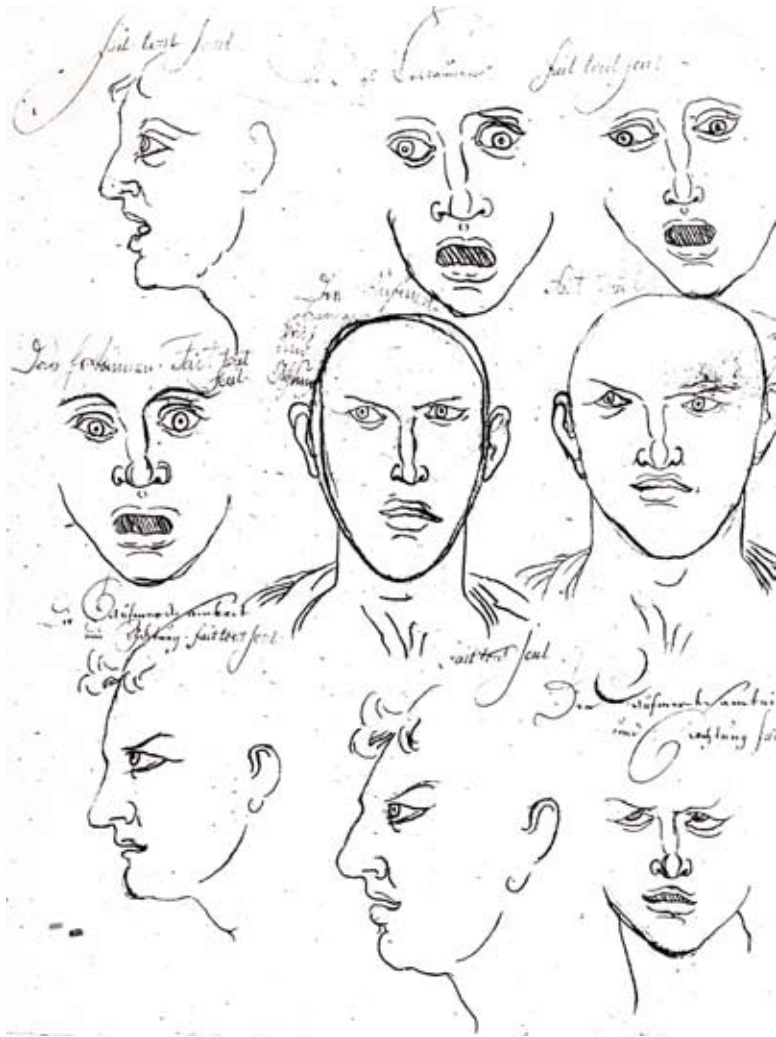
78. See: Julia K. Dabbs, 'Characterising the Passions: Michel Anguier's Challenge to Le Brun's Theory of Expression', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. 65 (2002), 273-96.

79. Hill, *The Prompter*, numb. CXVIII.



Figures 4.3 & 4.4 Examples from Le Brun's *Conférences*. Collection Valkenheining.





Figures 4.5 & 4.6

Pages from an 18th-century workbook: the faces drawn by the student are marked 'fait tout seul'. Author's collection.

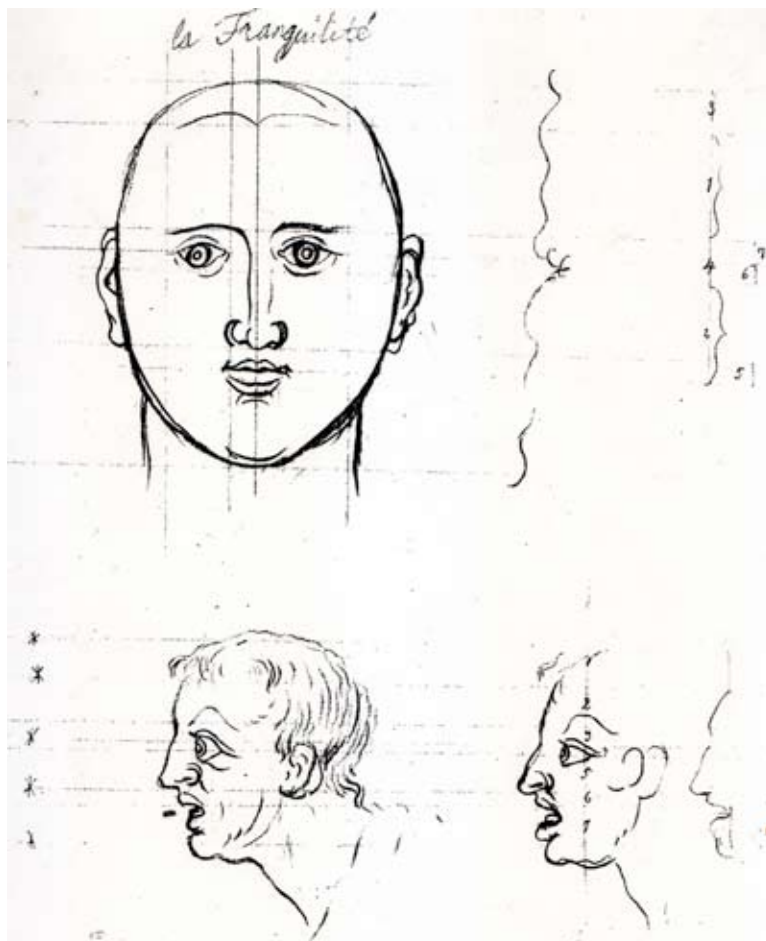


Figure 4.7
A group of theatrical gestures from
De Laire's *Groot Schilderboek*.
Universiteitsbibliotheek Leiden.

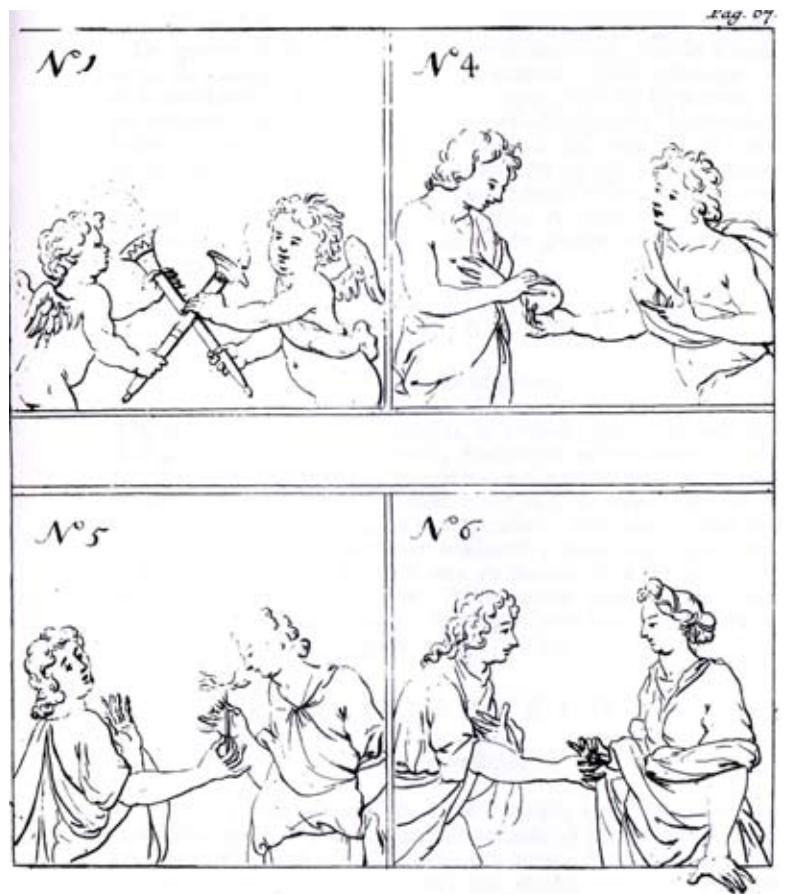


Figure 4.8
Coytel's *Homme nu debout*.
Rijksprentenkabinet Amsterdam.



4.4b Gerard de Lairese: passions and painting II

I will briefly address my use of the work of Gerard de Lairese's *Groot Schilderboek* (1707)⁸⁰. De Lairese's close relationship to the theater has been discussed in Lyckle de Vries' *Gerard De Lairese: An Artist between Stage and Studio* (1998), and will therefore not be followed up in detail here. I will only mention that I have favored de Lairese's work above that of other artists because of the many remarks on theater in his book.

De Vries notes de Lairese's understanding of affect as movement, something we have already discussed in Chapters 2 and 3:

[...] De Lairese makes no great distinction between motions and emotions. They are brought together as bewegingen [movements], divided into four groups according to their causes: simple (walking, etc.), active (pulling, climbing, etc.), emotive (love, hate, etc.) and violent (terror, despair, etc.). The distinction between the first two separates what one does automatically from what is done consciously, with a purpose. The last two categories differ in degree [...].⁸¹

De Lairese's thought on the affects was influenced by French writers: both Le Brun's *Conférence* and Cu-reau de la Chambre's *Les Caractères des passions* are recommended in the *Groot Schilderboek*. This French influence and the painter's links to the spoken theatre in Amsterdam encouraged me to explore his work [see figure 4.7]. For instance, if we examine two figures from his book, 'No 4' and 'No 6', we see two different acts of presentation: in 'No 4' the generous offer of an apple, in 'No 6', the offer of a ring. The giver of the apple (a symbol of goodwill) puffs out his chest and chin, and holds his left hand close to his torso; he points from his heart to his companion, as if to say 'from me to you'. On the contrary, the giver of the ring (a symbol of fidelity) places his hand and all of his fingers on his breast, which is not puffed out, but withdrawn in respect. Both men bend towards the recipient of their generosity, but the lover is the more circumspect of the two. This for me is a beautiful example of how performance can change the meaning of what is basically the same gesture: for though the motion is nearly identical, giving food to a friend, or one's heart to a lover are actions charged with very different affects.

However, though useful to me, De Lairese's art has not been as influential on my reconstructions as has that of Charles-Antoine Coypel. I merely mention him here to prepare the reader for my use of several drawings taken from the *Groot Schilderboek* in the case studies in Chapter 5.

4.4c Antoine and Charles-Antoine Coypel: actors and painters

The advantages for my study of looking at the works of the father and son Coypel should be obvious: both achieved the exalted rank of *premier peintre du roi*, both became director of the *Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture*, and both were interested in literature and theatre, particularly Charles, who was himself a playwright. The *Discours* by the father has informed my understanding of the theoretical and practical relationship between the representation of the passions in the visual and theatrical arts, while the images created by the son have influenced the postures and gestures of my case studies.

Antoine Coypel's *Discours prononcez dans les conférences de l'Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture* (1721) is a work intended to show the author's wide knowledge of the arts and sciences, and to awaken his fellow painters to the enriching influence that such knowledge could have on the visual arts. The passions are, of course, of paramount importance within this discussion:

Le grand Peintre [...] doit être Physicien pour connoître la nature. Peut-il être sûr de représenter parfaitement les choses dont il ne connoitra ni les causes, ni les effets? S'il n'a quelque teinture de cette partie de la Morale qui donne la connoissance des passions, comment sçaura-t-il tracer des images sensibles des mouvemens de l'ame? Comment sçaura-t-il peindre la joye, la tristesse, le plaisir, la douleur, l'amour, la haine, la crainte, & les autres passions qui troublent & agitent le cœur humain? Car non-seulement il doit connoître l'homme extérieur par l'étude des Proportions & celles de l'Anatomie, mais il doit fouïller jusques dans son ame par le secours de la Philosophie.⁸²

Coypel immediately thereafter mentions declamation:

80. A copy of the 1712 edition is accessible here: http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/lair001groo01_01/ . Last Accessed 28-10-2010.

81. Lyckle de Vries, *Gerard De Lairese: An Artist between Stage and Studio* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1998), 103-4.

82. Antoine Coypel, *Discours prononcez dans les conférences de l'Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture* (Paris: 1721), 63.

Les regles de la Déclamation sont nécessaires à la Peinture pour accorder les gestes avec l'expression du visage.⁸³

But he then proceeds, oddly, to speak of dumb-show, which, being textless, is difficult to relate directly to the art of declamation. Indeed, he might be thinking of some form of theatrical declamation (singers at the Opéra acted during instrumental pieces like *ritounelles*, but an orator in court or in the pulpit would have linked his gesture to spoken words), unless of course he was thinking of the silent declamation of pantomimic dancers:

Le Peintre ne pouvant malheureusement donner la parole à ses figures, doit y suppléer par la vive expression des gestes & des actions dont se servent ordinairement les muets pour se faire entendre.⁸⁴

The link with dance is made clear immediately afterwards:

Les Peintres doivent avoir quelque connoissance de l'Art des Balets, non-seulement pour le choix noble & gracieux des attitudes, mais aussi pour imiter en partie ces Pantomimes si celebres parmi les Grecs, qui avec des pas reglez enseignoient l'Histoire: Les pieds & les mains y parloient, & il y avoit un si grand art & une expression si vive dans leurs postures, que les Spectateurs déchiffoient aisément les circonstances mêmes les plus mystérieuses des actions de leurs Divinitez.⁸⁵

Taken together, these quotations show a remarkable progression in Coypel's thought. After underscoring the importance of having an understanding of the physical basis for the passions (and Coypel's is, in fact, a relatively old-fashioned, humoral one), he proceeds to invoke first declamation, then pantomime in a way that suggests artists need to look at the stage, as well as read books about rhetoric. This advocacy of observation would lead Coypel to suggest, later on in the *Discours*, that not only the performers on stage, but the very audience could furnish an observant painter with inspiration. His starting point here is, once again, the relationship between gesture and words:

Je le repete encore, & ne puis trop le dire; le grand Peintre doit exprimer se parfaitement les caractères par les gestes, que le Spectateur s' imagine voir en effet les choses dont il ne voit que la representation; qu'il se persuade, pour ainsi dire, entendre des paroles, quand même on ne parle pas. [...] Tout contribué dans les Spectacles à l'instruction du Peintre; les idées, les images & les passions exprimées par la Poésie & par les gestes des grands Acteurs; les postures, les attitudes, la noblesse & la grace du Ballet & des Danseurs; les Spectateurs mêmes donnent une ample matiere pour étudier les gestes; l'admiration des uns, le dédain & le mépris des autres, l'indolence de ceux-ci; la vivacité des gestes, que produisent la prévention & les disputes, pour ou contre la Piece; le maintien different des Auteurs, leur inquiétude, leur jalousie ou leur satisfaction; le caractère de ceux qui viennent aux Spectacles sans soucier de le voir, mais uniquement pour y être vûs; enfin cent autres caractères qui seroient trop longues à détailler, & qui l'on peut étudier & connoître par les gestes. Si les Spectacles peuvent être utiles aux Peintres; s'ils doivent étudier les gestes des Acteurs, des Danseurs & des Pantomimes: ces derniers peuvent aussi s'instruire sur les grands Peintres & sur la beauté de la Peinture.⁸⁶

I have given this passage at some length because it not only paints a lively picture of the experience of the theater during a performance, but because it shows that actors influenced painters as well as visa versa, and that both were influenced by nature, in the form of a passionate audience. Though Coypel only specifies that painters should look at the audience, we know that actors on stage tried to infect their audience with the passions, and so there must have been an *energy flow* between them, that magical and often elusive contact between performer and the public. Coypel encapsulated this exchange, this ennobling of nature in order to move the heart, again taking the stage as his example:

Etudiez toujours les effets de la Nature, faites-en sans cesse des remarques vives & promptes, & n'en demeurez pas toujours à ce qu'elle présente ordinairement, mais élevez votre idée jusqu'à ce qu'elle peut faire de plus parfait: ainsi réveillant les facultez de votre ame, vous vous échaufferez du même feu dont vous voulez animer les autres; car il faut être le premier ému de la passion qu'on veut exciter, s'animer des mêmes mouvements, & se mettre à la place de ceux que l'on veut représenter. Que j'aime un excellent Acteur que je vois rentrer dans le chauffoir, les yeux encore baignez de larmes au sortir d'une scène pathétique.⁸⁷

Charles Coypel was perhaps even more enamored of the stage than his father; he not only sought inspiration there for his painting, he even authored a number of plays himself. His father, who had formed 'une étroite

83. Antoine Coypel, *Discours*, 63.

84. Antoine Coypel, *Discours*, 63-4.

85. Antoine Coypel, *Discours*, 64.

86. Antoine Coypel, *Discours*, 166-7.

87. Antoine Coypel, *Discours*, 187.

liason avec Messieurs Racine, Despreaux [Boileau] & la Fontaine',⁸⁸ was, as we have seen, also the published author of the *Discours*. He had also:

rassemblé vers 1705 dans une Épitre en vers adressé à Charles un abrégé des principes de la peinture qui fut lu à diverses reprises à l'Académie.⁸⁹

Charles, therefore, was raised in a literary environment, and his quill, though less talented and successful, was just as ambitious as his paintbrush. Thierry Lefrançois sketched the extent and seriousness of the son's literary pursuits in his *Charles Coypel, peintre du roi (1694-1752)*:

Charles voulu aller plus loin que son père et devenir un homme de lettres à part entière. C'est alors qu'il se tourna vers l'art dramatique. Dès 1717 il fit représenter ses premiers canevas pour le Théâtre Italien dont certains furent joués plusieurs fois. Ceux-ci sont, selon Irène Jamieson, au nombre de sept, auxquels il conveint d'ajouter treize pièces dont le texte ne nous est pas parvenu, et vingt-et-une pièces dont le texte a été conservé à l'état de manuscrit, à l'exception d'une seule, *Les Folies de Cardenio*, qui fut imprimée en 1721. Il s'agit donc d'un ensemble de quarante et une pièces, assez divers [...] L'ensemble était apparemment d'une honnête médiocrité [...].⁹⁰

Though Coypel may not have been a gifted writer, his close and passionate association with the theater makes itself strongly felt in his paintings. Best known in this respect are his *Portrait d'Adrienne Lecouvreur dans le rôle de Cornélie* (whereabouts unknown) and his *Portrait de chanteur Pierre Jélyotte en Platée* (Paris, Musée du Louvre), but the figures presented in a great number of his paintings betray his love of the stage: their attitudes and postures, their gestures and facial expressions clearly demonstrate that grace and strong emotions were, indeed, compatible within the theatrical aesthetic. Examples of this combination of grace and violent affect can be found in the two canvases that Coypel did of the famous letter scene from Racine's *Bajazet* entitled *Atalide et Roxane* (current whereabouts unknown) and *L'évanouissement d'Atalide* (Lille, Musée des Beaux-arts). But even in gentler passions, Coypel's theatrical style is evident, such as the *Study of a woman turned toward the left* (<http://www.getty.edu/art/gettyguide/artObjectDetails?artobj=112012&handle=li>)⁹¹, or his *Homme nu debut* (Amsterdam, Rijksprentenkabinet). The latter [see figure 4.8] has strongly influenced my basic posture in the reconstructions presented in the case studies.

More precise attributions of gestures and attitudes to Coypel's works will appear in the text accompanying the case studies. For now, let it suffice to say that much has been gained, and gleaned, from my contact with the works of father and son.

4.4d Cornelis Troost: what comedy can teach about tragedy

Cornelis Troost painted many subjects derived from the theater, and seems in particular to have liked to represent scenes taken from popular Dutch comedies. The style of his art is far from the grandeur and nobility of Coypel's, and yet there is much to be learned about acting by studying his works. As F. J. Duparc has noted in his introduction to *Cornelis Troost and the Theatre of His Time: Plays of the 18th Century* (1993):

Few other artists were so intimately involved with the world of the theatre. Troost began his career as an actor and was paid one guilder and five stuivers per performance. Even after bidding farewell to acting in order to devote himself to the far more lucrative profession of painter, he nonetheless maintained a close attachment to the theatre: for example, he painted several stage sets for the Amsterdam Theatre. His artistic fame is primarily due to his representations of scenes from plays.⁹²

Although Troost seems to have preferred to search for inspiration in the light-hearted scenes of comedy, his *Ahasverus' toorn over Haman tijdens de maaltijd bij koningin Esther*, currently in the Teylers Museum, Haarlem [see figure 4.9], provides a fascinating view of what one presumes must be a Dutch performance of Act V, Scene V & VI of Racine's *Esther*: in the middle ground, Aman supplicates Esther ('il se jete à ses pieds'), who greets his act of submission with a classic gesture of rejection ('Va, traître, laisse-moi'), while Assuérus, in the foreground, points imperiously towards the villain, and pronounces his fate ('Qu'à ce monstre à l'instant l'âme soit arraché').⁹³

88. Thierry Lefrançois, *Charles Coypel, peintre du roi (1694-1752)* (Paris: Arthéna, 1994), 41.

89. Lefrançois, *Charles Coypel*, 41.

90. Lefrançois, *Charles Coypel*, 44.

91. Last accessed 27-05-2010.

92. F. J. Duparc, 'Foreword' in J. W. Niemeijer and Edwin Buijsen, *Cornelis Troost and the Theatre of His Time: Plays of the 18th Century* (Zwolle: Waanders Publishers, 1993), 9.

93. See: Jean Racine, *Œuvres de Racine, nouvelle édition, avec figures* (Amsterdam: 1760), tome troisième, 221-2.



Figure 4.9
Cornelis Troost, *Ahasverus' toorn over Haman tijdens de maaltijd bij koningin Esther*.
Teylers Museum, Haarlem.



Figure 4.10
Cornelis Troost, *De Ontdekking van Volkert in de mand*. Rijksdienst Beeldende Kunst, Den Haag.

Figure 4.11 Cornelis Troost,
De Liefdesverklaring.
Koninklijk Kabinet van
Schilderijen Maurits
huis, Den Haag.



Figure 4.12 Cornelis Troost, *Pefroen met het schaapshoofd*.
Rijksprentenkabinet,
Amsterdam.



But even more interesting for me has been an examination of his representations of scenes from comedy, which, because of their contrast with tragic theater, throw interesting light on how posture and gesture could aid characterization on the 18th-century stage.

For instance, a series of images based on the play *De Ontdekte schijndeugd* by David Lingelbach offer insight into how mixed and feigned passions could have been portrayed on stage. Troost's painting entitled *De Geveinsde Droefheid van Geertruy*, now in a private collection, shows four characters from the play making surreptitious gestures that the audience can read, but that the other characters on stage cannot: the betrayed husband pretends to leave home, but glances distrustfully back at his wife, aware that she intends to cuckold him in his absence; his trusty manservant, who has tipped him off, makes an unseen gesture of warning, while his wife holds a kerchief up to her right eye, feigning tears, yet looks straight out at the audience with her left eye and smiles wryly. Her maid, in the background, holds two fingers up to her forehead, in a lewd gesture.⁹⁴

Another scene from the same play, *De Ontdekking van Volkert in de mand*, makes a very useful comparison to the scene of tragedy portrayed by Watteau that I have referred to already. In the Troost painting we see the husband, who has discovered his wife's lover in a large laundry basket, in an attitude of disdainful rage. The tension of his tightly clenched fists is palpable, indeed, they seem almost to shake on the canvas [see figure 4.10]. If we compare this image to that of Watteau (<http://www.backtoclassics.com/gallery/jeanantoinewatteau/actorsfromthecomediefrancaise/>)⁹⁵ we see that the actor's right hand has also tightened into a fist, while his left hand is placed arrogantly on his side (indeed, Bary says 'L'Interrogation injurieuse veut que l'on mette la main sur un des côtés, parce que cette interrogation demande une posture fière'⁹⁶). Watteau's scene is less easy for us to read, seems less 'natural' to us today, than Troost's snapshot from comedy, and yet both actors appear to represent disdainful anger towards their female partners, and both display tension in the hands as an indicator of this anger.

Another example of the audience's reading abilities that I have gleaned from the works of Troost has to do with stance: if we compare the hapless lover in *De Liefdesverklaring van Renier Adriaansz* to the henpecked husband in *Pefroen met het schaapshoofd* we see a subtle difference in humor is reflected in the position of the actor's feet. In *De Liefdesverklaring* [see figure 4.11], the awkwardness of the amorous mennonite, his weight distributed over both legs and his meaty hands dangling, is contrasted with the pert elegance of the fashionable young girl, Saartje. Indeed, after she rejects his marriage proposal she calls after his retreating figure:

[...] there he goes, the Simple Simon: why just look at him walking with his legs wide apart, as if he had pissed in his pants.⁹⁷

This clumsiness of mien and gait on the part of the rejected lover contrasts strongly with the strangely elegant stance of the sniveling servant in Troost's *Pefroen met het schaapshoofd* [see figure 4.12]; the combination of sturdy work-clothing and servant's apron with the actor's elegant foot position is only incongruous until we realize that poor Pefroen is not really a servant at all, but, in fact, the henpecked master of the house. His wife and lover are sending him back to the butcher's shop, under the sign of which Pefroen appears as a 'horned' husband. His ineffectual and elegant stance surely is here meant to underscore the role reversal on which the play's plot is hinged: he really knows better. A gentleman by birth and education, he has allowed the bold and glistening, silk-stockings'd legs of his swaggering rival to firmly supplant his own, elegantly balanced, but cheaply-worsted limbs.⁹⁸ Certainly the 18th-century audience would have found different kinds of comedy in the postures of the mennonite and the cuckold?⁹⁹ The realization of the importance of stance strongly affected the end of my reconstruction of 'Barbares, laissez-moi' in the case studies.

94. Reprinted in Niemeijer and Buijsen, *Cornelis Troost*, 45.

95. Last accessed 05-06-2010.

96. Bary, 'Méthode' in *Sept Traités*, 223.

97. Niemeijer and Buijsen, *Cornelis Troost*, 56.

98. Kellom Tomlinson writes: 'when the Weight rests as much on one Foot as the other, the Feet being considerably separated or open, the Knees straight, the Hands placed by the Side in a genteel Fall or natural Bend of the Wrists, and being in an agreeable Fashion or Shape about the Joint or Bend of the Hip, with the Head gracefully turned to the Right or Left, which compleats a most Heroic Posture; and tho' it may be improper, in the Presence of Superiors, among Familiars, it is a bold and graceful Attitude [...]'. My point here is that Pefroen's wife and the 'bold and graceful' gentleman are just a bit too familiar. See: Kellom Tomlinson, *The Art of Dancing Explain'd by Reading and Figures* (London: 1735), 4.

99. Indeed, Pefroen's posture is highly reminiscent that shown in plate 5 of Johannes Jelgerhuis' *Theoretische Lessen*, which shows a tragic actor's stage exit. It is possible that Pefroen here parodies serious acting, and that he would have turned to the audience with renewed squalls of sorrow just as Jelgerhuis' hero turns, on his way offstage, in order to strike a final, noble attitude.

The examples proposed in this section have been meant to show some of the ways in which the visual arts have influenced my understanding the stage conventions of the period in question. I have tried to consult, to assess and, to some extent at least, to absorb representations of both tragic and comic acting. The application of this understanding to my case studies will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

4.5 Music and *vérité*

Charles de Brosses writes, when describing the Italian improvised theater, of:

[...] ces pièces non écrites, dont ils ont par tradition un canevas que les auteurs remplissent et dialogue à l'impromptu; elles n'ont ni mœurs, ni caractères, ni vraisemblance; [...] Cette manière de jouer à l'impromptu, qui rend le style très faible, rend en même temps l'action très vive et très vraie. [...] Le geste et l'inflexion de la voix se marient toujours avec le propos au théâtre; les acteurs vont et viennent, dialoguent et agissent comme chez eux. Cette action est tout autrement naturelle, a un tout autre air de vérité, que de voir, comme aux Français, quatre ou cinq acteurs rangés à la file sur une ligne comme un bas-relief, au-devant du théâtre, débitant leur dialogue, chacun à leur tour.¹⁰⁰

De Brosses' remarks get to the heart of the problem facing any reconstructor of historical acting techniques: the place of naturalism within a strongly idealized style. His words tell us nearly as much about French taste as they do about Italian improvisation. His off-the cuff remark:

Cette manière de jouer à l'impromptu, qui rend le style très faible, rend en même temps l'action très vive et très vraie.

is, in fact, implicitly indicative of the existence of a kind of sliding scale for realism in 18th-century acting based on the seriousness and beauty of the text: the stronger the literary style, the more noble, elevated and 'unnatural' was the acting to match it. Conversely, the Italian improvised theater compensated for the poverty of its text by a light, naturalistic and highly engaging style, but, de Brosse warns:

On ne peut rien de plus jouissant, quand on n'est pas parvenu, ni de plus insipide, quand on les voit pour la seconde fois.¹⁰¹

This idea is reflected in many of the sources on acting from France in this period, but we would be mistaken to equate unnatural with unemotional. The relaxed style of the Italian improvisers was, for de Brosses, not more realistic than the French so much as differently so: their improvisations appeared 'tout autrement naturelle, a un tout autre air de vérité'.

So in what way was this seemingly contrived and highly conventional style of France, where the actors lined up at the front of the stage and spoke in turns, natural? They moved from one graceful, painterly, statuesque attitude to the next, declaiming and gesturing; they spurned the everyday attitudes of the Italians, preferring to move like gods or heros. What kind of truth could possibly have been incarnated in French bodies as they acted with *vérité*?

We turn to the works of Claude-Joseph Dorat to find an answer to this question. In his *La Déclamation théâtrale*, he stressed the need for realism on the stage, which he equated with the art of 'l'imposture':

Mais c'est peu de la voix, c'est peu de la figure,
Si vous ignorez l'art de l'imposture,
De parer ces présents, d'y joindre l'action,
Et cette vérité, d'où naît l'illusion.¹⁰²

Yet on the following page he stresses the need for the actor, through elegant postures and attitudes, to draw ('dessiner') himself on stage:

Faites-vous, il le faut, une secrète étude,
De chaque mouvement & de chaque attitude.
Instruits par la Nature, apprenez à l'orner;

100. de Brosses, *Lettres*, 320-1.

101. de Brosses, *Lettres*, 320-1.

102. [Dorat], *La Déclamation théâtrale*, 133.

Sur le Théâtre enfin sachez vous dessiner.¹⁰³

Vérité, then, was not a quality associated with the kind of realism we applaud in actors today. A middle-ground had to be found, on the Baroque stage, between cold stylization and a too plain verisimilitude. So of what, then, did this realism consist?

The *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* of Diderot and d'Alembert gives many meanings for 'vérité', but only the following one is of use to us here:

Vérité, (*Peint.*) ce terme s'emploie en peinture pour marquer l'expression propre du caractère de chaque chose, & sans cette expression il n'est point de peinture.¹⁰⁴

Writers on French music, especially the repertoire of the Opéra, seem to have used the term in much the same way. For instance, the following description of the famous monologue from *Armide* links idealized postures and strong expressions of emotion to *vérité*, labeling them as 'true':

Dans quel ravissement n'étoit-on pas dans la cinquième Scène du second Acte du même Opera de la [Le Rochois as Armide] voir le poignard à la main, prête à percer le sein de Renaud endormi sur un lit de verdure? La fureur l'animoit à son aspect, l'amour venoit s'emparer de son cœur; l'une & l'autre l'agitoient tour à tour; la pitié & la tendresse leur succédoient à la fin, & l'amour restoit le vainqueur. Que de belles attitudes, & vraies! Que de mouvemens & d'expressions différentes dans ses yeux sur son visage pendant ce Monologue de 29 Vers, qui commence par ces deux-ci:

Enfin il est en ma puissance,
Ce fatal ennemi, ce superbe vainqueur.¹⁰⁵

Here the attitudes struck—which, as we have seen, could have been studied from pictures, though perhaps the painter had already taken them (as Antoine Coypel suggested) from the actors—are described as both beautiful and true. They nobly reflect the emotion the actress is expressing in word, voice and action. The electrifying effect this elevated excess had on the audience is reflected in a description of the most famous embodiment of Armide, by Marie Le Rochois, who not only created the *rôle*, but made it entirely her own:

Pour moi. je croi avoir vû une Representation d'Armide qui me donne droit de mettre cette Pièce audessus de tout ce que tant de siècles ont pû produire. Le souvenir de ce soir-là m'est toujours demeuré, & je le garde avec délices. [...] *Le Rochois*, après avoir été cinq ou six ans hors de Theatre, ayant trouvé que la voix lui étoit revenuë, voulut s'y remontrer. Elle avoit déjà joué deux fois Armide, le jour que je l'entendis, & elle étoit animée par des applaudissemens, qui lui étoient redevenus piquans. [...] Quand je me représente la Rochois, cette petite femme qui n'étoit plus jeune, coëffée en cheveux noirs, & armée d'une canne noire avec un ruban couleur de feu, s'agiter sur ce grand Théâtre, qu'elle remplissoit presque toute seule, & tirant de tems en tems de sa poitrine des éclats de voix merveilleux: je vous assure que je frissonne encore, & comme je n'ai jamais été ému si vivement que je le fus alors, quoique j'aye été quatre ou cinq cens fois à l'Opéra, je ne manque point de revenir à Armide, dès que je veux penser à une Pièce de Musique, souverainement belle.¹⁰⁶

It is telling that the author, when he thinks of a beautiful piece of music, should hit upon a scene in which acting plays so dominant a role. The little actress, who was never considered a beauty by contemporaries and who, by the time of this performance, 'n'étoit plus jeune', filled up the stage all by herself, and seems, from time to time, to have cried out prodigiously loud. She was famous for such sounds, and for being very emotional, or gutsy:

Rochois, Marie le) née à Caen, vers l'an 1650, a été la plus parfaite Actrice, pour la déclamation, les sons, les entraiilles & l'intelligence, qui ait paru à l'Opéra.¹⁰⁷

Clearly her energy level was extraordinary, and she riveted her audience's attention, both in the second and

103. [Dorat], *La Déclamation théâtrale*, 134.

104. Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert, ed., *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*: 17: 72. University of Chicago: ARTFL Encyclopédie Project (Winter 2008 Edition), Robert Morrissey (ed), <http://encyclopedia.uchicago.edu/>. Last accessed 22-5-2010.

105. See Chapter 2, footnote 87.

106. Published in *Histoire de la musique, et de ses effets, depuis son origine jusque'à présent: & en quoi consist sa beauté*, ed. Jacques Bonnet (Amsterdam: 1725), tome troisième, 10. This is a reprint of the *Comparaison de la musique italienne et de la musique françoise* (1704-6) by Jean Laurent Le Cerf de la Viéville.

107. Joseph de Laporte, *Anecdotes dramatiques* (Paris, 1775), tome troisième, 437.

in the final act of *Armide*:

Et qu'est-ce qui suit, mon Dieu! La dernière Scène efface autant les premières que l'Acte efface les quatre premiers:

Le perfide Renaud me fuit.

Combien de beautés! Quelle force, quelle adresse d'expression jusques dans les moindres choses! Par exemple remarquez en passant le port de voix & le tremblement sur la blanche du mot, *me fuit*, ce long ton ne veut-il pas dire, *me fuit bien loin, me fuit pour jamais*? On peut appeler cette Scène pour le pathétique, pour les grâces, pour la diversité des mouvemens, le triomphe en abrégé de la Musique Française. [...] l'Auditeur plein de sa passion, qu'on a augmentée jusqu'au dernier moment, ne peut pas la point remporter toute entière. Il s'en retourne chez lui pénétré malgré qu'il en ait, rêveur, chagrin du mécontentement d'Armide.¹⁰⁸

So, not only did Le Rochois have the acting skills and vocal power to make her audience shudder at the mere memory of her rage, she could also manipulate vocal ornaments to express all the despair, longing and betrayal encapsulated in the simple words 'me fuit'. Such strong expression, such insight into the human heart, was considered to be typically and essentially French in nature. It is the expression of the pathetic—defined in the *Encyclopédie* as 'cet enthousiasme, cette véhémence naturelle, cette peinture forte qui émeut, qui touche, qui agite le cœur de l'homme'¹⁰⁹ —, and the variety of emotions combined with grace that makes this scene 'le triomphe en abrégé de la Musique Française'. In the end, Lully is not a great musician because he writes great music, but because he can set words so that they move the heart. As Pierre Estève put it:

Lully quoiqu'étranger sçut bientôt découvrir l'expression sonore que demandoit la vérité du sentiment des Poèmes de Quinault. En rendant exactement les mouvemens d'une versification tendre, pathétique, noble, sublime & quelquefois terrible, il créa la musique Française.¹¹⁰

This national music could only have its intended effect if properly interpreted. Without a singer/actor who could embody all the passions 'avec vérité', the French style would necessarily fall flat:

Un Acteur qui veut reciter une Scène avec vérité, doit se pénétrer de la situation & rendre avec force le sens des paroles. Sans cette pureté d'exécution on ne peut faire entendre le vrai Récitatif françois, dont la principale beauté est un intérêt toujours soutenu.¹¹¹

So, the singer had to feel the emotional situation strongly, and then express the words: we have seen that this expression resided in a combination of vocal color, expressive ornamentation, gestures and attitudes; in physical gestures and vocal inflections. Indeed, Dorat insists that a singer who does not use the proper vocal inflections is no better than Vaucanson's mechanical flute-player.¹¹² Here then is the essence of that French realism which was so different from the *actio* of the Italian improvisers seen by de Bosses. Gestures, like vocal ornaments, needed to be performed expressively, to be represented to the audience as the natural manifestation of passion of the text, though ennobled for the stage. Thus, Joseph Roach's description of seventeenth-century acting techniques can equally well be applied to both gesture on the French operatic stage, and the text and music composed to inspire it:

Far from denying natural inspiration in acting by substituting disembodied hieroglyphs for truthful gestures, the rhetoric of the passions proposed a means of harnessing inspiration's inexorable synergistic effects. [...] An oratorical gesture, a prescribed pattern of action, serves as a pre-existing mold into which this molten passion can be poured.¹¹³

The only tempo, at such moments of 'molten passion', was that of the heart. The passion thus expressed passed, by contagion, into the bodies of the audience. Acting, text, music and tempo, singers, musicians and spectators were all moved in the same flowing *mouvement*.

Thus, as Grimarest had warned, it was impossible to attain operatic *vérité* without freeing the music and the words from a rigorous beat. Acting and rhetorical shaping could not be naturally accomplished, as Hill

108. Published in *Histoire de la musique*, tome troisième, 14.

109. Diderot and d'Alembert, ed., *Encyclopédie*, 12: 169. <http://encyclopedia.uchicago.edu/>. Last accessed 22-5-2010.

110. Pierre Estève, *L'Esprit des beaux arts* (Paris: 1753), tome second, 9.

111. Estève, *L'Esprit*, tome second, 28. Lois Rosow has written about what is meant by the term *scène*; see: Lois Rosow, 'Structure and Expression in the *scènes* of Rameau's *Hippolyte et Aricie*', *Cambridge Opera Journal*, vol. 10, no. 3 (Nov., 1998), 259-73.

112. see: [Dorat], *La Déclamation théâtrale*, 136-7.

113. Joseph Roach, *The Player's Passion* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1993), 55.

pointed out, without following the tempi of the passions in the human frame. Or, as Rameau put it:

Si l'imitation des bruits et des mouvemens n'est pas aussi fréquemment employée dans notre Musique que dans l'Italienne, c'est que l'objet dominant de la nôtre est le sentiment, qui n'a point de mouvemens déterminés, et qui par conséquent ne peut être asservi par tout à une mesure régulière, sans perdre de cette vérité qui en fait le charme.¹¹⁴

4.6 In Closing

In this chapter I have placed before the reader my thoughts on the importance of gesture to the proper performance of the music in the *tragédie en musique*. I have also proposed my main visual sources, which, in conjunction the French treatises in Sabine Chaouche's *Sept traités*, Austin's *Chironomia* and Hill's *An Essay*, have provided a theoretical and gestural backbone for the case studies.

It seems clear to me that acting in the period in question, whether operatic or in the spoken theater, was a combination of realistic facial expression (both expressed in the body and excited in the imagination of the performer), graceful movements and beautifully 'drawn' attitudes that would not have looked out of place in a statue or a painting. The tricky business for the opera singer was somehow to match these *mouvemens* (and I mean both of the affects and of the body) to the timing of the music. As Laura Naudeix has noted in her article 'Le Jeu du chanteur dans l'esthétique spectaculaire de l'opéra lulliste':

[...] le chanteur d'opéra reste placé au croisement de deux temporalités, celle du théâtre, du texte proprement dramatique, et celle de la musique. La musique porte en elle-même sa propre durée, mais elle peut également avoir une influence sur le texte, puisqu'elle peut donner une longueur fort variable à l'énoncé des phrases, de même qu'elle peut les répéter une ou plusieurs fois.¹¹⁵

We have seen in Chapter 3 that Jean-Léonar le Gallois de Grimarest complained, in his *Traité du récitatif dans la lecture, dans l'action publique, dans la déclamation, et dans le chant*, about the influence of musical timing and intervals on the text:

C'est une grande question de savoir si la Musique ajoute à la passion, ou si elle la diminue. Pour décider ce problème, il faut établir pour principe, que la passion ne saurait être exprimée que par les accents, par la prononciation, & par les gestes qui lui sont propres. Or il est impossible, en conservant les règles de la Musique, de donner à la passion ce que je viens de dire; il n'y a que la seule Déclamation qui puisse le faire. Donc toute passion assujettie aux intervalles, & aux mesures de la Musique, perd de sa force. En effet on ne peut donner aux syllabes la quantité qui leur a été déterminée: on ne saurait varier ses accents suivant les passions, ou les figures; on ne peut donner à ses gestes la vivacité & le délicatesse qu'ils doivent avoir; en un mot la passion ne saurait être mesurée.¹¹⁶

Grimarest's solution to this problem was for the performer to abandon the idea of strictly realizing the notated score. He felt strongly that singers should approach a spoken style of stage declamation as closely as possible, even in measured airs. The main thrust of my practical work throughout this research trajectory has been to try to find a performance style in which declamation and *actio* free the music from the rhythms notated on the page, in concordance with the rules of *vérité*.

The practical results of this research are presented to the eye and the ear in Chapter 5.



114. Jean-Philippe Rameau, *Observations sur notre instinct pour la musique* (Paris: 1754), vij-viii

115. Laura Naudeix 'Le Jeu du chanteur dans l'esthétique spectaculaire de l'opéra lulliste' in *Musique et geste en France de Lully à la révolution: études sur la musique, le théâtre et la danse*, ed. Jacqueline Waeber (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009), 43-54, 49.

116. Jean-Léonar le Gallois de Grimarest, 'Traité du récitatif' in *Sept Traités*, 356.

Chapter 5

Case studies

5.1 Introduction

This final chapter of my thesis, entitled ‘Case Studies’, comments on videos of performances, both spoken and sung, of four monologues drawn from three different *tragédies en musique*: two ‘classics’ from the 17th century (*Phaëton* and *Armide*) by Jean-Baptiste Lully, and one 18th-century attempt at operatic reform (*Polidore*), by Jean-Baptiste Stuck. The monologues are performed with rhythmic freedoms linked to various aspects of performance practice as mentioned in the sources we have examined in the course of this thesis. I view these case studies as experiments, as attempts to put information gleaned throughout the research trajectory into practice in a creative way. Most of these monologues are performed with gestures devised by myself, but one of them displays movements created at my request by Sharon Weller (Schola Cantorum Basiliensis), while another is performed without any gestures at all. Some are sung (by the Canadian soprano Andréanne Brisson Paquin and the Dutch baritone Maarten Koningsberger), and some are declaimed in *Sprechstimme* (by myself). The logic behind these various performance modes will be discussed in the individual texts that accompany the video clips.

In addition I will include two video clips of monologues (sung by Sophie Daneman and Paul Agnew) taken from a DVD of the première of the 2009 production of Jean-Philippe Rameau’s *Hippolyte et Aricie* that I conducted for the Dutch traveling opera company (De Nationale Reisopera).

The pieces presented are:

5.2 ‘Que l’incertitude’ from *Phaëton* by Jean-Baptiste Lully

5.3 ‘Enfin il est en ma puissance’ from *Armide* by Jean-Baptiste Lully

5.4 ‘Du plus charmant espoir’ from *Polidore* by Jean-Baptist Stuck

5.5 ‘Babares, laissez-moi’ from *Polidore* by Jean-Baptiste Stuck

5.6 ‘Cruelle mère des Amours’ and ‘Ah! Faut-il?’ from *Hippolyte et Aricie* by Jean-Philippe Rameau.

However, before proceeding to the video clips, I must qualify certain aspects of the work. The first involves costumes: I am aware that clothing could strongly influence the quality of the movements made and the final look of the gestures, but I have made no attempt to dress the performers in authentic theatrical costumes. There are for two reasons for this. The first is that no single costume could be found which would be accurate for the entire period studied here, for Armide’s sorceress’ dress in the late 17th century would certainly have been different in many ways from her attire at the opera’s last revival in 1766; the second was purely financial. On the other hand, many of these clips do show the performers dressed in unusual clothing: the logic here has been to try to respect those elements of the costumes which I found essential to the ideas behind the gestures: for instance, I wear knee-breeches in all of the clips, as do my supernumeraries Alexandre Pettigrew and Petri Arvo. This is because the leg positions in use on the historical stage were designed to show off the male calf: to turn the heel of the unweighted leg towards the audience without the calf being visible (as when wearing modern trousers) turns the performance of the movement into an abstract, indeed, into a meaningless exercise. I wished to underscore for myself, mentally and visually, that these positions were essential for achieving a successful look on stage. After all, an 18th-century comment quoted in Graham Sadler’s Early Music article ‘Rameau’s Singers and Players at the Paris Opera: A Little-Known Inventory of 1738’, indicates that the beauty of the calf was something of a ‘make-or-break’ for male stage performers:

Noiseux had a fine voice which some preferred to that of Jélyotte, but ‘his one drawback is his very badly shaped legs’.¹

I therefore decided that knickerbockers, though not the same as 17th- or 18th-century knee-breeches, would serve a useful purpose here. So too I have donned a waistcoat in many of the videos, in order to offer a stiff

1. Graham Sadler, ‘Rameau’s Singers and Players at the Paris Opera: A Little-Known Inventory of 1738’, *Early Music*, vol. 11, no. 4, Rameau Tercentenary Issue (Oct., 1983), 453-67, 460.

and unified upper body to the audience, rather than a floppy shirt or tee-shirt. As far as Andréanne's dress for the first complete 'Enfin' video is concerned, the length of the skirt was, of course, very important for female performers, as it hid the legs entirely from view. The pose struck after the line 'Qu'il éprouve toute ma rage', for instance, looked terrible when Andréanne was wearing a shorter skirt, as she had to assume a bizarre, pidgeon-toed and almost knock-kneed position in order to approach the attitude in Coypel's painting on which this scene was based (Nijinsky would probably have loved it). Once Andréanne was clothed in a long skirt, however, everything looked quite beautiful. We added a red drapery to the costume at the last minute, because the blackness of the dress against the black walls of the stage where the video was filmed obscured the shifts of her hips, which I consider to be essential to the style.

The second and final caveat concerns the quality of the acting presented. Andréanne and I have worked very hard in the last two academic years to build up, from scratch, a style of stage acting based on historical sources, and we feel that we have come a long way in that time: but we both still see much room for improvement. As the richness of the style revealed itself to us, we both came to realize that nothing short of years of work and experience, including live performance, can prepare a singer to present precise, complex and expressive gestures successfully on the stage. Neither of us feel that the longer excerpts of video presented here are in anyway 'perfect': we both of us often fell short of what we had intended to do. The attitudes are particularly difficult to strike properly as they came at moments of great passion, yet they demand insight, precision and physical control: for instance, both the attitude mentioned above from 'Enfin il est en ma puissance' and the one that I strike at the words 'Quelles clameurs' in 'Barbares, laissez-moi' fall sadly short of the mark. We often managed to get them right in rehearsal, after repeated tries, and we practiced getting into them over and over again, but in the longer takes presented among the following video clips the performer's emotion and wavering concentration took their toll. I did question, when presented with this level of difficulty, whether or not actors on stage would have used such complex positions. Perhaps Andréanne and I were making our lives more difficult than necessary? Blanchet, however, makes clear that acting was learned slowly but surely by the singers, who sought out complex postures and expressions to heighten their acting:

Je ne crains pas d'ajouter qu'un Chanteur n'a point de règle plus sûre pour juger de son talent pour la déclamation, que son goût naturel pour les deux Arts dont il s'agit: si ce goût s'accroît, il est sûr que son talent se développe; si cet Artiste en vient au point de n'être pas maître de son admiration à la vue de statues & de tableaux de prix, dès-lors, il peut se flatter qu'il est bien près de la perfection de la déclamation, s'il n'y touche déjà.

Voici un trait que j'ai entendu rapporter d'un de nos fameux Acteurs chantans. Il se promenoit dans une salle du Palais Royal; il laissa tomber ses yeux sur un tableau imaginé avec hardiesse, exécuté avec vigueur & précision: la vivacité du coloris, la justesse & la sublimité du dessein l'étonnant d'abord; le caractère de la principale figure attire ensuite & fixe son attention: tout son corps prend naturellement la même situation que l'objet qu'il contemple; les mêmes degrés de passion se peignent dans le contour de sa bouche, dans ses yeux & sur tout son visage: ni le bruit des personnes qui passent, ni les propos des gens arrêtés pour être témoins de ce spectacle, ne peuvent l'arracher de cette sorte d'extase: tant les arts & le talent exercent puissamment leur empire.²

It seems reasonable to assume that such an ecstatic response would not be stimulated by a commonplace attitude or expression, nor that much time would be required to gaze at postures well-known and easily deciphered. Indeed, I too have caught myself 'trying out' a position from a painting or a statue, to the amusement of passers-by, in museum galleries and Baroque gardens, and I know from this experience that postures which look easy, graceful and natural can be, in fact, incredibly difficult to imitate properly. My point here is that we need well-trained actors who feel very much at home in this style before we can make any real judgements about its effects: only those who have truly mastered the basics of historical acting will be free enough in mind and body to attempt highly virtuosic attitudes, and to carry them off with complete success.

Having offered this criticism of the level of the acting in the clips, however, I hasten to state that I do believe it sufficient for the purposes of this research project: it is the basic link between gesture and rhythmic freedom that is my subject here, not the refinements of the style embodied by trained and experienced professional actors of genius.

Before continuing on to the case studies themselves, however, something must be said about my attitude towards the rhythmic notation of this music. I place my discussion of the topic in this final, highly personal, unabashedly subjective and performative chapter for a distinct reason: I have made no new study of, nor

2. Jean Blanchet, *L'Art ou les principes philosophiques du chant*, 11e Edition, corrigé & augmentée (Paris: 1756), 92-3.

have I inadvertently discovered anything unknown about, an aspect of French Baroque music that has been, in my opinion, thoroughly covered by musicologists before me. What I hope to briefly introduce here is a musician's personal, practical take on the subject.

There are two main aspects of the rhythmical notation of French Baroque opera that I would like to address here: the first is the use of changing meter signs; the second, and I admit it is related to the first, is the relationship between the setting of the text and the downbeats of the bar.

Lois Rosow has made a lucid analysis of the lengths to which French composers went in order to ensure that the rhyme of the verse fell 'on the downbeat or on the second stress of a bar in double time'.³ She has also shown that the shifting line lengths and non-metered nature of French poetry made changes of meter essential to the accomplishment of this goal. However, meter signs were also strongly associated with tempo in this period and the exact extent to which these changes in notation are meant to indicate changes in the beat has been a source of debate among scholars and performers alike. David Tunley made his case as follows:

Lully's observance of quantity, together with his desire to reflect the poetic structure of the text (and particularly the Alexandrine, with its rhythmic focal points at the caesura and the end of the line) resulted in the changing metres so characteristic of his recitatives. However Grimarest gives no hint as to whether the different metres implied any rubato, as has been suggested by some modern writers. If 'natural verbal delivery' is taken as Grimarest insists it should be, it is extremely difficult to find any hard and fast correlation between changes of metre and changes of tempo to accommodate the natural expression suggested by the text. It is my belief that while there are hints that such a connection might be applicable to some 18th-century French recitatives, in Lully's music the changing metres are simply the result of his observance of quantity, and of the close union between poetic structure and music. [...] To see this as more than a solution to a notational problem is to run the danger of reading more into the music than the composer intended.⁴

It is unclear exactly what Tunley understands under the term rubato here. However, it does seem probable that a strictly proportional interpretation of this notational device is sometimes intended by French composers—though I personally would not describe this as a form of rubato. One example can be found in Act V scene 5 of Jean-Baptiste Lully's *Armide*, where the text 'le perfide Renaud me fuit' is consistently notated half in *signe binaire* and half in *signe majeur*⁵: it seems very likely that Lully intended the 8th-note *binaire* notation associated with the syllables 'le perfid-' to have the same speed of declamation as the 16th-note and 8th-note notation of the syllables '-de Renaud' [see figure 5.1]. At any rate, William Christie and Philippe Herreweghe have both interpreted the notation in this manner in recordings they have made of the piece.⁶ Another example that points towards proportional performance occurs in Act IV scene 3 of Jean-Philippe Rameau's *Hippolyte et Aricie*, where the appearance of a sea monster sends the string-players in the orchestra into a frenzy of 32nd-notes while accompanying the block chords of the chorus: this is all notated in *signe majeur*. During two bars of recitative ('Venez, qu'à son deffaut') sung by Hippolyte just before he rushes to his supposed destruction, Rameau switches to *signe binaire*, and afterwards, at the entry of Aricie ('Arrête'), again to *signe majeur*. Surely the string figures are all meant to sound equally quick, whether notated in 32nd or 16th-notes [see figure 5.2]?

However, in practice my attitude is more flexible than my citation of these strictly proportional relationships between the meters might imply. It is clear, for instance, that a single meter sign could be beaten either slowly or quickly. The officially 'slow' *signe majeur* could indicate any tempo from the slowest to the very fastest when tempo words like 'lentement' or 'vîte' were used to modify its natural movement. Even the normally flowing *signe binaire* was susceptible to great extremes of tempo and expression. Lully's use of the sign to express both rage and confused regret in Act V, scene 5 of *Armide* makes this very clear: the text 'Que dis-je? où suis-je' (marked 'lentement') and 'L'espoir de la vengeance' (marked 'viste') are both set in *binaire* meter. But, to even further complicate the matter, contemporary sources stress the fact that one need not beat time at all in recitative.⁷

My own personal manner of integrating these facts into performance is close to that proposed by Rosow:

3. Lois Rosow, 'French Recitative as an Expression of Tragic Declamation', *Early Music*, vol. 11, no. 4. Rameau Tercentenary Issue (Oct., 1983), 468-479., 469.

4. David Tunley, 'Grimarest's *Traité du Recitatif*: Glimpses of Performance Practice in Lully's Operas', *Early Music*, vol.15, no. 3, Lully Anniversary Issue (Aug. 1987), 361-4, 363-4.

5. Terminology taken from Jean Rousseau's *Methode claire, certaine & facile* (Paris: 1678). See Klaus Miehling, *Das Tempo in der Musik von Barok und Vorklassik: die Antwort der Quellen auf ein umstrittenes Thema* (Wilhelmshaven: Florian Noetzel Verlag, 2003), 40-1.

6. For Christie's performance: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9FdB-d4MJq8> (last accessed: 30-10-2010). For Herreweghe's: Jean-Baptiste Lully, *Armide*. Deutsche Harmonia Mundi, 1993. B00000078X.

7. See, for an example: Rosow, 'French Recitative as an Expression of Tragic Declamation', 472.

However one interprets the various time signatures in French recitative, it is evident [...] that they served the performer as rough guides, not as rigid indications of precise proportional relationships.⁸

I therefore begin by viewing the meter signs as general indications of a quicker (*binaire*, *triple simple*, *signe mineur*) or slower (*signe majeur*) pulse. Very often I have found this to work well with the affective content of the poetry; it is, however, merely a starting point, and numerous factors such as gesture or vocal technique, can influence just how much rhythmical freedom finally results from such an interpretation of the notation. For the clearest realization of these ideas, see my performance in *Sprechstimme* of 'Barbares, laissez-moi' from Stuck's *Polidore* in section 5.5.

I have already mentioned that French composers took care to notate rhymes on 'good' beats (the downbeat in any meter signs, with the additional option in *signe majeur* of the third beat, in *signe mineur* or *binaire* of the second).⁹ This notational system of relating text to heavy and light beats in a bar could, in fact, lead to quite subtle uses of notation on the part of the composer. For example, in 'Enfin il est en ma puissance' Lully notates the exclamation 'Ah!' (see page 213, system 1, bar 1) on the fourth beat of a bar in *signe majeur*, and ties it over to a quarter note on the down beat of the next bar. This implies a syncopated feeling in performance, with the singer beginning softly and swelling towards the tied over portion of the note that falls on the downbeat. The expressive effect in performance would therefore be, I feel, one of surprise, as a new thought burrows its way into Armide's consciousness. I would contrast this notation with Lully's setting, later in the same monologue, of the word 'Hè': here Lully notates the exclamation as a half note starting on the second beat of a bar notated in *signe majeur* (see page 213, system 4, second complete bar) and thus 'ties it over' to the third beat. Though Rosow has shown that the third beat in *signe majeur* could in some cases assume the function of a downbeat accent, it seems to me that Lully here indicates a subtle difference in performance by means of notation: the third beat, being 'less good' than the first, does not invite the singer to make as much of a crescendo. The result is a less energetic and more unemotional exclamation than was heard on the 'Ah!'. This interpretation would well accord with the dramatic situation: in the 'Ah!' passage Armide realizes that she has nearly killed the object of her passion, while the 'Hè' occurs in a passage very different in mood, as she tries to rationalize to herself her inability to take revenge on the sleeping Renaud. The second example represents a cool exclamation made by the thinking brain, whereas the 'Ah!' comes straight from the heart. Both of these performances should ideally differ from that of 'Ciel!' (see page 212, system 3, bar 1), which is notated on the downbeat of a bar in *triple simple*: this would imply that the word 'Ciel!' does not crescendo, but rather diminishes sharply in sound. During the rehearsal process I encouraged Andréanne differentiate between these various exclamations, though, unfortunately, they often came close to an identical realization in performance.

Thus, to sum up my personal view of notation, though it might seem at certain points in this thesis that I am arguing for a complete disregard of what the composer has written in favor of the performer's insights into how it should sound, I am in general quite a passionate student of the notation, especially in the opening phase of any musical project. When I take liberties, I do so consciously, sometimes boldly, but ultimately, though perhaps paradoxically, with great respect for what the composer has actually notated.

5.2 'Que l'incertitude' from *Phaëton* by Jean-Baptiste Lully

Jean-Baptiste Lully's *Phaëton* premiered on the 6th of January, 1683 at Versailles. It is a spectacular opera, one in which—and this it has in common with *Armide*—a machine steals the show in the last act. The story, based on a Greek sun-myth as recounted in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, was set in verse by Philippe Quinault.

No cast list for the premiere survives, so we cannot say which actress created the role of Libye, but Jean Leonard Le Gallois de Grimarest, as we have seen in Chapter 3, praised her for her ability to convey emotion in the air from Act II entitled 'Que l'incertitude'. Grimarest implies that even though the music seems more like a merry dance tune than the expression of uncertainty in love, it is possible, through freedom of tempo, to express convincingly the emotion of the text. This assertion makes his singling out of 'Que l'incertitude' even more precious to the current research: it would be difficult (as a researcher rather than as a performer) to pinpoint with confidence, across such a distance of time and cultural changes, exactly which airs in 17th-

8. Rosow, 'French Recitative as an Expression of Tragic Declamation', 472.

9. Here again Rosow's article is indispensable. See: Rosow, 'French Recitative as an Expression of Tragic Declamation', 469.

and 18th-century French opera would have demanded a free performance. Having a specific air to work on, and one that, from a purely musical point of view, does not cry out to be performed with freedom when viewed on the page, has been a great boon.

I have chosen to experiment, here in the case studies, with this piece in a very specific way, by recording two different gestured versions in which the musical timing is determined by the gestures themselves, rather than by musical factors. The precise nature of the research carried out in each version will be discussed below. Let it suffice to say here that the gestures seen in the video clips were not set on the singer in order to give an aesthetically pleasing effect. ‘Que l’incertitude’ was the first air with which I experimented during this research trajectory, and I thought it unwise to begin by trying to achieve a particular aesthetic result, rather than simply gathering information about the possible links between gesture and musical timing.

It is important then, that the reader not view the following video clip as my idea of an artistically satisfying union between gesture, word and music, but rather as the first, unhurried step in a longer process. The gestures here, it must be stressed, were fitted to the words only, without the least regard to Lully’s musical setting. I wanted to see in what way, and just how much, gesture could pull and push the air towards the expression of the words.

The situation in which the singer finds herself, in scene 3 of Act II of *Phaëton*, where the air occurs, is as follows:

Libye, the daughter of King Merops, is in love with Epaphus. She sings ‘Que l’incertitude’ to express her feelings as she waits to hear whom it is that her father has chosen for her to marry: she hopes that she may be able to marry her beloved Epaphus, but fears that her father will force her to marry another against the wishes of her heart. The basic passion of ‘Que l’incertitude’ is thus one in which love, longing, fear and hope can be said to be mixed.

However, before proceeding, it must be admitted that ‘Que l’incertitude’ is not technically a monologue air, because another character, Théone, is on stage at the same time. Pierre Estève wrote of the monologue air that:

C’est ici la partie la plus brillante de l’Opéra françois, & où on donne l’effort aux sentimens les plus vifs & aux passions les plus impétueuses. Les caprices & les incertitudes d’un Acteur qui doit se considérer comme seule & rendu à lui-même lui permettent une expression vive & variée.¹⁰

However, the fact that two female characters sympathetic to each other’s plight are here alone on stage allows Libye to express her unveiled feelings with nearly the freedom of a true monologue air; I felt that the sincerity of Libye’s expression of anxiety brings ‘Que l’incertitude’ close enough to the genre of the monologue air for the purposes of this study.

5.2a ‘Que l’incertitude’, versions 1 and 2

The method used for this experiment was as follows: I gathered together a group of young musicians to help me with this project, most notably soprano Andréanne Brisson Paquin, with whom I have worked very closely during the last two years of my research. I gave the music to ‘Que l’incertitude’ to these musicians and asked them to work on it without my intervention. I then videotaped the result. [see video 5.1]

We have here a version of the air which closely resembles a dance tune, and which is performed in time. I wanted to have this version on video to make clear that these musicians, specialized in early music, themselves would not have come up with the idea of applying rhythmic freedom of any kind to this piece. The free beating of the meter in the two versions which follow was the direct result of the gesture applied to the air.

The next step involved my devising and subsequently notating a set of gestures for this air, in order to transmit them to the singer. After working for several months with Andréanne on gesture in general, as well as on this specific text in the form of a declaimed—that is to say as a purely spoken—monologue with *actio*, I reassembled my forces and asked them to perform the piece again, this time allowing the gestures of the

10. Pierre Estève, *L’Esprit des beaux arts* (Paris: 1753), tome second, 30.

singer to determine the tempo and timing of each phrase. The result is presented in the next video clip, but before proceeding to watch it, I would like to clarify my intentions as a researcher.

The idea behind the choice of the gestures in this initial experiment was to see just how far I could go in using the idea of the passionate body shrinking and expanding under the influence of affect (this has been dealt with in Chapters 2 and 3): it was the flow of the animal spirits which interested me here. I immediately ran into an obstacle, however, for it was quite difficult to find a detailed description of the physical manifestation of the affect of uncertainty ('l'incertitude' is the main affect of the piece) in treatises of the period: however, I finally decided that uncertainty could be seen as a kind of negative image of hope: hope is often described in the 17th-century as a mixture of confidence and fear in which confidence has the upper hand.¹¹ I therefore decided that uncertainty, in my version of the air, would be a combination of confidence and fear in which the latter was the more powerful emotion.

Having decided on this basic premise, I then had to determine the gestures for the air. For the component of confidence I imagined, following affective theory, the body expanding. Therefore I applied an expansive gesture, and a shift of weight forward on 'Que'. As a contrast, I needed to find an emotion in the fear category which would counterbalance but not entirely overshadow this confidence. As I have noted, this was not easy to determine using historical sources: 'l'incertitude' was not discussed in the treatises I examined. Fortunately, however, I could turn to Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, who described 'inquiétude' (an emotion that shows up later in Quinault's text) as the first and weakest manifestation of the passion *crainte*:

L'inquiétude, les soucis, la peur, l'effroi, l'horreur et l'épouvante, ne sont autre chose que les degrés differens, et les differens effets de la crainte. Un homme mal assuré du bien qu'il poursuit ou qu'il possède, entre en inquiétude. Si les perils augmentent ils luy causent de fâcheux soucis; quand le mal presse davantage, il a peur; si la peur le trouble et le fait trembler, cela s'appelle effroi et horreur; que si ell le saisit tellement, qu'il paroisse comme éperdu, cela s'appelle épouvante.¹²

Bossuet here suggests a very useful continuum of emotion from uncertainty ('un homme mal assuré') to *inquiétude* and *épouvante*. So, since the main affect of the air is not the strongest manifestation of the passions from the family of fear or *crainte*, I decided to make the basic gesture associated with the text 'Que l'incertitude' an expanding gesture (hope) through the extension of the right hand coupled with a change of weight forward, followed, on the accented syllables of the word 'l'incertitude' by a simple retraction of the main gesturing hand (fear). This corresponds to the notion that joy and desire (the components of hope) caused the animal spirits to expand, while in fear they would flow back from the limbs into the heart and brain (we have seen Hill's statement to this effect in Chapter 4). The movement is, therefore:

shf p— shf rc. m—
Que l'incertitude
a L 2

The result, when Andréanne timed the music to the gesture, was a crescendo with the 'expanding' gestures forward, and a musical ritardando and decrescendo to accompany the retracted gesture.

It will be clear, I hope, from my description of the process used to determine the gestures for this version of Lully's air that a specific aesthetic result was not a priority here. Neither in this opening 'signature' gesture nor in the following movements did I attempt to create a beautiful piece of acting, nor was it my intention to achieve, through my gestures, any particular musical *rubati* that I thought might be artistically pleasing when applied to Lully's score. What I did hope to discover was a 'natural' affinity between tempo and expanding, or retracting, gestures, and between braced or slackened muscles (the place of muscle tension in historical acting has been discussed in Chapter 4).

I contrasted this use of retraction for fearful passions with more purely expansive gestures in the more agitated moments of Quinault's text. The most remarkable of these were the rising hands at the words 'je sens croître à tous moment' (starting in bar 12), culminating in a shift of weight forward with hands clasped on

11. See for instance, Charles Le Brun's *Conférence*, where, in explaining his drawing of hope he writes: '[...] cette passion [l'espérance] tient toutes les parties du corps suspenduës entre la crainte & l'assurance; de sorte que si une partie du sourcil marque de la crainte, l'autre marque de la sûreté [...]. See: Jennifer Montagu, *The Expression of the Passions: The Origin and Influence of Charles Le Brun's Conférence sur l'expression générale et particulière* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 119. I have also discussed the affect hope in Chapter 2, while examining Mattheson's description of the courante from *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*.

12. Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, *De la Connaissance de dieu et de soi-même* (Corpus des Œuvres de Philosophie en Langue Française, Fayard, 1990), 25-6.

D Bndq a—— shq—vhq a Bcl.hf. n
Je sens croire à tous moment mon inquietude.
a l. 2

In this experimental version I often combined physical ‘inflation’ with a shift of weight forwards: the underlying concept was to use shifts of weight to indicate changes in animal spirit activity (or, in more modern terms, the basic emotional energy level): this constant shifting of weight gives a restless feeling to ‘Que l’incertitude’, parallels for which can be found in Austin’s foot notations in the ‘Brutus Speech’ from Julius Caesar (he himself states that these shifts are indicative of Brutus’ anxiety). However, I did build in some exceptions: the words ‘en aimant’ (bars 7-8) were coupled with a shift of weight forwards which seems to have worked against rhythmic freedom here: Andréanne takes less time at this place than on ‘l’incertitude’, even though I asked her to touch her heart gently and soften her voice and face on the word ‘aimant’. It is possible that her raised activity level in moving the weight forward cancelled out, to some extent, the *ritardando* that I expected would take place here as a result of the softening of the voice and face (lowered muscle tension).

Bchc————Bshq sw
un rigoureux tourment!

The opening *ritournelle* was not involved in this particular experiment, therefore Andréanne does not act or make any gestures during it [see video 5.2].

In order to test my ideas about muscle tension and a free meter in operatic music I experimented with declaiming the text in the rhythm of Lully's setting. I purposely kept the same, very relaxed muscle tension throughout the air. It was perfectly possible to keep to a steady beat. The 'look' of the gestures however was transformed into a pantomimic choreography which made little affective impression on the viewer and which therefore did not significantly reinforce the meaning of the words [see video 5.3]. In video 5.3 I 'playback' the gestures to the sound track of video 5.1. The result is much like the last of my four interpretations of Austin's annotation for 'Man is born to trouble' [see video 4.3]: the gestures are too quick and too frequent to impress any affect—or even much meaning—on the heart of the viewer. My conclusion is that if Baroque gesture is not treated as acting, but rather as a kind of elegant pantomimic dance, then it necessitates no changes of tempo in performance. On the other hand, if Baroque gesture is seen not as dance, nor as a kind of pantomimic sign language, but rather as a method of acting, then the actor's own affect results in muscle tension, a tension that must significantly change the timing of the gestures and thus, as in my other experiments here, of the music itself. This could be why Gildon notes that:

13. Charles Gildon, *The Life of Mr. Thomas Betterton* (London, 1710),

5.2c ‘Que l’incertitude’, version 4

In order to test this idea further, and to have some kind of ‘outside control’, I asked Sharon Weller, a specialist in Baroque gesture, to devise gestures to this same text. However, I expressly did not send her the music: she received only the words, without any context or specific information about my project. Weller very kindly complied with my wishes, and provided me with a version of ‘Que l’incertitude’ in Austin notation, which I recorded with Andréanne about a year after the initial, purely musical video recording [see video 5.1]. The gestures of this version were thus created by someone uninvolved in the research process and therefore cannot have been designed, consciously or unconsciously, to achieve a particular result. My intention was to show that different gestures, when performed in the spirit of a spoken declamation, would result in different rhythmical freedoms [see video 5.4].

Weller’s gesture ‘incertitude’ is the opposite of mine: she has the performer retire on the first syllable and move forward on the last three. Thus, rather than causing a *ritardando*, Sharon’s gestures on l’incertitude propel the music and the singer forward.

Both times the word ‘non’ appears (bars 5 and 6) it is given a gesture, slowing the tempo in a way that is incompatible with Lully’s bass line:

Sh phfsw—...—pdq phf n—.....—br
Non, non, on n’a point en aimant
R1

but immediately afterward the gestures flow energetically forward at the words ‘De peine plus rude que l’incertitude’, again causing a slight *accelerando*.

gbr—pdf A veqp—
De peine plus rude

shf—pdb
Que l’incertitude.
aR2

The flow of the text ‘Je sens croître’ (starting in bar 12) is hobbled by the individual gestures on each word, including a step forward on ‘sens’:

br—shf a Bshf a Ts veq sh—....—veq sh
Je sens croître à tous moment mon inquietude.
aL2

The final line, in which I emphasized, in my version, the word ‘rigoureux’, has, in Weller’s version, a strong gesture given to the word ‘tourment’. As I have explained above, the expressive gesture in my version on the word ‘rigoureux’, at the very beginning of the air, resulted in a fermata on that word, while the final statement of the text, which was accompanied by a sweep of the arms, did not significantly influence the tempo. In Weller’s version, the muscle tension of the final gesture on ‘tourment’ causes that word to stretch.

D Bcdq
Est un rigoureux tourment.

It must be noted, however, that Weller’s gestures influence the tempo less radically than mine: they tend to result in small-scale stretching of words, whereas my version results in (relatively) large-scale *rubati*. This I found significant: the nature of the gestures influenced the resulting kind of rhythmic freedoms to a greater extent than I had anticipated. I had, as I mentioned, created my gestures specifically to experiment with muscle tension and the results were different to those associated with Weller’s movements. I have continued to work with both these small- and large-scale effects of gesture on the flow of the beat in the following case studies.

5.2d The conclusions drawn from these various versions of ‘Que l’incertitude’

This initial experiment was designed to help me define more clearly the boundaries of my research. It became obvious to me that muscle tension had to be taken into account as a valid factor contributing to rhythmic freedoms in performance. I also felt it was arguable, based on the results of these experiments, that *accelerandi* are more naturally related to energetic movements forward (high muscle tension), while *ralentandi* are more easily associated with weaker movements backwards (low muscle tension). I later put these insights to use in ‘Enfin il est en ma puissance’: as we shall see in the next section, the forward sweep of energy accelerated the tempo at the words ‘vengeons-nous’, while the retreat of spirits and the stiff, retreating body slowed the music at the words ‘qui me fait hésiter’.

5.3 ‘Enfin il est en ma puissance’ from *Armide* by Jean-Baptiste Lully

5.3a About ‘Enfin il est en ma puissance’ and its place in this research trajectory

Armide, in spite of a controversial fourth act, was widely held, in the 17th and 18th centuries, to be Lully and Quinault’s masterpiece. As Lois Rosow has written:

Armide represents the culmination of the long and fruitful career of Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632-1687). Though not his final composition, it was his last complete *tragédie en musique* and the last work he wrote in collaboration with Philippe Quinault.. It was an instant and enduring success: a crowd-pleaser at its initial production, and a perennial favorite of audiences and critics in the 18th century.¹⁴

The temptation to work on the final scene of Act II, the famous ‘Enfin il est en ma puissance’, which, as we have seen in Chapter 4, was thought to be ‘une Pièce de Musique, souverainement belle’,¹⁵ proved to be irresistible: not only is this monologue richly documented in the written sources (indeed, it has been discussed already in a number of contexts in this thesis), but there are numerous extant paintings, drawings and cartoons depicting scenes from the story that could be used as sources of inspiration for specific gestures and attitudes. Add to this the fact that working on ‘Enfin il est en ma puissance’ gave me a chance to tackle a masterpiece of poetry which contains multiple changes of mood in a short time and it simply seemed that *Armide* was too good a chance, and too exciting a challenge, for me not to take it up.

The title role was created by Marie (Marthe) Le Rochois, who was famous for her acting; so it seems likely that Lully wrote the scene with her own particular dramatic skills in mind. We have also seen, in Chapter 4, that de Brosses commented on how important *actio* was to this scene. Before going any further, however, I would suggest that the reader look at the first video that I made with Andréanne of the monologue, one in which it is performed without any gestures [see video 5.5]. Here, just as in the initial video of ‘Que l’incertitude’, the performers worked on the piece without my intervention; differences in timing between this version and the final recorded version (made during a performance in the Utrecht Early Music Festival in 2010, here presented as video 5.20) are marked, and can be said entirely to be the result of the work Andréanne and I did together on the gestures.

Before preceding to a version with gestures, I would further suggest that the reader look at a clip from the 2008 William Christie/Robert Carsen production with Stéphanie d’Oustrac singing the title rôle: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mkSvsf9_eEs.¹⁶ Here the stage director has Armide walk slowly across stage at a uniform speed, while she removes layers of clothing. He thus directs the audience’s attention away from the meaning of individual words and phrases, and imposes, through the uniformity of the singer’s movements, an unvarying tempo on the music: the result is a near monotonous emotional delivery of the text. Such a performance is at odds with the analysis of the scene provided by Rameau in his *Observations sur notre instinct pour la musique*. Rameau was, in fact, quite specific about the variety of emotions that he felt were expressed by Lully’s setting of the words. His remarks are examined below: suffice it to say here that he would not have agreed with the Christie/Carsen rendering. Indeed, the modern performance’s obliteration of those nuances which Rameau heard in ‘Enfin’ calls to mind Aaron Hill’s remark about actors, who:

14. Lully, *Armide*, ed. Rosow, XXI.

15. Published in *Histoire de la musique, et de ses effets, depuis son origine jusque’à présent: & en quoi consist sa beauté*, ed. Jacques Bonnet (Amsterdam: 1725), tome troisième, 10. This is a reprint of the *Comparaison de la musique italienne et de la musique française* (1704-6) by Jean Laurent Le Cerf de la Viéville.

16. Last accessed 25-09-2010.

[...] walking thro' a PART, (as a Blind Man thro' a Gallery of Pictures) They MARK no Passion, only because they see none.¹⁷

Carsen's static staging never allows the listener focus on the words, but either contradicts them (as the monotone march across stage at the beginning is in contradiction to Armide's expression of eagerness, joy, triumph and scorn), or smothers them in overtly sexual gestures (as when Armide rudely rubs herself with flowers in the measured air 'Venez, venez'). The 18th-century description by Dorat shows us another way to approach the scene:

Dans ces riants Jardins Renaud est endormi,
Ce n'est plus ce guerrier, ce superb ennemi,
Ombragé d'un panache & caché sous des armes,
C'est Adonis qui dort, protégé par ses charmes.
Armide l'aperçoit, jette un cri de fureur,
S'élance, va percer son inflexible cœur....
O changement soudain! elle tremble, soupire,
Plaint ce jeune Héros, le contemple & l'admire.
Trois fois, prêt à frapper, son bras s'est ranimé,
Et son bras qui retombe est trois fois désarmé.
Son courroux va renaître & va mourir encore:
Elle vole à Renaud, le menace, l'adore,
Laisse aller son poignard, le reprend tour-à-tour;
Et ses derniers transports sont des transports d'amour.
Que ces emportemens son mêlés de tendresse!
Quel contraste frappant de force & de foiblesse!
Que de soupirs brûlans! que de secrets combats!
Que de cris & d'accens, qui ne se notent pas!
A l'ame seule alors il faut que j'applaudisse:
La Chanteuse s'éclipse, & fait place a l'Actrice.¹⁸

These verses have served as inspiration to my work, especially its emphasis on the wild and rapid changes of emotion which Armide undergoes. I have tried to follow the spirit of these descriptions, balancing *vérité* with 'belles attitudes, & vraies!'¹⁹ in the video versions which follow [see video 5.6].

It is not my intention to describe or to justify each gesture of this reconstruction one by one, but rather to focus my attention on three sections of the monologue and to subsequently draw from them a number of conclusions about the possible relationship between gesture and tempo at the Opéra. The sections in question are:

1. the opening four lines, the gestures for which were inspired by Rameau's remarks on them in the *Observations sur notre instinct pour la musique* (for a discussion of which, in the context of the *Querelle des Bouffons*, see Chapter 3);
2. Armide's 3 attempts to kill Renaud, from the line 'Qu'il éprouve toute ma rage' to 'Je soupire';
3. the last lines of the scene ('Volez, volez/ Conduisez-nous au bout de l'univers').

Before proceeding, however, let me briefly describe the goals I have had for this particular phase of my research. In contrast to my work on 'Que l'incertitude', I here wanted to achieve a more satisfying artistic result, something closer to what I think a performance on stage might actually have looked like. Yet it was not my intention to immediately try to achieve a particular aesthetic result, either musically or visually. To do so would have been, I felt, to impose to an undesirable degree my personal taste upon the research. Instead, I hoped to document, through notation and video, a series of smaller changes in a basically stable gestured version, and then to compare these variations and to draw conclusions from the comparisons. I have been inspired by various 17th- and 18th-century sources, both written and visual, in this reconstruction, and feel it as a whole is aesthetically more satisfying than my work on 'Que l'incertitude': but I do not propose the following as a version ready for, or worthy of, stage performance. It retains an experimental character.

17. Aaron Hill, *The Prompter*, numb. CXVIII.

18. [Claude Joseph Dorat], *La Déclamation théâtrale*, quatrième édition (Paris: 1771), 140.

19. See Chapter 2, footnote 87.

5.3b Literary influence: Rameau's *Observations sur notre instinct pour la musique*

I have already discussed, in Chapter 3, the acrimonious nature of the interaction between Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Jean-Philippe Rameau during the *Querelle des Bouffons*. Among the better known documents of this pamphlet war are Rousseau's *Lettre sur la musique française* (1753) and Rameau's *Observations sur notre instinct pour la musique* (1754). I therefore feel that Rousseau's scathing attack on 'Enfin il est en ma puissance' and Rameau's spirited, line-by-line defense need no extra context here. My intent is to show how I used Rameau's affective analysis (from the *Observations*) of the first four lines of the monologue in my reconstruction.

We have already seen (and heard) the musical effect of the Carsen/Christie version from 2008, in which Stéphanie d'Oustrac's uniformity of movement imposes an equally uniform performance style on the first four lines of Armide's monologue. Rameau, in contrast, spells out explicitly the variety of affect and inflection that he felt these lines contained; a variety, furthermore, that he believed would prove Lully's extraordinary skill in setting Quinault's text. Rameau rebukes, in his discussion of the opening lines, Rousseau's derision of Lully's placement of a trill on the word 'puissance':

Le Tril [...] fait beauté dans notre Musique, sur-tout dans le cas présent, où il ajoute de la force au mot *puissance*, sur lequel porte tout le sens du Vers: [...]. Armide s'applaudit ici d'avoir Renaud en sa puissance, & pour y exprimer son triomphe, rien n'est mieux imaginé que le Tril qu'elle y emploie: Tril justement semblable à celui des Trompettes dans les Chants de Victoire.[14]²⁰

I have therefore marked, in the line 'Enfin il est en ma puissance' the word 'puissance' with a gesture of triumph and power: Armide clenches her raised left hand into a fist. As a commencing gesture preparatory to this one, and in order to create a certain amount of anxiety in the breast of the audience, I have Armide raise her knife on the word 'Enfin'. The suite of gestures looks like this

chf—.....—chf
Enfin il est en ma puissance
aL2

After this strong gesture, however, I follow Rameau, who, in his *Observations*, suggests an immediate change of affect. He justifies Lully's change from minor to major on the words 'ce superbe vainqueur':

Un Auteur, qui me fait la grace d'adopter mes Principes, n'ignore pas sans doute l'intime rapport déjà cité entre le Mode majeur et le mineur, il n'ignore pas, non plus, que celui-ci doit son origine au premier, qu'il en dépend, et que s'il a la molesse en partage, l'autre au contraire est mâle, vigoureux. [...] mais employer d'abord le Mode mineur, pour que sa molesse opposée à la vigueur du Majeur y ajoute un nouvel aiguillon, et la redouble, pour ainsi dire, dans le moment que ce Majeur va terminer un repos absolu, sur ces mots, *ce superbe Vainqueur*, voilà le grand coup de Maître: car enfin ce n'est que sur ces derniers mots que porte tout le dépit d'Armide, ce n'est point ce fatal Ennemi qui l'occupe, non plus que ses captifs délivrés, comme elle le dit ensuite pour s'exciter à une action que son coeur dément, ce n'est que le mépris de Renaud pour ses charmes qui blesse son orgueil.²¹

I have tried here to show gradations in Armide's scorn. The words 'ce fatal ennemi' receive the weaker gesture, a falling of the hand that has been raised on the word 'puissance'. My idea here was to show how little Armide feels threatened by the helpless Renaud, who appears to be anything but a 'fatal ennemi' as he lies at her feet. The gesture on 'ce superbe vainqueur', in contrast, I have tried to make 'mâle' and 'vigoureux': a sudden upwards flash of the opened palm, to correspond with the sudden stab of pain Armide feels as she remembers her *orgueil blessé*.

—pdq sw —vhq sp
ce fatal ennemi, ce superbe vainqueur.

Of the line 'Le charme du sommeil le livre à ma vengeance' Rameau notes:

Un homme de goût et de sentiment peut-il se méprendre, quand la raison l'éclaire, sur le grand art qu'il y a d'adoucir une première expression pour porter toute la force sur la principale par l'opposition du contraste. *Le*

20. Jean-Philippe Rameau, *Observations sur notre instinct pour la musique, et sur son principe; où les moyens de reconnoître l'un par l'autre, conduisent à pouvoir se rendre raison avec certitude des différens effets de cet art* (Paris: 1754), 70.

21. Rameau, *Observations*, 74-6.

charme du sommeil ne conclut rien encore, et c'est sur, *le livre à ma vengeance*, que le tout doit porter. [...] Lulli pen-
soit en Grand, et certainement ne s'est point endormi sur ce dernier Vers: il le commence d'abord dans le Mode de
la Soudominante qu'annonce le Diéze cité par l'Auteur de la Critique [Rousseau], puis enjambant sur la Tonique,
il passe à sa Dominante où la force se redouble, pour exprimer, *le livre à ma vengeance*, il porte la voix dans le bas,
pour que s'élevant ensuite avec rapidité, elle fasse sentir toute la fureur à laquelle Armide s'efforce de se livrer, en
disant, *je vais percer, &c.*

I therefore have made a 'soft' gesture, a sweep of the hand and a shift of weight, on the words 'le charme du sommeil' with Rameau's words in mind: 'd'adoucir une premiere expression pour porter toute la force sur la principale par l'opposition du contraste'. 'Le livre a ma vengeance', where, according to Rameau 'la force se redouble' is therefore marked with an energetically performed version of the gesture Bary, in his *Méthode*, notes as indicative of 'le fondamental' (see Chapter 1 for my performance of this gesture), a striking movement of the hand:

—sdq d —sdq st
Le charme du sommeil le livre à ma vengeance;
rL1

Rameau makes clear, in his *Observations*, that the main thrust of Armide's fury falls on 'Je vais percer son invincible cœur'. Before going into detail about my gestures for this line, however, I would like to sum up my interpretation of Rameau's remarks in the following table [see table 5.1]:

Line	Quinault's text	Rameau's description
1	Enfin, il est en ma puissance	'triomphe'
2	Ce fatal ennemi,	dépit?
	ce superbe vainqueur.	'orgueil blessé'
3	Le charme du sommeil	adouci
	le livre à ma vengeance;	'la force se redouble'
4	Je vais percer son invincible cœur.	'fureur'

[illegible]

We have seen that Rameau believed that Lully had set Quinault's text in a way that emphasized a variety of affect and inflections. The difference between this and Carsen's unified affective approach becomes obvious when comparing the video of the modern stage production to video 5.7, which was made during a working session with Andréanne [see video 5.7].

I would now like to go into some detail about how I applied gesture to the line 'Je vais percer son invincible cœur', both as a way of elucidating my work method and as a prelude to a further reflection on the topic of gesture, affect and rhythmic freedom in the *tragédie en musique*.

My choice for a first gesture, a starting point for the line was simple. Pierre Estève, in his *Justification de la musique française, contre la querelle qui lui a été faite par un allemand & un allobroge*, noted that:

[...] suivant la première règle de la Déclamation Française, il faut appuyer sur le verbe; c'est-à-dire, donner le coup, la force de la voix sur le mot où est l'action, ou qui donne de la force à la phrase [...].²²

I therefore decided that the simplest and most logical treatment of the line would be to accent ‘percer’ by raising the knife in front of the singer’s torso. Then, to complete the thought expressed by the text, the word ‘cœur’ was emphasized by resting the left hand on the breast [see video 5.8].

chf— —br.
Je vais percer son invincible cœur!'

The result was unsatisfactory, because the gesture seems to indicate that Armide will kill herself, rather than

22. [de Morand and Estève], 'Justification de la musique françoise, contre la querelle qui lui a été faite par un allemand & un allobroge' (La Haye: 1754), 51, in *La Querelle des Bouffons*, ed. Denise Launay (Genève, Minkoff Reprint, 1973), tome II, 1081-1143.

her enemy Renaud. I therefore removed the gesture on 'cœur' and added an indicative gesture on the word 'son', so that Armide points to Renaud, indicating unmistakably her intended victim [see video 5.9]:

chf—...—ihx
Je vais percer son invincible cœur!

Here we can already see that the gesture on 'son' has changed its timing: when I asked Andréanne to redo this clip, but strictly in time, she could not suppress a smile at the ludicrous result. Just as in 'Que l'incertitude', the gestures need time to 'register' [see video 5.10].

Now it was possible to re-instate the gesture on 'cœur', and thus to complete the thought in gesture and in word [see video 5.11]:

chf—.....—ihx —n
Je vais percer son invincible cœur.

This, however, still seemed unsatisfactory, because I felt that the word 'invincible', here performed without gesture, was too important not to be marked in some way: after all, Armide's magical ability to destroy the otherwise indestructible Renaud is the very source of her joy and triumph. Rather than adding another gesture to an already 'busy' line, I simply asked Andréanne to stretch the note musically without any bodily movement [see video 5.12].

This version of the line, however, remained unsatisfactory to me, so I decided to add what Gilbert Austin would call a 'suspended gesture'. Such movements are preparations for more emphatic gestures; in this case a retraction of the arm on 'invincible' in order to jab more forcefully on 'cœur'. This retraction, I hoped, would help to explain to the eye the musical elongation taking place on 'invincible', so that the senses of sight and hearing would be synchronized. The result can be seen in the following video clip, which shows me performing the opening lines as I had imagined them, with changes of tempo and muscle tension, of vocal inflection, and facial expression. I show this video clip because I would like to contrast this 'ideal' researcher's version with the results of my work with Andréanne, when she performed the monologue sung to a musical accompaniment [see video 5.13].

When we compare this spoken version with the same lines in sung performance, a tendency towards an evening out of the tempo, the inflections and the speed and force of the gestures becomes apparent [see video 5.14]. We can compare this to a spoken version by the singer and see that she herself gestured with more life and variety when not singing [see video 5.7].

This leads me to my first observation, that there seems to be some basis for Grimarest's harsh criticism of sung texts.²³ He clearly stated that gestures and inflections lost their spontaneity when sung:

C'est une grande question de savoir si la Musique ajoute à la passion, ou si elle la diminue. Pour décider ce problème, il faut établir pour principe, que la passion ne saurait être exprimée que par les accents, par la prononciation, & par les gestes qui lui sont propres. Or il est impossible, en conservant les règles de la Musique, de donner à la passion ce que je viens de dire; il n'y a que la seule Déclamation qui puisse le faire. Donc toute passion assujettie aux intervalles, & aux mesures de la Musique, perd de sa force. En effet on ne peut donner aux syllabes la quantité qui leur a été déterminée: on ne saurait varier ses accents suivant les passions, ou les figures; on ne peut donner à ses gestes la vivacité & le délicatesse qu'ils doivent avoir; en un mot la passion ne saurait être mesurée.²⁴

Of course it would be possible, with further work, to get more flexibility and variety into Andréanne's performance (she herself would agree; in fact we have discussed this many times). However, it is not the ultimate and ideal performance of these particular gestures fitted to this specific piece that I hope will be of use to future researchers, but rather the general conclusions that can be drawn from our attempt: it seems to me that, in principle, Grimarest was right. When compared to the spoken theater, operatic gesture appears, slow, exaggerated and, to some extent, unnatural. Angelica Goodden's *Actio and Persuasion: Dramatic Performance in Eighteenth-century France* offers several corroborative instances from 18th-century sources. Indeed, she notes that:

23. For a fuller discussion see Chapter 3.

24. Jean-Léonard le Gallois de Grimarest, 'Traité du récitatif' in *Sept traités sur le jeu du comédien et autres textes: de l'action oratoire à l'art dramatique* (1657-1750), ed. Sabine Chaouche (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2001), 356.

Favart, for instance, observes in a letter of 6 February 1763 that opera encourages a non-natural acting style, and remarks of a young actress who was formerly a pupil at the Académie royale de musique, but has not yet appeared on the Opéra stage, that '[elle] n'est point encore faite aux grands gestes de l'Opéra; tant mieux, elle sera plus naturelle.'²⁵

Goodden further remarks that:

[...] the anonymous *Essai sur l'opéra* of 1772, concludes that gesture should be sparing in opera, and compares the latter with non-lyrical drama. The author remarks that the words of opera, whether in recitative or aria, are delivered less quickly than those of ordinary declamation, and the speed of gesture must correspondingly be reduced. On the other hand, he writes, gesture should be more marked than in conventional acting.²⁶

All of this leads me to my second observation, which is highly speculative, and which concerns the founder of the *tragédie en musique*, Jean-Baptiste Lully. Before I begin speculating, however, I need to establish the angle from which I here examine the genre and its master.

Lully came to compose operas after having acquired a great deal of stage experience as a dancer. Indeed, Jérôme de La Gorce informs us, in his article in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, that the composer:

excelled in character parts that allowed him to display his talents for mime and comedy.²⁷

This performance background was further supplemented by his subsequent work as a composer of *comédie-ballets*, during the period in which he collaborated with Molière; but Lully also knew tragic theatrical styles, for a well-known anecdote has it that his style of recitative was based on the declamations of the famous actress La Champmeslé:

When looking for models for his recitatives the composer, who had written the intermèdes for *Oedipe* and probably for other tragedies as well, is said to have gone to the *Comédie* to hear Marie Desmares, known as 'La Champmeslé', famous for her performances in Racine's plays, and to note the intonations and inflections of her voice.²⁸

The point I am trying to make here—and it is no extraordinary one—is that Lully came to write opera from a performance background: he relied on his own stage experience as a performer, and on his observations of other performers on stage. He made a success of the French opera by coming at it from the inside out. De La Gorce noted as much:

As a violinist, dancer and actor himself he was able to control the accuracy of the instrumental playing, demonstrate the steps of ballets, show how a performer should make an entrance and move on stage, and display the attitudes they should adopt. From the first, thanks to these abilities and the convergence of so many talents, his work received excellent performances which contributed to their success.²⁹

So if we accept that Lully had a practical, working knowledge of the stage, that is to say as a *performer* as well as a composer, and if we accept that he was very concerned with every aspect of the *tragédie en musique* from the writing of the *livret* to the details of gestures made on stage, then surely he must have composed his music with specific acting styles, perhaps even with specific gestures, in mind? I say this because I have run into a serious difficulty with my gestures added to the line 'Je vais percer son invincible cœur'. For Rameau is clear, in his *Observations*, that 'Si toute l'impétuosité du mouvement tombe sur, *Je vais percer son invincible*, peut-on mieux la rendre qu'en montant par gradation et avec rapidité jusqu'au moment où Armide doit avoir jetté tout son feu',³⁰ and yet my gestures slow down the line considerably.

Here I as a researcher consciously retreat from the temptation to give an aesthetic judgement. I do not wish to promote the aesthetic superiority of my gestured performances, but rather to note the very different ef-

25. Angelica Goodden, *Actio and Persuasion: Dramatic Performance in Eighteenth-century France* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 68.

26. Goodden, *Actio and Persuasion*, 123.

27. http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/42477pg1?q=lully&search=quick&pos=2&_start=1#firsthit Last accessed 15-09-2010.

28. http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/42477pg1?q=lully&search=quick&pos=2&_start=1#firsthit. Last accessed 15-09-2010.

29. http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/42477pg1?q=lully&search=quick&pos=2&_start=1#firsthit. Last accessed 15-09-2010.

30. Rameau, *Observations*, 82.



Figure 5.2a *Le Sommeil de Renaud*, Nantes, Musée des Beaux-Arts.



Figure 5.2b 'Qu'il éprouve toute ma rage'.

fects of the non-gestured, gestured and modern-staged versions. In fact, I find it much more challenging and important to leave the question of aesthetics for someone else to answer; I obviously am too close to the subject now, too involved, to have sufficient distance in order to make larger aesthetic judgements. If one compares the video of Andréanne singing ‘Enfin il est en ma puissance’ without gestures [see video 5.5] made at the start of this project, with the later gestural version [see video 5.6], it is clear that something has been lost as well as gained in the course of the research process: the vigor, freshness and energy of the first version is slowed and tamed by the gestures, though they do have the effect of making the many changes in the affect of the text more obvious. It seems clear that an unwanted side-effect of a detailed affective performance is a general feeling of enervation. It would of course be rash to assume that the enervation perceptible in my experiments is somehow proof that the same principle was at work in the 17th and 18th centuries. After all, this slowing down in my work was certainly, to some extent, caused by Andréanne’s anxiety about maintaining her vocal quality in performing the scene; she admitted to me that she didn’t want to go into full declamatory style because of the damage she feared it might do to her voice.³¹ However, we have seen in Chapter 3 that several 18th-century authors complained that performances of the *tragédie en musique* were slower in their day than in Lully’s own, so perhaps Rameau’s detailed affective analysis does not reflect Lully’s original intentions, but rather the performance style of the 18th century?

Such questions of beauty, of authenticity, of composer’s intentions and of performance traditions are raised here, but cannot be answered within the compass of this research; however, they beckon for attention for other scholars in the field.

Before leaving this section, however, I would like to point out that in the line ‘Je vais percer son invincible cœur’ the gestures result in a stretching of individual words, at least in the spoken performances: this lengthening was perhaps most noticeable on the word ‘son’ and is comparable to the lengthening of ‘mes’ in the line ‘Puisqu’il n’a pu trouvé mes yeux assez charmants’ in the following video clip [see video 5.15]. This kind of rhythmic freedom is different from either a melodically or harmonically triggered rubato, or a tempo rubato made on the part of the performer in order to create new dissonances. This particular kind of rhythmic freedom was a surprise to me, but one that made perfect sense in the context of the heated criticisms of the *Querelle des Bouffons*.

5.3c Influences from the Fine Arts: paintings and drawings by Charle-Antoine Coppel

In Chapter 4 I discussed my use of 17th- and 18th-century images in reconstructing stage action at the Opéra. Here I will give a specific example of how I used a series of images by Charles-Antoine Coppel to generate gestures for the following lines:

Quel trouble me saisit? qui me fait hésiter?
Qu’est-ce qu’en sa faveur la pitié me veut dire?

I will then discuss briefly certain aspects of the gestures I added to the subsequent lines:

Frappons.... ciel! qui peut m’arrêter?
Achevons....je frémis!
Vengeons-nous.... je soupire!

The basic blocking for this scene was inspired by the very beautiful painting by Coppel entitled *Le Sommeil de Renaud*, which is currently in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nantes [see figure 5.2a].

The composition of this painting served as the basis for the entire reconstruction of the scene, with Armide positioning herself first on one, and then on the other side of the sleeping Renaud. I decided that two well-known versions of the scene, one by Nicolas Poussin (*Rinaldo and Armida*, London, Dulwich Picture Gallery) and the other by Jean-François de Troy (*Armide, sur le point de poignarder Renaud, est désarmée à la vue de ce héros endormi*, Lille, Palais des Beaux-Arts), lent themselves less well to my purposes: in the Poussin Rinaldo’s leg position is unsuitable for the stage, while Troy’s figure of Armide requires a supportive hillock to rest her leg against. In the Coppel version, however, the positions of the main characters are perfectly

31. I will speak more about the vocal technique associated with the *tragédie en musique* when dealing with Bérard’s ornamented version of ‘Du plus charmant espoir’.



Figure 5.3a
Fille au balcon, private collection,
England



Figure 5.3b
'Quel trouble me saisit?'



Figure 5.4a *L'Évanouissement d'Armide*, Paris, private collection



Figure 5.4b 'Qu'est-ce qu'en sa faveur la pitié me veut dire?'



Figure 5.5 *Renaud abandonne Armide*, collection of the Baron de Rothschild, Paris.

suites to my needs here. Indeed, I tried to incorporate the attitudes of Coypel's characters at the line 'Qu'il éprouve toute ma rage' [see figure 5.2b].

The application of Coypel's attitude, however, proved to be a very problematic undertaking: although it looks quite beautiful and easy on the canvas, striking it in real life involved manoeuvring oneself into an extremely uncomfortable body position with knees bent and back tilted forward, and with wrists turned up and away from the audience, while at the same time finding a rather disagreeable head position with jaw angled downwards towards the clavicle. It was nearly impossible to get into this position with anything approaching a naturalistic movement, and once there it looked much less threatening than it does on the painting. Therefore, in the course of our work on the scene, the attitude morphed first into an approximation, and then into quite a different position all together. I decided not to make an issue of this, because this final version of the position remained an extended one, which was the essential quality I was looking for: we have seen in Chapters 2 and 4 that Galenist affect theory associated the more animated affects with a greater extension of the body. So, in my version, after singing 'Qu'il éprouve toute ma rage', Andréanne assumes an extended and threatening position based to some extent on *Le Sommeil de Renaud*. This means that she begins the series of lines on which I focus here in a position inspired by, rather than copied directly from, Coypel.

The next line expresses an entirely different affect: 'Quel trouble me saisit?'. I wanted a contrasting, and extremely contracted position to represent the sudden flow of Armide's animal spirits back towards her heart—I had decided that she is here paralyzed with fear at her inability to strike down her enemy. I was enchanted by the hand positions on a small drawing of Coypel's, entitled *Fillette au Balcon*, now in a private collection in England [see figure 5.3a]. I decided to use this gesture, coupled with a drawing together of the legs (which had been so awkwardly extended in the preceding attitude) and a rigid straightening of the back, to express this retreat of the spirits on the words 'Quel trouble me saisit?' [see figure 5.3b]. I hope that the reader will notice, however, that I have not followed the drawing exactly: instead, I have reversed the hands, so that the left hand is on the outside of the right. I will explain why I felt that I had to depart from Coypel's drawing in due course.

Yet another drawing of Coypel's provided inspiration for the line 'Qu'est-ce qu'en sa faveur la pitié me veut dire?' This drawing, entitled *L'Évanouissement d'Armide*, shows an entirely different scene from the opera, from Act V. Here it is Renaud who looks with pity on the prostrate Armide [see figure 5.4a]. I decided to reverse the characters, and have Armide assume this pitying attitude as she gazes on the helpless hero. [see figure 5.4b]. Here, Andréanne's head is turned to face the viewers, as she must sing outwards, and show her softened facial expression to them, not to the sleeping Renaud.

I was very pleased to have been able to build up a series of attitudes for these lines using Coypel's art as a guide. However, when I began to work with Andréanne on the flow of the gestures from 'Qu'il éprouve toute ma rage' through 'Quel trouble me saisit? qui me fait hésiter?' to 'Qu'est-ce qu'en sa faveur la pitié me veut dire' I realized that I would not be able to use the hand position shown in *Fillette au balcon* because it would have required me to move the right hand (which is holding the dagger) on the words 'Qu'est-ce qu'en sa faveur'. This could neither work well as an indicative gesture (because the hand was moving away from Renaud) nor as one conveying the meaning of 'faveur' (because it looked aggressive to move the knife on that word). However, if the position of the hands on the words 'Quel trouble me saisit' were reversed in comparison to those shown in Coypel's *Fillette au balcon*, suddenly the gestures made perfect sense. Video 5.16a shows how I explained this during my presentation at the conference 'Gesture on the French Stage, 1675-1800' [see video 5.16].

I was, however, not satisfied with the look to this particular attitude for 'la pitié me veut dire' and therefore decided to abandon *L'Évanouissement d'Armide* in favor of a painted version of the scene by Coypel entitled *Renaud abandonne Armide*, which is currently in the collection of the Baron de Rothschild [see figure 5.5]

In this drawing Renaud and Armide glance at each other, Armide's head turned towards him much as the piteous *putto* does in the drawing *L'Évanouissement d'Armide*. In the painting Renaud stands with his weight on his right leg, rather than the left, as in the drawing. I decided to have this shift of weight, accompanied by the glance, take place in between the words 'Qu'est-ce qu'en sa faveur' and 'la pitié me veut dire'. Video 5.16b shows how this works [see video 5.16].

Before leaving my work on this section of Quinault's text I would simply like to remark that, for the sake of experimentation, I decided to have Andréanne perform the gesture of contraction notated on the words 'Quel trouble me saisit' after she sang text, rather than having the words and the movement coincide. I have no justification for doing so from any historical source, and can only justify my choice by confessing that I liked the dramatic effect of the displacement. Moreover, it seemed to me that this research should include experimental timings and gestures of all kinds, and that I should, in certain cases, break the rules and observe the results; as long as my documentation is clear, I feel that I can and ought to be creative in my experimental reconstructions. I have done so not only at this line (by bringing the gesture after the text), but also at two places in the monologue where I have inserted long pauses in between measures of the score. The first comes after the text 'je soupire', the second after 'Il semble être fait pour l'amour'. I did so in order to give Armide pauses in which to struggle with her emotions: this seemed to me to be justified by Aaron Hill's remarks on pauses (discussed in Chapter 4) and also by the fermatas in Morin's printed score of one of the recitatives in his *cantate française* entitled *Psiché, et ses sœurs*.

Here, in the cantata, two fermatas are printed at key moments in the text [see figures 5.6 a-b]. The first occurs when one of the sisters plants doubts as to the identity of her lover in Psiché's mind, the other when Psiché herself struggles with her feelings of loyalty and curiosity. The text is as follows (the fermatas are marked with editorial asterisks, the words 'lentement', 'lent' and 'vif' are taken from the score):

Cidippe

Votre mal'heur est trop certain;

Tout ce qu'on voit ici passe l'effort humain,

Et l'objet qui vous aime est toujours invisible:

[lentement] Ce ne peut estre hélas! qu'un Enchanteur cruel

Qui trompe votre cœur sensible^{*};

Vous veriez vot'Amât s'il étoit immortel.

Psiché

Dieux! quel coup vous portez a mon âme interdite!

C'en est fait; pour calmer le trouble qui m'agite

Je verrai mon Amant^{*} ...[lent] Mais quoi?

Je le perdrais si je le vois...

[vif] Non, je l'offencerois par mon obéissance,

Puor le justifier trahisson sa defense

C'est un crime que je lui dois^{*}.

It is not my intention to enter here into the thorny question of whether or not gesture was used in the French cantata. Even if Morin composed *Psiché et ses sœurs* for performance without gestures, his score shows changes of tempo and pauses at moments of emotional struggle. For instance, the jealous sibling Cidippe, on the words 'Ce ne peut', slows the tempo of her delivery as she plants the seed of doubt in her sister's mind, and the word 'sensible' is marked by Morin with a fermata. It seems unlikely that the composer could mean to indicate a cadenza here, nor does it seem logical that he expects the singer to hold a very long note. Certainly, if one imagines a staged version of this scene, gestures and facial expressions that could accompany this fermata spring easily to mind. I would propose that this pause indicates a meaningful silence, and can imagine Cidippe's sly look, the right hand pressing the breast, while she slowly clenches the left; this last gesture, unseen by Psiché, but well marked by the audience, could serve as a sign that one sister has entrapped the other. Psiché, on the other hand, swings back and forth in her lines between slow and quick tempi, changes that reflect her warring emotions. The composer's fermata on 'Amant' seems once again to request silence in which the singer struggles with her emotions. I would propose that, in this recitative, Morin indicates meaningful pauses not by writing out bars of rests, but simply by adding fermatas. I cannot, in the absence of such fermatas in 'Enfin il est en ma puissance', prove that Lully desired similar breaks in his monologue: I have therefore used them in a purely experimental fashion (in later versions of the scene these gaps or *repos forcé* as Rameau might call them, were somewhat shortened and the silence filled by the basso continuo). I do, however, feel that we need not regard a continuous sequence of notes in the score as

Cidippe. 99

Votre malheur est trop certain; Tout ce qu'on voit ici passe l'esfort hu-

lentement.

main, Et l'objet qui vous aime est toujours invisible: Ce ne peut estre he-

las! qu'un enchanteur cruel Qui trompe votre cœur sensible; Vous ver-

Précip.

riez votre amant s'il étoit immortel. Dieux: quel coup vous portez à mon âme inter-

uite. C'est fait pour calmer le trouble qui m'agite. Je verrai mon amant.

100

Lent. *Inf.*

Mais quoi! je le perdrai si je le vois... Non, je l'encens par mon o-beis-

sance, Pour le justifier trahissons sa défense. C'est un crime que j'ai dû

Gracieusement et mesuré. *Ab! vous applaudi.*

rez à ma tendresse extrême. Lorsque vous connaîtrez l'objet qui m'a charmé,

Ab! vous applaudirez à ma tendresse extrême. Lorsque vous connaîtrez l'objet

Figures 5.6 a-b

Two pages from Jean-Baptiste Morin's 'Psiché, et ses sœurs' from *Cantates Françaises*, œuvre VIe (1712)

necessarily indicative of a composer's intention for continuously beaten music: it seems logical to me, in a style where the stage movement and the words were considered of equal importance to the music, that actors would have taken time for their *actio* where they felt it was necessary to do so, no matter how Lully had notated the scene.³²

To return to my gestured version of 'Enfin il est en ma puissance', I will simply note that the high point of the monologue comes with Armide's third attempt to kill the sleeping Renaud, at the words 'Vengeons-nous'. In my gestured version of the scene, the continuo must wait for Armide to drop her right hand before playing their next note: the performer therefore entirely determines the timing and the length of the silence based solely on her acting and gestures:

cex sw B.R.
Vengeons-nous... je soupire!

Surely these lines were created in order to give Le Rochois an opportunity to perform a spectacular change of facial expression, a sort of female equivalent to the famous moment in Act III, scene 5 of Racine's *Mithridate*, when Monime cries out 'Seigneur, vous changez de visage'? Unlike 'Que l'incertitude', where the various passions that make up Libie's compound affective state flow one into and after the other, at this point in 'Enfin il est en ma puissance' conflicting passions manifest themselves in Armide's body at the same time. I have already mentioned, in Chapter 2, the beautiful description of such warring affections in *The Spectator* piece about the loves of Marraton and Yaratilda. I hope that the reader will remember that 'the passion made up of joy, sorrow, love, desire, astonishment that rose in the Indian upon the sight of his dear Yaratilda' could be expressed 'by nothing but his tears, which ran like a river down his cheeks as he looked upon her'.³³ In this example from *The Spectator* the individual expression of so many conflicting affects is blocked, and the only release found is that of weeping. Similarly, in the case of Armide, I have had her turn out to the audience so that they can see the play of affect on her face as she struggles, dagger suspended in mid-air, with her overwhelming and simultaneous feelings of hatred and love. Indeed, one of my main frustrations about the quality of the videos in this section of my thesis is that they are not sharp enough to convey all the power of Andréanne's facial expression. Most particularly it is at this moment that the face and eyes are of supreme importance. I can only say that at every public performance of the monologue this gesture of struggling face and falling arm really caused the audience to hold its breath. I was always reminded, at this point, of Gildon's words:

When you are free from Passion, and in any Discourse, which requires no great Motion, as our modern Tragedies too frequently suffer their chief parts to be, your Aspect should be pleasant, your Looks direct, neither severe nor aside, unless you fall into a Passion, which requires the contrary. For then Nature, if you obey its Summons, will alter your Looks and Gestures. Thus when a Man speaks in Anger his Imagination is inflam'd, and kindles a sort of Fire in his Eyes, which sparkles from them in such a manner, that a Stranger, who understood not a Word of the Language, or a deaf Man, that could not hear the loudest Tone of his Voice, would not fail of perceiving his Fury and Indignation. And this Fire of their Eyes will easily strike those of their Audience, which are continually fixt on yours; and by a strange sympathetic Infection, it will set them on Fire too with the very same Passion.³⁴

Armide's face, contorted with rage and hate, slowly changes; the features relax, the eyes sparkles with a new, softer light, and love grows stronger as vengeance retreats; and the audience can relax and breathe again. The effect was enchanting and none of the videos do justice to the work Andréanne and I did on this particular moment in the scene. I show here a bit of a working session, to demonstrate how we attempted to get more expression into this crucial moment [see video 5.17].³⁵

32. Rameau felt that opera singers, like actors of the spoken theater, could act perfectly well in silence. For a discussion of this see my article 'Gaps, Pauses and Expressive Arms: Reconstructing the Link between Stage Gesture and Musical Timing at the *Académie royale de musique*', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol. 32, no. 4, 2009, 607-23.

33. Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, ed., *The Spectator* (London: 1711-14), no. 56.

34. Charles Gildon, *The Life of Mr. Thomas Betterton* (London, 1710), 66-7.

35. This clip is an excerpt of what Andréanne and I now refer to as 'the black dress session', which has attained a mythical status in our minds as a kind of breakthrough session. I think that, for both of us, it was a moment of dawning understanding and of new possibilities. It was also a session that was accompanied by a good deal of off-color language (on both our parts). Because of this I hesitated to include clips from this session in my thesis; however, I think the session itself was too important in my own research process not to be documented here, and I believe that the unusual (for us) profanity is indicative that something significant is happening here, an emotional release after weeks of hard, often frustrating, work. The excitement we felt at the progress being made expressed itself in an unconventional and rather undignified way. However, performers communicate with each other in a non-academic, salty tongue: it's all part of the experience. I apologize if I hereby unnecessarily offend my readers.

5.3d The application of these principles to a measured air: 'Venez, venez'

I have already, at several point in this thesis, raised the possibility of performer-controlled rhythmic freedoms based on gestures having been applied to measured airs at the Opéra. I was therefore particularly eager to work on the final section of 'Enfin il est en ma puissance'.

I have decided not to write about this, but rather to show a video clip of a working session in which all of the basic ideas I was trying to realize are explained [see video 5.18].

It will obvious that the last two gestures cause a large fluctuation in the beat when performed in a musical version [see video 5.19].

I close this section with a final video of a live performance of this scene, recorded during a concert in the Utrecht Festival for Early Music in 2010 [see video 5.20]. Unfortunately the tiny stage made it impossible to have a sleeping Renaud during this performance: he is here represented by a chair with a jacket over it.

Several small changes in the gestures can be noted in this version: these changes were made on aesthetic grounds. For instance, the original version of the final line

	phx n—br		ieq—pdq
Volez, volez	conduisez-nous	au bout de l'univers	
			rR1

Was changed to:

R	phx n—br		ieq—pdq
Volez, volez	conduisez-nous	au bout de l'univers.	
	tR2		rR1

The reader will also note that, although the recordings of this air in performance are markedly different to either Andréanne's original gestureless version or, for instance, the Carsen-Christie version, they are not as free as the best moments of the spoken working session. I cannot help but hold up, as ideal, the spoken version as a model for the sung, no matter how distorted the representation of Lully's notation would become: it seems to me that the passion of the text and a naturalistic representation of that affect must be the goal in all French monologues which portray moments of deep feeling. Perhaps this is one reason why foreigners at the Opéra could not distinguish the recitative from the measured airs?

5.3e The conclusions drawn from my work on 'Enfin il est en ma puissance'

It seems clear that the pulse of the music can be influences in various ways by gestures:

1 Gestures can trigger rhythmic freedoms when their performance complements changes in the underlying affect of the text (as in my interpretation of the opening lines, where I follow Rameau's affective analysis).

2 Gestures, when performed with intent and the appropriate muscle tension, can lengthen, or even in some cases speed up, specific words in a line: in general, the more gestures to a line, the slower the line becomes (as in my work on 'Je vais percer son invincible cœur').

3 The singer/actor's placement of the gestures in relationship to the text will strongly affect the timing of the line (as in 'Quelle trouble me saisit', where the gesture delays delivery at different points in the music when following the text, preceding it or being performed together with it).

5.4 'Du plus charmant espoir' from *Polidore* by Jean-Baptiste Stuck

Before beginning with Stuck's music I would like to establish the artistic nature of my working relationship with Maarten Konigsberger, the baritone who helped me to create this video experiment. He and I had

worked together on the production of *Hippolyte and Aricie* that I conducted for the Nationale Reisopera in 2009. Maarten sang the rôle of Thésée, and we had established an excellent musical rapport long before I began working on *Polidore* with him. In *Hippolyte* Maarten's emotional monologue scenes had all been treated very freely; a good example is 'Je ne te verrais plus' from Act 5 [see video 5.21]. Here the rubati are made for purely musical and harmonic reasons, or to underscore the affect of the text; they are not due either to vocal ornamentation or to gestures made on stage.³⁶ I have included this clip of Rameau here because Maarten's timing in the Polidore monologue is of a very different nature, and is unique in our working relationship: we are not just performing as usual in the following clip, but specifically experimenting with Bérard's notation.

Jean-Baptiste Stuck (known in the 18th century as Batistin) is remembered today for his work in the genre of the *cantate françoise*; but he also composed three operas that were performed at the *Académie royale de musique*. The last of these, its libretto by l'abbé Pellegrin, was called *Polidore*, and premiered on the 15th of February, 1720. It closed after 25 performances, achieving only a moderate success, but was revived in 1739. The revival, however, fared even less well than the first run, reaching a meager 12 performances. An article that appeared that year in the *Mercure Galante* promised that the Opéra would re-mount the work in the autumn in an improved form. This third attempt, however, did not take place. The score was never published, and the opera passed into obscurity.

Despite this, it seems that *Polidore* had some kind of an 'underground' status, and a select following: Rochement wrote, in 1754:

Un habile musicien essaya, il y a une trentaine d'années, de présenter au Théâtre, dans un opéra de sa composition (Polidore, Opéra composé par le sieur Baptistin), des beautés musicales d'un goût nouveau, et d'un genre plus élevé que notre routine ordinaire; le publique françois s'obstina à conserver ses anciennes préventions, et l'opéra ne fut point goûté.³⁷

Such appreciation among connoisseurs could account for the many manuscript copies of the opera which have been preserved in libraries in Europe and America: six in Paris, two in Washington, D.C (in the Library of Congress), and one in Boston. These scores are all clear of any musical or gestural markings relevant to this dissertation. However, an air from the second act, Polidore's monologue 'Du plus charmant espoir', is included in the ornamented examples of Jean Bérard's *L'Art du chant* (1755). I present a video recording of Bérard's version here.

Cuthbert Gridelstone, in his *La Tragédie en musique (1673-1750), considérée comme genre littéraire*, had already remarked upon the high quality of Pellegrin's libretto. This very emotional and exciting *livret* supplied the composer, and myself as researcher, with several fine opportunities to represent strong affects. I have chosen two monologues from the opera for presentation in this chapter, one in a version with gesture and one without any gesture at all. It is with the latter that I will begin. It may seem strange to present an un-gestured version of a monologue air in this thesis, which is all about the influence of gesture on performance. However, it became clear to me in the course of my study that purely musical factors could also cause fluctuations in the musical beat, and that these fluctuations, which would have emphasized an important harmony or word (usually both, as the composer would save his best harmonies for important moments in the text), would then probably have been expressed physically through a gesture. I realized that it simply would be too easy to say that there was no overlap, no interactive play between staging and music at the Opéra: I do not believe that gesture was the only motivation for a performer to play with rhythmic freedoms on stage. It was in order to explore this overlap that I decided to reconstruct Bérard's version of 'Du plus charmant espoir'.

The remarks on *actio* in the Bérard/Blanchet treatise have been discussed in Chapter 4, but here a few words must be spent on the purely vocal information it contains. Klaus Miehling, in his article 'Affekt und Gesangspraxis in Bérards *L'Art du Chant*' stressed the unique importance of the work:

Erstmals in der Musikgeschichte wird hier versucht, die Technik zu beschreiben, mit welcher der Sänger die Töne produziert. Und das ist nicht eine bestimmte Technik, sondern es sind nicht weniger als sieben Arten, die von den darzustellenden Affekten abhängen. Es ist klar, dass das geschriebene Wort dies nur unvollkommen wiederzugeben vermag; aber da wir bei keinem Lehrer des 18. Jahrhunderts Gesangsstunden nehmen können, ist

36. More on my musical method during this production will follow in section 5.6

37. See: Bertrand Porot, *Jean-Baptiste Stuck (1680-1755) et la réunion des goûts en France au seuil du XVIIIe siècle* (Atelier National de Reproduction des Thèses, 2001), tome I, 464.

Bérards Traktat diejenige Quelle, die uns am nächsten an die Art heranzuführen kann, wie man in Frankreich zur Zeit Rameaus gesungen hat.³⁸

What is most remarkable about Bérard's technical tips for singers is that he advocates a manner of singing that is universally condemned by today's singing teachers as destructive to the voice: the moving of the larynx. It is not my intention once again to discuss the 'French scream' here, but I must point out that neither of the singers involved in my reconstructions, neither Andréanne Brisson Paquin nor Maarten Koningsberger, are attempting to reconstruct the singing technique of the Opéra as described by Bérard. I have already mentioned that Andréanne was reluctant to do anything that might hurt her voice. I suppose that I could be censured for not finding singers who were willing to perform the repertoire of the *tragédie en musique* in a historical way. However, though I feel sure that the use of an appropriate technique would have been very enlightening (though perhaps not aesthetically pleasing to our contemporary ears), I know of no professionally trained singers of Western Classical music who actually move the larynx as Bérard suggests. The reconstructions presented here, therefore, do not pretend to be authentic in terms of vocal production.

The monologue 'Du plus charmant espoir' is sung by Polidore in Act II, scene 3 of the opera. In it he expresses, as may seem obvious from the title, the affect hope. It is the only monologue for Polidore's character in the entire piece, and the composer and librettist have done their best to paint the heroic title character in a favorable light. Polidore here expresses his sweet hope and his joy concerning his impending marriage to the Greek princess Deidamie. Bérard, in his *L'Art du Chant*, places this monologue in the category 'Pour les Sons Légers', of which he remarks that 'Il faut chasser l'air intérieur en petit volume, expirer peu de temps pour les divers Sons, et préparer très faiblement les lettres'.³⁹ It is perhaps useful, in light of my here oft-stated belief that 'le cri Français' was a real expressive device used by singers at the Opéra, to remind myself and my readers that a good deal of music at the *Académie royale de musique* was not screamed at all: to have cried out in a monologue expressing hope and love would not have conformed to the rules of *vérité*.

My method for this particular experiment was simple. I gathered a group of musicians around singer Maarten Koningsberger, and gave them the music to 'Du plus charmant espoir'. Maarten and I had talked through the monologue at an earlier date; we had agreed, at that time, that he would try to realize Bérard's notation in a free and expressive manner; that is to say, he would take time anywhere that he felt he needed it in order to make the ornaments function as rhetorical, expressive devices. We have seen, in previous chapters, that many writers associated the *goût du chant* with free rhythmical performances. De Rochemont specifically related French vocal ornaments to the meanings of the words:

'Le goût du chant, relativement à nous, paroît être le juste rapport des grâces de l'organe avec les idées musicales & les pensées poétiques. Il est certain que les Chanteurs Italiens ne se piquent pas d'avoir ce goût-là'.⁴⁰

I therefore strongly encouraged Maarten and the musicians at the session to play freely according to the ornamentation of the words. As a first step the string-players went through the piece. Then they and Maarten worked together on it for about an hour. At the end of this hour I filmed the result: the video is therefore a record of how far they had gotten in that amount of time, rather than a definitive version worked out in detail and approved of by all.

A list of Bérard's ornaments and copy of his ornamented version, as well as a score of the monologue, can be found in Appendix 2. I would propose that the reader watch the video tape and follow the ornamented version, to see where and when Maarten takes time. Of particular interest is the *son filé entier* which he makes on the word 'seul' (notated by Stuck as an eighth note) just before the 'Fin'. However, Maarten also takes time on the notes marked with a *flatté*, which he performs as a small vibrato. Interestingly, one of the reasons that Klaus Miehl rejected the idea that the *flatté* could mean vibrato in Bérard's treatise was that it appeared on short note values:

[...] ein Vibrato als Bestandteil des Flatté kommt nicht in frage (wenngleich der Begriff von Anderen Autoren tatsächlich im Sinne eines Vibrato gebraucht wird); Bérard bringt diese Verzierung auch auf Achtelnoten in relativ schnellem Tempo an [...].⁴¹

38. Klaus Miehl, 'Affekt und Gesangspraxis in Bérards *L'Art du Chant*' in *Gestik und Affekt in der Musik des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts* (Stiftung Kloster Michaelstein und Verlag Janos Stekovics, 2000), 139-150, 140.

39. Jean Bérard, *L'Art du chant*, dédié à Madame de Pompadour (Paris: 1755), musical appendix, 21.

40. [de Roche Mont], 'Réflexions d'un patriote sur l'opéra français, et sur l'opéra italien (Lausanne: 1754), 53-4, in *La Querelle des Bouffons*, tome III, 2025-2174.

41. Miehl, 'Affekt und Gesangspraxis', 143.

Apparently, Miehlings is assuming that these monologue airs are to be performed in time [see video 5.22].

It is noticeable that Maarten's stretching of ornamented notes almost always highlights rhetorically important or affective words: 'charmant', 'la douceur', 'couronner', 'flame', 'heureux' and 'seul' in the A section, and 'cruelle', 'puissance', 'naissance' and 'esperance' in the B section. This is the typical vocabulary of the lover in French poetry of this period, and to highlight such words would have underscored, for the contemporary audience, the fact that the monologue was amorous in nature. Maarten, working through the text, realized that sometimes the stretching of a syllable marked with an ornament necessitated lengthening the rest of the word. For example, according to the rules of syllable length, the second syllable of the word 'charmant' must not be shorter than the first. Therefore Maarten, stretching of the syllable 'char' in order to accommodate a *port de voix feint*, felt that the following syllable 'mant' had to be proportionally lengthened, even though it was unmarked by Bérard. One oddity of the ornamentation is the marking on the word 'la' which precedes 'douceur'. Here Bérard uses a sign that does not appear in his list of ornaments, combined with a *flatté*. The unknown sign could be a faulty version of that for a *son filé entier*; this, at any rate, is how Maarten chose to interpret it. Here, once again, 'douceur' is stretched in order to maintain a rhetorical proportion to the 'la' which precedes it.

It is also worth remarking on the seeming unsuitability of this air for a rhythmically free performance. The constant motion in the string parts, their quavers gently flowing throughout the piece, make the application of rhythmic freedoms a tricky business. Indeed, the *rubati* made in the opening bars, in this experimental performance, are not entirely organic. However, somewhere about half way through the A section, the performance style begins to 'gel'. The players seem to gain confidence, and the musical timing in the repeat of the A section is much more organic than the first time through: here the string players find better solutions to the problems posed to their continuous flow of notes by Maarten's rhythmic freedoms. I think that the smiles on the faces of the musicians at the end of the clip speak clearly of their surprise and satisfaction at having been able to 'make this work'.

Unlike the other videos in this section, I will draw no conclusions related to my research question from my work on 'Du plus charmant espoir'. I plant here, I hope, a seed for future research. However, if we agree with Klaus Miehlings that Bérard's ornaments are a kind of 'hörbare Gestik',⁴² then we have evidence of yet another way in which gesture could have influenced the beating of time at the Opéra.

5.5 'Barbares, laissez-moi' from *Polidore* by Jean-Baptiste Stuck

Polidore ends in with a shocking scene, one for which its creators were to pay a high price. The published 1720 libretto ends with a triumphal chorus to celebrate the wedding of Polidore and his beloved Deidamie. The score, however reveals a very different finish. Bertrand Porot, who did his doctoral work on Stuck, describes the changed ending of *Polidore* thus:

[...] la fin de l'opéra a été changée et on lui a substitué un aspect beaucoup plus dramatique. Dans le livret était prévu une scène de retrouvailles entre les amants Polidore et Déidamie: ils proclamaient le triomphe de leur amour sur la haine; [...] Dans la partition, cette conclusion est complètement transformée: le roi parricide Polimnestor est maintenant sur la scène «l'épée à la main»; dans un recitatif simple puis accompagné, il fait part de ses remords et se suicide devant les spectateurs.⁴³

It appears that the failure of the 1739 revival was due, at least to some extent, to this stark ending. Porot quotes a *Mercur de France* announcement about a possible second revival attempt:

'Cette fin tragique a déplu; on auroit mieux aimé que la pièce finit par une fête, dont le mariage de Polidore et de Déidamie auroit fourni le sujet; l'auteur a promis de se conformer aux désirs du public, à la reprise du même opéra qui est renvoyée à l'automne.'⁴⁴

It is odd that this revival never took place, as the score of the original 1720 version, with its choral happy ending, still exists in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, in Paris.⁴⁵ Be that as it may, I chose to work

42. Miehlings, 'Affekt und Gesangspraxis', 139.

43. Porot, *Jean-Baptiste Stuck*, tome 1, 443.

44. Porot, *Jean-Baptiste Stuck*, tome 1, 461.

45. For an overview of the extant scores in France see: Porot, *Jean-Baptiste Stuck*, tome 1, 438-9.

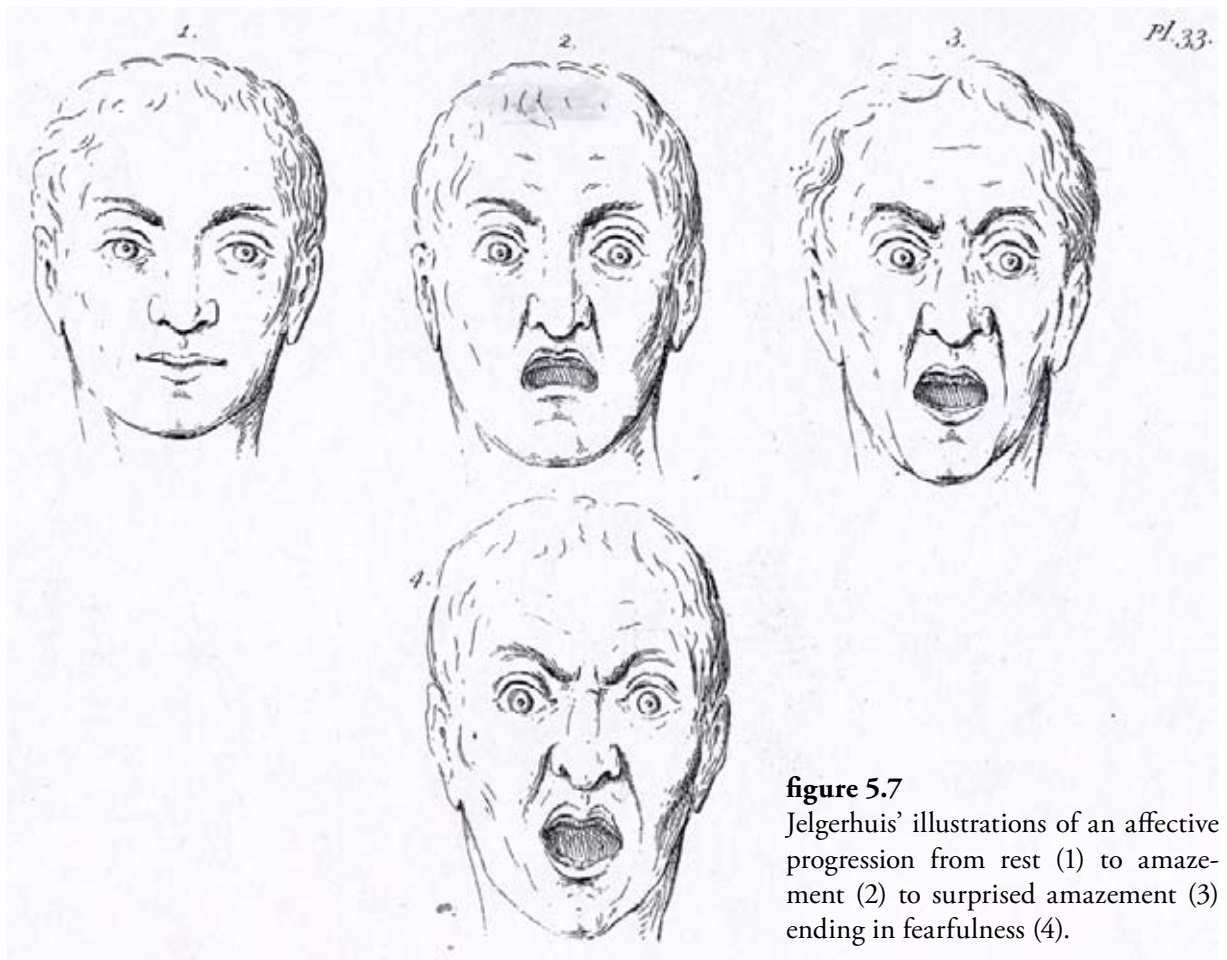


figure 5.7
Jelgerhuis' illustrations of an affective progression from rest (1) to amazement (2) to surprised amazement (3) ending in fearfulness (4).

figures 5.8 a - b 'Quelles clameurs!'

Attitudes from Delaïresse's *Groot Schilderboek* and my adaptations of them for 'Barbares, laissez-moi'.





figures 5.9 a - b 'Courons audevant de ses pas'
figures 5.10 a - b 'Justes Dieux!'



figures 5.11 a - b 'étouffons ce murmure'



on this dramatic suicide scene because I was curious how its heightened emotions could be portrayed in word, gesture and music within the aesthetic (*vérité*) of the *tragédie en musique*. It seemed, having dealt with anxiety ('Que l'incertitude'), rage, love ('Enfin il est en ma puissance') and sweet hope ('Du plus charmant espoir') that it was time for me to plumb the depths of despair.

5.5a 'Barbares, laissez-moi' as spoken declamation, gestures by Jed Wentz

I have already mentioned that I am not a singer, and therefore could not fully realize a gestured version of a monologue myself; and yet I felt that it was important, as a researcher, to have worked on the material, to have felt it in my own body, before daring to draw any conclusions about the research trajectory. The compromise solution, which is presented here, was to do a purely spoken version, followed by a performance in *Sprechstimme*. In this way I felt that I could at least come somewhat closer to the experience of a singer working on this repertoire. I apologize to the reader for the unsatisfactory nature of this compromise; but I felt it was the best approach given the circumstances.

Before viewing my first, spoken version of the scene, the reader will need a bit of 'back story' in order to understand the context of the monologue within the plot of the opera. The *livret* of *Polidore* presents the viewer with the tragic consequences of the insatiable lust for power of Polymnestor, king of Thrace. In the course of the opera Polymnestor proves himself willing to be made king of all Greece at the price of betraying Polidore (the brother of his Trojan wife) into the hands of the vengeful Greeks (Polidore is a son of Priam). What Polymnestor doesn't know, until it is too late, is that his own son (Deiphile) and Polidore were exchanged as infants, and have grown up with false identities. Thus, in sacrificing the supposed Polidore, Polymnestor is actually destroying his own son.

The scene presented here, 'Barbares, laissez-moi', comes, as has been mentioned, at the very end of the opera. Polymnestor, having discovered his terrible mistake, has tried unsuccessfully to crash the real Polidore in military combat. Polymnestor and a group of his soldiers rush onto the stage. The vanquished king upbraids his men for not having killed Polidore, and sends them away, commanding them to seek out the enemy. As soon as he is alone, however, his true feelings are revealed: he calls on Hell to swallow him up. Hell answers his prayer: thunder and groans are heard as the ghost of his sacrificed son appears. Overcome, Polymnestor kills himself on the final chord of the opera.

The libretto mentions, although the score does not, that a group of soldiers accompanies Polymnestor at the beginning of this scene. There is no indication that they exit, but it is clear from the text that he sends them off to seek Polidore; I therefore decided that the recitative at the beginning is with supernumeraries on stage, and that the rest of the scene (from the words 'Terre, pour m'engloutir') is a true monologue, the king being alone on stage until the work's final chord.

I did not have any 'extras' when I filmed this initial version of the scene. It is necessary, therefore, that I explain the initial set of gestures, as they are in reference to a group of actors that do not appear on the video.

I designed this scene with the idea that the soldiers and Polymnestor would rush onto the stage from different directions and at different times, to reflect the chaos of battle, and that they would all meet at the front of the stage. The king first addresses the troops to his left as 'Barbares' and then waves them away at the words 'laissez-moi'. In doing so he turns his head to the right, away from them, as if disgusted by them: this is the opposite movement to that discussed in Chapter 1, where I countered Sabine Chaouche's criticism of Bary's remark that one must turn the head to the left to indicate scorn. Here I had to reverse the sides because I hold a sword in my right hand. This resulted in the left hand becoming the main gesturing hand throughout the scene (just as was the case in most of 'Enfin il est en ma puissance', where Armide holds a dagger in her right hand). As Polymnestor turns his head away from the soldiers standing to his left he catches sight of, and addresses, those to his right. These too he treats with scorn and contempt, with a wave of the hand. Then, the overly graceful and polite flourish on the words 'est-ce ainsi' expresses his biting irony. However, when he thinks of Polidore his rage overpowers him. His gestures become rude, violent and unbalanced at the words 'ma victime échappe à mes coups' (in a suite of moves originally created for my realization of Bary's text from *La Rhétorique Française* [see video 4.1]):

—sdq sw.....cdq n— —chq sp
 Est-ce ainsi qu'on sert mon couroux?
 trL1

—ceq —shq x cdc st—
 Ma Victime échappe à mes coups

In this first, spoken version, I have Polymnestor recover his equilibrium quickly, and proceed without much flourish; however, on later reflection I wanted to make more of this transition. Therefore, in the second video of this scene, the king at this point assumes an arrogant attitude, with his right hand resting on a very displaced hip, as if he needed to overcompensate for his loss of control in the line before.

This entire first version was spoken in the rhythms notated by Stuck, and with some reference to the composer's notated intervals and tessitura, but without my having heard the harmonies or taken them at all into account. This first reading of mine presents Polymnestor as furious, aggressive and enraged. I came to this idea because of similarities I see between Pellegrin's text and the final scene of Racine's *Andromaque*, where Orestes loses his mind and sees the approaching furies who will torment him as a punishment for his crimes. In order to strengthen this representation of fury, I attempted to integrate extreme facial expressions inspired by those presented by Le Brun in his *Conférence* (which were discussed in Chapter 4), but without trying to imitate them through an exact memorization. Of particular use were Le Brun's *Tristesse*, *l'Admiration*, *Etonnement avec frayeur*, *Estreme douleur Corporelle* and *Douleur aigu de corps et d'esprit*. I was also inspired by Johannes Jelgerhuis Rienkzoon's own versions of Le Brun's facial expressions [see figure 5.7].

I based a number of key attitudes in my realization of this scene on illustrations published in Gérard Delaïresse's *Groot Schilderboek*. I illustrate my method by placing Delaïresse's figures next to stills from the video, and have added captions of the lines of text that they accompany [see figures 5.8 - 5.11]. Just as in the monologue from *Armide*, it proved very difficult to strike these poses precisely while evoking strong emotions. For instance, at the words 'Quelles Clameurs', the incorrect shading of my shoulders in both video versions detracts greatly from the beauty of Delaïresse's design. Another point of resemblance—in my use of attitudes from paintings—between this scene and 'Enfin il est en ma puissance' concerns the actor's orientation to the audience: the beauty of Delaïresse's designs often had to be changed for practical reasons, such as singing/speaking out towards the audience. Even simple practical matters like gripping a sword in one hand or having to move smoothly from one position to the next forced me to alter some of Delaïresse's attitudes. These considerations, however, cannot hide the fact that my body, at several points in the monologue, is sadly *mal dessiné* [see video 5.23].

One such moment of poor design was, on the other hand, consciously chosen: at the end of the monologue, between the words 'Eh bien' and 'étouffons ce murmure' I collapse my upper body in an extremely ignoble fashion. The attitude at 'étouffons' is taken from Delaïresse, but here the specifics of the scene required me to alter the design: Delaïresse's figure has a high muscle tension, the arms and chest are tensed. I, on the contrary, wanted to show that Polymnestor has lost all hope by this point, and therefore used the attitude, but with very low muscle tension. The result was that the hands were much lower and the whole figure more collapsed than in Delaïresse's drawing. The result is what would have been, I believe, an altogether shocking image for 18th-century viewers; the king's loss of his upright posture would have registered to them as a loss of sanity. The ensuing suicide is the inevitable result of such madness.

5.5b 'Barbares, laissez-moi' performed in *Sprechstimme* with musical accompaniment

My next step was to tackle the work musically. I was in for an unexpected shock, however, for when I came to work on the piece with the harmonies, I felt the full force of the incongruities between Stuck's setting and my spoken interpretation. Like Rousseau listening to Armide's 'Enfin il est en ma puissance', I initially was disappointed in the composer. It seemed that Stuck had set the text in a tame and uninspired manner, because I expected the chosen affects to be madness and fury. However, I decided to take Rameau's advice, concerning 'Enfin il est en ma puissance', to heart:

Les paroles ne suffisent point au Chanteur pour le mettre en état de bien exprimer le sentiment qu'elles peignent, il faut, en même tems, que la Musique y réponde: pour preuve de cela, qu'on donne à *je frémis* le Chant de *vengeons-nous* d'abord après *achevons*, comme le permet la Modulation: le saisissement, le trouble, que l'Acteur y voudra peindre, paroîtra gauche, forcé: lui-même aura besoin de toute sa présence d'esprit, pour rendre de son mieux ce que la Mélodie, et sur-tout le fonds de l'Harmonie ne lui inspireront point: et malgré tout son art, on y sentira toujours une disparate entre son jeu et la Musique: ce qu'il faut bien remarquer, pour ne pas donner dans l'erreur de croire que le jeu de l'Acteur puisse en imposer en pareil cas: il faudroit être bien borné dans ses connoissances, et bien peu sensible, pour penser de la sorte.

C'est principalement du fonds d'Harmonie, dont se tire la Mélodie appliquée aux paroles, que le Chanteur reçoit l'impression du sentiment qu'il doit peindre: ces paroles ne lui servent, pour ainsi dire, que d'indication: [...] Aussi lorsque le Chanteur reconnoît, par les paroles, qu'il doit marquer du trouble à *je frémis*, sa voix l'exprime comme d'elle-même: et sans penser à la cause qui le fait agir, sans la soupçonner même, il se trouve entraîné à cette expression par le fonds d'Harmonie qui la lui inspire; l'Auditeur, de son côté, se trouve ému [...] ⁴⁶

This passage uncannily compliments my own disappointing experience in attempting to follow the words only when making the gestures, as well as my subsequent unsuccessful efforts to make the resulting version *en fureur* fit onto Stuck's music. I clearly had to rethink my performance. Contemporary reviews of the opera described it as *très triste*⁴⁷ rather than as wild or shocking. On further reflection it seemed to me that the catharsis of the last act was not one of terror, but of pity, and that this would better suit Polmnestor's kingly status. So I decided to see if I could keep my basic set of gestures in tact, but change the affect of their performance from insane rage to a desperate rueful guilt. The harmonies of some passages of Stuck's setting seemed simply to demand this: for instance the sweetness of the cadence in E-flat major at the at the words 'Mais, c'est n'est qu'aux enfers que je dois m'adresser' sounds hopeful rather than crazed. Having worked already on 'Du plus charmant espoir' with Maarten, I couldn't resist the temptation to add a *son filé* to the word 'seul' at the end of this invocation of Hell, which lead me to slightly alter the gestures at this point (originally both hands descended to the rest position at the word 'seul'):

shf p—R. B.R.

C'est à toi seul de m'exaucer.

This resulted in a sweeter performance style for this entire passage, which I quickly came to prefer to my original, crazed interpretation.

Even more pronounced is Stuck's gentle setting of 'Lui-même il vient m'ouvrir les portes du trépas', which, following the dramatic cadence in c minor on the word 'vengeance' descends almost lovingly to terminate in B-flat major on the word 'trépas'. Thus, by changing the timing of the gestures, but especially the facial expressions and muscle tension, to match Stuck's harmonies, I transformed my performance of this scene into one attempting to inspire not terror, but pity.⁴⁸

One other major change to the gestures in this second version comes at the very end, where I removed the rapid advancing steps forward of my spoken version (four steps in two lines) at the text:

Tu m'accuse tout à la fois,
De Parricide et de parjure'.

Such wild changes of weight seemed to work better in the case of furious madness than in a man overcome by guilt, shame and sorrow.

One gesture was changed in order specifically to influence the timing of the music: I moved the sweep of the sword (which originally had fallen together with the words 'ou de ma mort') forwards, so that it now entirely precedes the text. The movement thus occurs in the rest notated by Stuck between 'de ma vengeance' and 'ou de ma mort'. Here the continuo must wait for me to make a gesture before playing the final chords of this recitative [see video 5.24].

I have to admit, after this experiment, that I feel that Rameau was right in answering Rousseau's criticism's of Armide thus:

46. Rameau, *Observations*, 100-3.

47. See: Porot, *Jean-Baptiste Stuck*, 462.

48. Lois Rosow has examined how such modulations interact with the poetry of the *tragédie en musique*. See: Lois Rosow, 'Structure and Expression in the Scènes of Rameau's *Hippolyte et Aricie*', *Cambridge Opera Journal*, vol. 10, no.3 (Nov., 1998), 259-273.

[...] si nous sommes véritablement sensibles, & si nous ne jugeons que d'après le sentiment, nous jugerons toujours bien.⁴⁹

5.6 Two monologue airs from Jean-Philippe Rameau's *Hippolyte et Aricie*

I present here two monologue airs from *Hippolyte et Aricie*. This footage was filmed at the première of the 2009 production of Rameau's masterpiece that I conducted for the Nationale Reïsopea. The first of the two airs is 'Cruelle mère', which forms Act II scene 1 of the opera; the *rôle* of Phèdre is sung by Sophie Daneman. The second air forms the opening scene of Act IV; 'Ah! Faut-il?' is here sung by Paul Agnew. I have decided to include these clips in this final chapter for much the same reason as I included 'Je ne te verrais plus' in section 5.4: they show how I approached rhythmic freedom in a production that did not involve Baroque *actio*. I shall comment on these videos as a performer, not as a researcher, and in doing so I shall speak the language that performers use. Here, at the end of my thesis, the player's emotional experience of the creative act finds a tongue. It shall wag itself but briefly, for the proof of the pudding is in the *hearing*.

At the time this video was made I had already worked on 'Que l'incertitude' with Andréanne, but not yet begun my work on 'Enfin il est en ma puissance'. I feel that my use of a freely beaten meter in 'Cruelle mère' is much like that in 'Que l'incertitude' in that I have tried to express the affective message of the text in terms of quicker and slower tempi. Unlike 'Que l'incertitude', however, I also stretch important or affective harmonies in the music. In doing so I felt I was following Rameau's own prescriptions from the *Observations* and *Erreurs* (see Chapter 3 for a discussion of these treatises), where he advocates slowing down and stretching the beat in order to allow the harmony to penetrate the soul. Perhaps the most notable place where this stretching occurs in 'Cruelle mère' is just before the 'Fin', on the words 'que Phèdre trouve grâce' (see Appendix 2 for a score of 'Cruelle mère'; on page 92 of this score, see the third system, bars 5, 6 and following). Here Rameau's highly distressing harmonies dictated an extreme stretching of the beats, especially during the 'da capo', before the final 'Fin'. Other notable moments of rhythmic freedom include the opening line 'Cruelle mère', which Sophie and I agreed should be declaimed freely, and the orchestral sigh just before the text 'N'en suspendras-tu point le cours?' (page 92, first system, bars 3-5); however, it must be said that in general the performance is very free. Indeed, if one actually beats time along with the video it becomes apparent just how much and how often the beat changes to underscore the affect of the text [see video 5.25].

Looking at this video now, after having worked so intensively on Baroque gesture, there are aspects of the staging which I find very disappointing. I am especially disturbed by the fact that, at the end of the B section where the music is at its most desperate and intense, Sophie turns her face from the audience to stare at an empty chair. In all fairness, this is the chair that Hippolyte has occupied for much of the production, so in turning away she shows the audience that she is thinking of him; but how much would I have preferred to see Phèdre's desperate emotions, her guilt, her torment, her doomed hopes, all painted on her face and glistening in her eyes! The effect of Sophie's acting in the close up at the end of the monologue is very strong: I regret that we didn't have more of this kind of facial expression and gesture throughout the scene.

The second monologue [see video 5.26], 'Ah! Faut-il' betrays much the same approach as 'Cruelle mère': the most notable *pedre la mesure* (or perhaps *temporegiato* is the better term) occurs on the words 'tout accable mon cœur', which were stretched for as long as Paul cared to hold the phrase; the timing varied with each performance and was firmly in Paul's control (Appendix 2 contains a score of 'Ah! Faut-il'; see page 130, final system and following). It is notable that the sudden change in affect with which this section begins (where the meter sign changes from *signe majeur* to *binnaire*), just before the text 'et les maux que je crains', is slowed down to a near standstill, an instrumental pause, in the spirit of Aaron Hill that allows the actor to change affective gears [see video 5.27].

The conclusions that I draw in watching these videos of *Hippolyte et Aricie* is that the kind of rhythmic freedom specifically dictated by the gestures of Baroque *actio* is very different in nature from the large-scale *rubati* evident in my approach to Rameau. Gesture-related freedoms tend to be small-scale and text-related; often just one word will be stretched, or perhaps a small group of words accelerated, by specific gestures. However, there is no reason why these two types of rhythmic freedom—the larger and the smaller scale—could not coincide in a single performance. My next step in investigating this topic, one with which I am

49. Rameau, *Observations*, 78.

already busy but which will not be included in this thesis, is to devise gestures for 'Cruelle mère'. It is already clear to me, even at this early stage of the work, that within the larger-scale changes of tempo related to the affect of the text numerous small-scale rhythmic freedoms will take place as a consequence of the gestures. The result will be, I hope, one of which Grimarest—that advocate of distancing performance from notation—would have approved.

5.7 Proposed responses to the questions posed by the researcher

1. What was the link, at the *Académie royale de musique*, between non-musical aspects of period stage craft (such as facial expressions, attitudes and gesture) and rhythmic freedoms in the performance of the music itself?

My goal has been to demonstrate how various aspects of historical acting techniques could have influenced the performance of the music at the Opéra. I have shown particular examples not only of syllable lengths that were changed by the addition of gestures, but also of larger-scale freedoms of the beat which corresponded to the expression of the passions in attitude, facial expression and gesture; and more rarely, but most expressively, moments where the accompanying parts had to wait for a gesture to be made in order to continue the musical performance. The driving factors behind these changes in rhythm were:

1. the intelligibility of the gestures, which, if made too quickly no longer resembled acting, but rather pantomimic dance,
2. the muscle tension in the performer's body, which required a certain amount of time to physically be dispelled before the muscles were pliant and ready to take on the new degree of tension associated with the subsequent affect and
3. the pauses (which are indeed closely related to changes of muscle tension), indicative of changing thoughts and emotions as yet unspoken, with which Aaron Hill said good actors interlaced their performances.

2. How might the reconstruction of such links in performance today influence the sound of the score and the audience's experience of the piece on stage?

It will be clear from the video examples presented in this chapter that the music has been strongly influenced by the acting; and that it lost as much in rhythmic energy as it gained in text expression. Some may feel this to be regrettable from a purely musical point of view; but it is a happiness for those who love words. Indeed, I would argue that the experience of the exquisite lines of Quinault and Pellegrin, when reinforced by the *vérité* of Baroque *actio*, is an intense one, and that the experience of the monologue in French tragic opera becomes one of declaimed text and affective harmony, rather than of rhythmic impulse. Perhaps this helps to explain the importance given to dance in the genre, as a welcome and delightful awakening of the rhythmic sense after the 'drawl' of the recitative and monologues? Be that as it may, the sound of the music is strongly affected by gesture; but we have seen in the Carsen/Christie *Armide* that this can also be true of modern stagings.

3. The final research question deals with matters of style and stylization: it is clear from the acting sources of the period that absolute naturalism, as we expect it in our current theater, was considered undesirable—too lowly—for the stage. Instead actors working in the genre of the *tragédie*, were expected to ennoble nature rather than precisely imitate it. Yet, at the same time, great emphasis is placed on a quality known as *vérité*, which term was used to indicate a naturalistic representation of the human passions. How might these two ideas be brought together in the acting style of opera singers today, and what would the effect be on the audience?

The answer to this question must be an individual one. My personal preference would be for a staging which allows the music to be performed with rhythmical variety and insight into the harmony, as well as with vocal inflections and colors that correspond to and thus express the affects of the text. Although I am convinced that the use of Baroque *actio* as I understand it would have specific and significant consequences for the *sound* of the music (particularly by stretching individual words on which gestures fall), I would already

be more than happy to see operas from this genre performed in a manner that gives priority to the expression of the text, even if the acting style itself were modern and naturalistic. However, as I am a lover of 17th- and 18th-century art, nothing would please me more than to have *vérité* in vocal inflection and facial expression matched to the beautiful attitudes found in period paintings. The actor's nobility of stance and mien would then compliment the elevated nature of the language used in the *livret*, and the resulting unity of style and intensity of emotion would probably resonate well with today's sophisticated opera audience. Their experience would be, ideally, that of seeing and hearing of a Baroque painting 'come to life'.

Though many would disagree with me, I am not entirely alone in my preference for a less abstract, more affective approach to staging and performing this repertoire: Antonia Banducci has eloquently noted already, in her review of the 2000 Opera Atelier production of Lully's *Persée*, that the entire genre of the *tragédie en musique* could benefit from a less rigid performance style:

For the most part, [the conductor Hervé] Niquet's consistently lively and always steady tempos tastefully conveyed the opera's internal momentum. Nevertheless, because so many of the opera's most dramatic moments occur during passages of recitative, I would have preferred a more flexible and fluid interpretive approach, one dictated by dramatic content and not by a steady tempo. For example, Andromède and Persée's first and only dialogue scene (II, 6) is set entirely in simple recitative. Persée proclaims his love. In reply, Andromède first declares her fidelity to Phinée and then admits her love for Persée. Short rests help to articulate the text—e.g., after "Mais" in the line, "Mais je mourray content, si vous vivez heureuse" ("But I will die content, if happily you live"). Still, a more flexible tempo, a slight internal broadening or quickening of the lines, even a tiny lengthening of the rests would give more musical and hence more dramatic quality to the recitative. Indeed, the moment when Andromède calls to Persée not to leave, and Persée slowly responds "What do I hear?" ("Qu'entends-je!") had great dramatic impact. A quick check of the score shows that Lully indicated this marked change in tempo with "lentement." One could argue that without such indications, no such changes are warranted elsewhere, but to my mind, the importance accorded to "sublime poetry" and expressive acting in French Baroque opera argues otherwise.⁵⁰

Banducci's disappointment does not surprise me. Indeed, I cannot help but feel that one of the happier consequences of a free performance practice for this repertoire would be the affective contagion from player to audience that the sources assure us would take place—assuming, of course, that our minds, unprejudiced by current musical fashions, are fully open to the experience. Therefore it is my sincere hope that this thesis may in some way contribute towards the reinstatement of a rhythmically flexible performance style for the *tragédie en musique*.



50. Antonia L. Banducci, 'The Opera Atelier Performance (Toronto, 2000): The Spirit of Lully on the Modern Stage', *Journal of Seventeenth-Century Music* 10, no.1 (2000), par. 7.1. <http://sscm-jscm.press.illinois.edu/v10/no1/banducci.html>. Last accessed 27-06-2010.

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Appendix 1

Gilbert Austin's
System of Gesture: a step-by-step
starter's kit

Gilbert Austin's

System of Gesture: a step-by-step starter's kit¹

SLIDE 1: Gilbert Austin's System of Gesture: a step-by-step starter's kit

SLIDE 2: Chironomia title page

Gilbert Austin published his book on gesture, entitled *Chironomia, or a Treatise on Rhetorical Delivery*, in 1806. Its 583 pages are devoted to the task of encouraging the use of gesture in public speaking in the British Isles, where, according to Austin, there was a prejudice against its use and an ignorance of its full beauties. In order to put this British resistance to rest, Austin threw the weight of his considerable learning against all such criticism: much of his book is taken up with arguments, drawn mainly from Classical sources, in favor of the virtues of the eloquent hand. Indeed the entire last 30 pages of the book are devoted to quotations, almost exclusively in Latin, on the propriety of a proper delivery.

But what is most astonishing about this book, and what will interest us exclusively here, is the system for notating gesture which Austin proposed. Austin, who taught public speaking at a school for young men in Dublin, was inspired to invent his system sometime during the 1770s as a memory aid for himself and his students. It is probable, then, that he was using it with success with his own pupils long before the publication of his book. Unfortunately, however, Austin's system received, and indeed has continued to receive, harsh criticism: in 1809 *The Monthly Review* published the following dismissive analysis:

We are really loth to pronounce an unfavorable judgment on the new scheme of notation invented, explained, and very highly appreciated by Mr. Austin ; yet he would perhaps still less forgive us if we passed it over in silence. We must avow, then, that we have examined it with care, and are sorry to acknowledge that it appears to us cumbersome, complicated and ill adapted to its purpose.

Such prejudices against Austin's system still abound. Indeed, one modern critic has gone so far as to claim that:

The actual workings of Austin's system of annotation are horrifically complex. [...] To attempt to follow one of Austin's annotated extracts from canonical texts—Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Church Yard," Edward Young's "Night Thoughts," a speech of Brutus's from Julius Caesar—is to become, inevitably, a clumsily articulated automaton, a mechanized monster of crippling self-consciousness.

And the same author warns his readers of the 'confusion and exhaustion that awaits any reader rash enough to put the system to the test'.²

To this I can only say 'Balderdash'! My Dear Ladies and Gentlemen, I am of an entirely different opinion. I learned to read Austin's notation after just two weeks of studying for an hour a day—a mere fraction of the time it took me to learn Beauchamps-Feuillet notation, or indeed musical notation. I use Austin notation to teach my students at the conservatory, and they very quickly grasp the essentials, though without bothering to memorize all the details. I must emphasize that it is a tremendous aid to anyone working with gesture, or to anyone in need of notating finger, hand, or arm positions. The seeming problem is not with the system itself, but with our access to it: we lack a systematic reader whose annotated texts gradually move from the simple to the complex. Such a handbook—and indeed, I must confess that I am in the process of creating one now—would allow us to become comfortable and familiar with the notation before we attempt to decipher one of the long and complex poems in *Chironomia*. Trying to learn Austin's notation from his annotations to poetry is like trying to teach Beauchamps-Feuillet notation using L'Abbée's *Turkish Dance*, or music notation using *Le Sacre du Printemps*: yes, these masterpieces contain examples of all the information we might wish to explain, but surely they would overwhelm the beginner with too much complexity, too great detail?

So now we will begin on our basic, step-by-step introduction to Austin's system. I shall try here to avoid the pitfalls of either overcharging this presentation with too much information, or of timidly resorting to too simplistic an overview: my aim is to give everyone a helping hand so that they can themselves get to work with *Chironomia*. And, at the end, I shall include a demonstration of my own reconstruction of one of

1. The Keynote presentation that accompanies this text can be found on DVD 1. It will play like a movie in Quicktime; the reader therefore will have to stop its flow using the space bar.

2. See: Brian Dillon, 'Inventory / Talk to the Hand' (*Cabinet*: <http://www.cabinetmagazine.org/issues/26/dillon.php>). Last accessed 24-9-2010.

Austin's annotated texts from *Julius Caesar* by William Shakespeare.

So, let us begin with the feet!

SLIDE 3: The feet

Austin has four basic foot positions, marked by a letter and a number. They are pictured here. Moving from left to right they are: R1, R2, L1 and L2. The R and L refer to the leg which is forward, either right or left. The numbers 1 and 2 refer to which leg is carrying the weight: 1 indicates that the weight is on the back leg, 2 indicates that the weight is forward, on the front leg. In fact, you can see where the weight is on Austin's illustration by the coloration of the footprints below the drawings of the feet: the darker the shading, the more weight the foot has on it. If you look to R 2 or L 2 for instance, you will see that the back foot is nearly white, because in this position only the big toe (colored dark in the drawing) is touching the ground.

SLIDE 4: The feet moving forward

This use of shading is very clear in the plate showing how to move from R 1 to R 2. Here we see that the left foot is darkly shaded in R1 (on the left), but only the toe is darkened in R2 (on the right). We can also see that as the right foot slides forward, the back foot pivots slightly, bringing the heels closer together.

SLIDE 5: Video of the feet positions

Let me show you that again, in a close up.

SLIDE 6: Video close up of the feet positions

This seems to have been a standard stage technique with a long tradition, as can be seen in this clip from a film of French actors from the beginning of the 20th century: watch the second gentleman from the right and you will see him using this same technique:

SLIDE 7: Video excerpt from Lucia di Lammermoor

Let me play that for you again: notice how the second gentleman from the right, when he steps forward, only touches the floor with the toe of his back foot, and how he swings the heels closer together, to perfectly present to us his handsome calf. The step forward is perhaps a bit large, but otherwise this movement is just as Austin describes.

Slide 7: Play the Lucia video clip again

Slide 8: Side steps

Austin describes other foot positions, using different combinations of letters (which are abbreviations for English words) and numbers, but I shall not recount them all here. Instead, we shall move on to the fingers, arms and hands.

We start with the arms.

SLIDE 9: Austin's orator in an imaginary sphere

Austin uses a system of vertical and transverse points in a sphere, a kind of longitude and latitude if you will, to describe the position of the actor's arms in space. He notes five vertical and five horizontal positions.

SLIDE 10: Cross sections both vertical and horizontal

The vertical positions are, from top to bottom: Z for Zenith, e for elevated, h for horizontal, d for downwards and R for rest.

The horizontal positions are: b for backwards, x for extended, q for oblique, f for forwards and c for across (please forgive my saying 'crossed' in the following video...I should have said 'across').

SLIDE 11: Video showing all 10 basic arm positions

Thus, by using a combination of two letters one can notate 15 basic positions of the arm. The first letter is the elevation or the vertical position. The second indicates the horizontal or transverse position. This order of the letters is fixed, and never varies. Here they are, for the right hand:

Slides 12-26: The fifteen systematic arm positions

Now these two letters showing the position of the arms can be preceded by a small letter to indicate the position of the hand itself. Here are just a few select examples, Austin gives even more possibilities. First, positions of the hand which can be categorized by the presentation of the palm.

Slide 27: Positions of hand: p, s, n, o, v

Slide 28: Video of hand p, s, n, o, v

Now, positions of the fingers.

Slide 29: Finger positions notated as x, c, l, w, i, h, m

Slide 30: Video of positions notated as x, c, l, w, i, h, m

And finally, positions involving both hands. These are signified in the notation by a capital B, for both.

Slide 31: Positions of both hands together

Slide 32: Video of both hands together

So in a group of three letters, the first always indicates the hand position, the second the elevation and the third the transverse position.

Slide 33: Vertical horizontal front

Here are some examples of such three-letter groups: In this first illustration the hand is vertical, the arm horizontal and front. The notation would therefore be vhf.

Slide 34: Index elevated oblique

Here the hand is in the index position, the arm elevated and oblique. ieq.

Slide 35: Prone downwards crossed

And finally, here the hand is prone, the arm downwards and across. pdc.

Gesture of course is not static, but involves motion. Motions are indicated in Austin's system by adding a letter after the initial group of 3 letters, which is separated from them by a space to facilitate legibility. So, if I want to show that I arrive in the position supine horizontal oblique by a downwards motion, the notation would look like this:

Slide 36: shq d

Supine horizontal oblique and d for downwards motion.

Slide 37: Video of shq d

Here, once again, the position of the letter in the sequence is essential. Motion is always notated after the group of three letters which indicate the hand and arm position. To avoid confusion, there is a space between this initial group of letters and the fourth letter indicating motion.

Of course, there are two hands to be notated. Austin's system uses a dash to differentiate between the right and the left hands.

Slide 38: vhf—

If the dash is to the right of the group of letters, it indicates the right hand. Here the right hand is vertical horizontal front.

Slide 39: —sdq

If the dash is to the left it indicates the left hand. Here the left hand is supine downwards oblique.

Slide 40: vhf—sdq

In notating asymmetrical positions of the actor's arms, Austin therefore uses two groups of letters separated by a single dash. Here we have an example: the letters vhf are followed by the dash on the right and therefore relate to the right hand. The letters sdq are preceded by the same dash to the left and therefore indicate the position of the left hand.

SLIDE 41: video vhf— + —sdq = vhf—sdq

SLIDE 42: Bshf

If however both hands are symmetrically placed, Austin simplifies the notation by using only one set of letters preceded by a capital B (for both).

SLIDE 43: Video of Bshf

We have now seen the basics of Austin's system. It is, of course, capable of greater refinement by the addition of more letters, but this is exactly what is frightening, frustrating and confusing for beginners, so I shall not go into this detail now. Suffice it to say here that one must do a bit of memorizing, and that it is essential to remember that the position of the letters, their order within the group, has a fixed meaning. But I assure you that it is really not so terrifyingly difficult a system as its critics portray it to be. Here's how it works with the text:

Slide 44: 'No man is wise at all times'.

Here we have three sets of letters: shf (supine horizontal front) above the word 'No', nef (natural elevated front) above the word 'wise' and shf st (supine horizontal front, striking) above the word 'all'. The end of the sentence is marked with a capital R, meaning rest. The abbreviations underneath the text in this example do not actually belong to the notation. Austin is here indicating the categories of gestures which apply: the gesture on the word 'No' is a commencing one, on 'wise' it is a suspended gesture leading to an emphatic one on the word 'all'. The final motion of the hand to rest is a terminating gesture.

This is how it looks:

SLIDE 45: Video of 'No man is wise at all times'.

SLIDE 46: 'It is an old observation'.

Here's an expanded version of the same sentence. Note that Austin clearly relates the gestures to specific words, their meaning and their function within the sentence. He does not see gesture as a kind of sweeping choreography of emotion: indeed, he warns his readers at several points in his book not to partake of the 'pomp' the 'sweep' or the 'affectation' of the dancer, but to behave as an orator, and to send the words with 'light and warmth' into the hearts of the audience:

SLIDE 47: Video of 'It is an old observation'.

And now let's look at a text where the notation involves the feet and the hands:

SLIDE 48: Brutus' speech (annotated text)

Now I would like to show you my reconstruction of the annotation Austin gives for Brutus' famous speech in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. This leads us to certain questions of acting styles: Austin gives no indications

of the vocal or declamatory style he intends his gestures to accompany, but in his book he does correlate the strength of the voice, the power of the emotion and vehemence of the gesture. So, by thinking backwards from the notation, I have inferred a passionate style and high emotional level from those gestures which require force and energy to perform. Austin also indicates that the gestures rise with the voice, so high gestures I have generally tried to match with a raised voice, and low gestures with a lowered one. Austin also says this speech from Shakespeare is bold, manly and agitated. Here goes!

SLIDE 49: Video ‘Brutus’ Speech’

SLIDE 50: Optional video ‘Brutus’ Speech *Lite*’ (with less emotion)

Now I admit that there are other possible reconstructions of Austin’s notation. I have in fact recorded a second version of this speech, performed by myself at a much lower emotional pitch than what you have just seen. This emotional coolness changes the look and ‘feel’ of the gesture significantly. If any of you would care to see it, it can be shown now, or perhaps in a break between sessions. The comparison raises important questions about how we interpret 18th-century acting styles.

Now, please let me just say in closing that Austin nowhere claims that his own gestures are the only ones suitable to the poems notated in his book. In fact, he stresses quite the opposite. In doing so he makes clear what I have found to be true in my own experiments with his system: very different styles of motion can be notated with in it equal success.

I shall let Mr Austin have the final word:

‘As these gestures may be varied, it may be said, infinitely, so there can be no fixed standard, as to the manner of delivering this or any other poem or oration, which should be considered exclusively appropriate. The sentiments require indeed to be delivered with suitable tones of voice, and expression of countenance; but great variety of gesture may consist with propriety, provided general rules are not violated [...] The notation will accommodate itself to every variety in the speaker’s manner, and this must prove a recommendation to its use’.³



3. Gilbert Austin, *Chironomia* (London: 1806), 539.

Appendix 2

Scores and annotations

Appendix 2.1

La Rhétorique française

text by René Bary

gestures and notation by Jed Wentz

Appendix 2.1

Excerpt from *La Rhétorique française* annotated by Jed Wentz

ndq—hip shq sw—ndq n—
L'on doit accomoder l'action aux diverses flexions de la voix,
aL2

neq— —sdq
& aux divers sens des paroles,

ieq—pdq p (pushing down) idq d—R
& toutes les fois qu'on observera ce précepte,

R—R B shcr sw—q-----n
L'on sera en état d'avoir une favor..able attention.
rL1

B. R. shf— D phf—
Quand l'on représente quelque action modeste, l'on doit baisser la tête,

B.R.
& humilier le regard.

U shq—.....D—pdq seq a— seq d—
Quand l'on représente le ciel ou la terre, l'on doit hausser ou baisser le
aL2

i(n)ef— ndf sw—fdq n
bras, selon les chose hautes ou basses.

Bvhf sp Bphx n phx a— pdx—pex d
Quand l'on représente quelque naufrage, les bras élevés & abaissés
rL1 x

pef a— —pdf a Bpef circle
& mus à droit[e] & à gauche en forme de cercle, doivent mettre devant

B nef B vef sp xx pdc—pdq
les yeux le bouleversement des choses.
aL2

phc—phq shf-----a
Quand l'on représente quelque chose [de] méprisable, la main en s'avancant
rL1

vhf c— rj
doit représenter le rejet qu'on en fait.

B.R. innocence Bndf B.R.
 Quand l'on représente quelque justification, l'on doit mettre durant quelques
 aL2

Bshf B cr br.
 moments les mains sur l'estomac.

B.R. B ndf
 Quand l'on représente quelque contestation, l'on doit avancer le corps &
 aR2 aL2

vhf—pdq
 ouvrir extraordinairement les yeux.

B. R. cl
 Quand on représente quelque mouvement de colère, l'on doit pencher le
 aR2 x st

E L E R E tr
 corps, l'on doit mouvoir les yeux, l'on doit branler les paupières, l'on doit

grinding
 grincer les dents.

en garde! R
 Quand l'on représente quelque combat l'on doit tourner la tête a droit[e] et à
 rL1 xx

L —(cl)ef c
 gauche, l'on doit avancer le corps & le retirer un peu, & l'on doit lever les
 aL2 rL1

(cl)ef cl—shf sp (cl)hf st—pdf
 bras l'un après l'autre en forme d'estramaçon.
 aL2 aR2

B.R. prejudice L sh
 Quand l'on représente quelque préoccupation, l'on doit tourner la tête en la
 rL1

vhf—vhc vhf c—vhc c rj
 branlant, l'on doit exprimer le refus des raisons avec le repoussement des mains.

expostulation Bsdf lean fr
 Quand l'on représente quelque remontrance, l'on doit simplement pencher le corps.

impertinent ihf ihf rc

Quand l'on représente quelque moquerie, l'on doit avancer le bras & darder le doigt.

—pdf—q R shq—

Quand l'on représente quelque distribution, l'on doit tourner la tête à droit[e]

L phq—shq B shf sw—q—n ieq—pdq

& à gauche, & rendre par ce moyen le dénombrement plus remarquable.

implore U Bbr. cr.

Quand l'on représente quelque imploration, l'on doit lever la tête vers le ciel & croiser les bras.

aL2

L

Quand l'on représente quelque posture rêveuse, l'on doit pencher la tête du

rL1

U

côté de l'épaule gauche, & l'on doit tout ensemble lever les paupières & fixer les regards.

pleading intense soften face Bshf a

Enfin quand l'on représente quelque exhortation, l'on doit adoucir le visage & avancer un peu le corps.

aL2

Appendix 2.2

Phaëton

Act II, scene 3

‘Que l’incertitude’

text by Philippe Quinault

music by Jean-Baptiste Lully

gestures and notation by Jed Wentz
and Sharon Weller

Appendix 2.2a

score of 'Que l'incertitude' by Jean-Baptiste Lully

The musical score is written for a single voice and a figured bass. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The score consists of four systems, each with a vocal line and a bass line. The lyrics are in French and describe a state of uncertainty and torment.

System 1: The vocal line begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, Bb4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The bass line starts with a half note G2, followed by quarter notes A2, Bb2, A2, G2, F2, E2, D2, C2. The lyrics are: "Que l'in - cer - ti - tu - de Est un ri - gou - reux — tour - ment!". The figured bass below the bass line is: $\frac{4}{2}$ b5 7 4 3.

System 2: The vocal line continues with a half note D4, followed by quarter notes E4, F4, G4, A4, Bb4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The bass line starts with a half note G2, followed by quarter notes A2, Bb2, A2, G2, F2, E2, D2, C2. The lyrics are: "Non, non, on n'a point, en ai - mant, De pei - ne plus ru - de Que". The figured bass below the bass line is: $\frac{6}{4}$ 6 # 6 6 #.

System 3: The vocal line continues with a half note D4, followed by quarter notes E4, F4, G4, A4, Bb4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The bass line starts with a half note G2, followed by quarter notes A2, Bb2, A2, G2, F2, E2, D2, C2. The lyrics are: "l'in - cer - ti - tu - de. Je sens croi - stre à tout mo - ment mon in - qui - e -". The figured bass below the bass line is: $\frac{4}{2}$ b5 6 6 6.

System 4: The vocal line continues with a half note D4, followed by quarter notes E4, F4, G4, A4, Bb4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The bass line starts with a half note G2, followed by quarter notes A2, Bb2, A2, G2, F2, E2, D2, C2. The lyrics are: "tu - de. Que l'in - cer - ti - tu - de. Est un ri - gou - reux — tour - ment!". The figured bass below the bass line is: $\frac{4}{2}$ b5 6 7 (4) (3).

Appendix 2.2b

‘Que l’incertitude’ annotated by Jed Wentz

shf p— shf rc .m— Bchc-----Bshq sw
Que l’incertitude est un rigoureux tourment!
a L 2

vhf p—.....—vhq sw br.—shq
Non, non, on n’a point en aimant
r. L 1 a L 2

cbr.-----peq sw— B.R.
de peine plus rude que l’incertitude.
r L 1

D Bndq a-----shq—vhq a Bcl.hf. n
Je sens croire à tous moment mon inquietude.
a L 2

odf—ndq d Bsef sw Bshq st
Que l’incertitude est un rigoureux tourment!
r L 1

Appendix 2.2c

‘Que l’incertitude’ annotated by Sharon Weller

R vhf— shf n—
Que l’incertitude
rR1 aR2

S cdq—.....—br
Est un rigoureux tourment.

Sh phfsw—...—pdq phf n—.....—br
Non, non, on n’a point en aimant
rR1

gbr—pdf A veqp—
De peine plus rude

shf—pdb
Que l’incertitude.
aR2

br—shf a Bshf a Ts veq sh—....—veq sh
Je sens croire à tous moment mon inquietude.
aL2 rL1

shfsp—pdb
Que l’incertitude
aR2

D Bcdq
Est un rigoureux tourment.

Appendix 2.3

Armide

Act II, scene 5

text by Philippe Quinault

music by Jean-Baptiste Lully

gesture and notation by Jed Wentz

Appendix 2.3a

score of 'Enfin il est en ma puissance' by Jean-Baptiste Lully (my working score)

Scene V.
Armide, Renaud Endormy.
Fin du Chœur.

Violons.

Acte II. Scene V. 87

Armide.
En...fin il est en ma puis
...sance. Ce fatal En...my, Ce Su...per.be Vainqueur. Le
Charme du sommeil le livre à ma vengeance, Je vais percer son invincible
Cœur. Par luy tous mes Captifs sont sortis d'escla...vage; Qu'il é...prouve

Handwritten notes: Triumph, dépit, l'air, quick rises, 11 le Pureau de, 6 ostentat

tou-te ma rage. Quel trouble me saisit? qui me fait hési...
 ...ter? Qu'est-ce qu'en sa fa-veur la pitié me veut dire? Frapons...
 Ciel! qui peut m'arê-ter? A-chevons... je frémis! Vengeons-nous...
 je sou-pire! Est-ce ainsy que je doy me venger aujour...
 d'huy! Ma Co-le-re s'é-teint Quand j'approche de luy. Plus je le
 voy! plus ma vengeance est vaine; Mon bras tremblant se re-fuse à ma

haine. Ah ! quelle cruau-té de luy ravir le jour ! A ce jeune He...
 ...ros tout cède sur la Terre. Qui Croiroit qu'il fût né seule...
 ...ment pour la Guerre ? Il semble être fait pour l'amour. Ne puis-je
 me venger à moins qu'il ne pé... risse ? Hé ne suffit-il pas que l'a...
 mour le pu nisse ? Puis qu'il n'a pû trouver mes yeux assez Char...
 mants, Qu'il m'ayme au moins par mes enchantements, Que s'il se peut, je le ha...

Violons.
is-se.

Ve-nez, ve-nez Secon.

der mes dé-sirs, Démons, transformez-vous en d'ay-mables Zé.

phirs: Venez, ve: phirs: Je cède à ce vainqueur, la pi-tié me sur.

monte, Ca-chez ma foi-blese et ma honte Dans les plus re-cu-lez dé.

Acte II. Scene V.

91

...serts, volez, vo...lez, Conduisez-nous au bout de l'u...ni...
...vers volez, volez, Conduisez-nous au bout de l'u...ni...vers.
Entr'acte page 83.

Fin du Second Acte.

Appendix 2.3b

‘Enfin il est en ma puissance’ annotated by Jed Wentz

chf—.....—chf
Enfin il est en ma puissance
aL2

—pdq sw —vhq sp
ce fatal ennemy, ce superbe vainquer.

—sdq d —sdq st
Le charme du sommeil le livre à ma vengeance;
rL1

chf—....—ihx —n
Je vais percer son invincible coeur.

—ohx
Par luy tous mes captifs sont sortis d’esclavage;
trL2

 —shx st
Qu’il éprouve toute ma rage. c/shx—c/pex
aR2

 cbr.c—vbr.c
Quel trouble me saisit? qui me fait hésiter?
rR1

 —sdq d.....cdq d— Bn
Qu’est-ce qu’en sa faveur la pitié me veut dire?
rL2

chf sw— chf sw_____q
Frappons.... ciel! qui peut m’arêter?
aL2

cex sw— Bcr.
Achevons....je frémis!
trR2

cex sw B.R.
Vengeons-nous.... je souûpire! (turns away)

shf—shc n shf n—shc
Est-ce ainsy que je doy me venger aujourd’huy!
trL2

chf x—.....—phq
Ma colere s’éteint

R—ohx
Quand j'approche de luy.

—chf sw —pdq sw
Plus je le voy! Plus ma vengeance est vaine;

cex sh— B.R.
Mon bras tremblant se refuse à ma haine.

—pdq p —seq
Ah! quelle cruauté de luy ravir le jour!

—shq d
A ce jeune Heros tout cède sur la Terre.

—phq.....cef sh
Qui croiroit qu'il fût né seulement pour la guerre?

R.—br.
Il semble être fait pour l'amour.
trL1

—pdq sw.....c/shf
Ne puis-je me venger à moins qu'il ne périsse?

R.—sbr.
Hé ne suffit-il pas que l'amour le punisse?

—br. n
Puis qu'il n'a pû trouver mes yeux assez charmants,

—4/leq —veq sp
Qy'il m'ayme au moins par mes enchantements,

cex—cex L
Que s'il se peut, je le haïsse. (discards knife, enchants Renaud)
rL1

ief— idf d— br.—pdb
Venez, venez, seconder mes désires,
aR2

R.—n/vef sw —cdf d shc.....peq sw
Démons, transformez-vous en d'aymables zéphirs.
rR1 aR2

br.—.....—cbr.
Venez, venez, seconder mes désires,

B pdq sw Bsdq Bsdf sw
Démon, transformez-vous en d'aymables zéphirs.
rR1

br.— —sdx U D
Je cède à ce vainquer, la pitié me surmonte,
rL1 rR1

Cachez ma faiblesse et ma honte

R Dans les plus reculés déserts, seq—sec
aR2

shq sp— seq sp— sdq_____shq sw—
Volez, volez conduisez-nous au bout de l'univers.
aL2

Veuillez nous conduire au bout de l'univers.

Appendix 2.4

Polidore

Act II, scene 3

‘Du plus charmant espoir’

text by Simon-Joseph Pellegrin

music by Jean-Baptiste Stuck

vocal ornamentation by Jean Bérard

Appendix 2.4a:

score of 'Du plus charmant espoir' by Jean-Baptiste Stuck

Polidore

Violons

h.c.

Taille

B.c.

6

8

Du plus char-mant es-poir je

12

gou-te la dou-ceur, L'A mour va cou-ron - ner ma flam - me.

17

Aux plus heu-reux tran sports j'a-ban - don-ne mon a - me. Plai -

22

sirs qui m'é - chan - tez, Reg - nez.

27

Reg-nez seuls dans mon coeur.

33

Fine

A - près u - ne cru - elle ab - sen - ce, Je vais re -

39

voir ces yeux dont la dou - ce - puis - san - ce al - lu - me les feux les plus

45

beaux. La mè - re des a mours bril - la

51

moins sur les Eaux dans l'heu-reux jour de la nais-san - ce que l'ob - jet dont l'a-

56

D.S. al Fine

mour flat - te mon es pé - ran - ce. Du plus char-mant es--

Appendix 2.4b:

ornament table from Jean Bérard's *L'Art du chant*

By kind permission of Prof. Dr. A. G. M. Koopman

DU CHANT. 145

SIGNES POUR LES AGRÉMENTS.

Pour la Cadence Appuyée.
Ψ.

Pour la Cadence précipitée ou jettée.
X.

Pour la Cadence Molle.
⌘.

Pour la Double-Cadence.
*.

Pour la Demi-Cadence ou le Coup de Gorge.
∩.

Pour le Port de Voix Entier (1).
V.

(1) Comme on ne fait jamais un port de Voix entier, non plus qu'une Cadence appuyée par degrés conjoints en montant, sans préparer ces agréments par un Flatté, on doit se dispenser de marquer ce dernier dans l'un & l'autre cas.

146 L'ART

Pour le Port de Voix Feint.
^.

Pour l'Accent.
τ.

Pour le Coulé.
l.

Pour le Flatté ou Balancé.
ε.

Pour le Son Filé Entier.
⌒.

Pour le Son Demi-Filé.
⌒.



Appendix 2.4c:

ornamented version of 'Du plus charmant espoir' from
Bérard's *L'Art du chant* (1755)

By kind permission of Prof. Dr. A. G. M. Koopman

Même genre du morceau précédent

Monologue de Polidor

Du plus charmant Esprit je

goute la douceur, L'amour va couronner ma

flamme. Aux plus heureux transports j'abandonne

26

donne mon a... me, Plaisirs qui m'enchantent

vous régnez

Fin

vous régnez seuls dans mon cœur Après il

ne cruelle absence, Je vous revoir en

yeux dont la douce puissance allume les feux

les plus beaux. La mere des amours brille

moins sur les eaux dans l'heureux jour de

27

sa naissance Que l'objet dont L'amour

flatte mon Esprit... ce Du plus

Chassés L'air intérieur en petit volume, manières un peu vos sons, et la Prononciation claire.

Air de Titon et L'aurore

Du Dieu des Cœurs on a

dore. L'Empire, lui Seul avec des fleurs en

chaîne tout ce qui respire enchaîné

ne l'enchaîne

Appendix 2.5

Polidore

Act V, *scène dernière*

‘Barbares, laissez-moi’

text by Simon-Joseph Pellegrin

music by Jean-Baptiste Stuck

gestures and notation by Jed Wentz

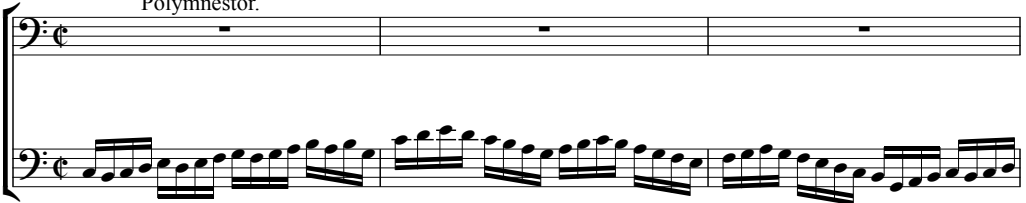
Appendix 2.5a

score of 'Barbares, laissez-moi' by Jean-Baptiste Stuck

Scène dernière.
Polymnestor
l'Épée à la main.

Polymnestor.

Prelude des Basses



4

Bar - ba-res, laissez moi, vo-tre ze - le m'ir - ri - te; Est ce



9

ain - si qu'on sert mon couroux? Ma Vic - ti - me é-cha-pe à mes coups; laissez moi l'im-mo



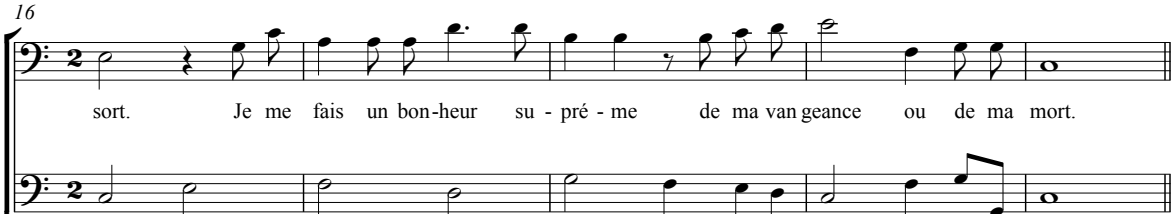
13

ler ou m'im-mo-lez moi mé - me, li-vrez moi Po - li - dore ou ter-mi-nez mon



16

sort. Je me fais un bon-heur su - pré - me de ma van geance ou de ma mort.



Lent.

[Vns]

h.c.

Tailles

Polimnestor

Ter - re pour m'en-glou

[Basses]

4

tir ou-vre moi tes a - bis - mes, mais ce n'est qu'aus En - fers que je dois m'ad-dres

2

8

ser, se - jour de l'hor-rreur et du crim-me c'est à toi seul de m'e-xau - cer. Quel

12

Bruit! quel-les cla - meurs, quel fan - tom - me s'a - van ce! Cou

16

rouns au-de-vant de ses pas; Jus-tes Dieux! c'est mon fils, il de-man-de van

20

gean - ce, lui même il vient m'ou - vrir les por - tes du tré -

23

pas. Ar - rê- te... je ne puis sou-te-nir tes ap - pro-ches, quels re-gards fu-ri

27

eux! quels fu-nes - tes re - pro-ches! tu m'ac euse tout à la fois de par-ri - ci -

30

de et de par - ju - re. Hé - bien é - touf-fons ce mur-

32

mu - re, re - çois le sang que je te dois.

Appendix 2.5b

‘Barbares, laissez-moi’ annotated by Jed Wentz

Scene dernière

Polymnestor, l’Epée à la main

Troupe de Thraces

—n/vef —vef sp —nef —shf st
Barbares, laissez-moi, vôtre ze! m’irrite;
L2

—sdq sw.....cdq n— —chq sp
Est-ce ainsi qu’on sert mon couroux?
trL1

—ceq —shq x cdc st—
Ma Victime échappe à mes coups;

—idq n —br.
Laissez-moi l’immoler, ou m’immolez moi-même.
trL2 rL1

—oeq —ndq d —n
Livrez-moi Polidor, ou terminez mon sort;

—vhq w —shq sw
Je me fais un bonheur suprême
trL2 aR2

—ceq sh R.—cdx sw
De ma vengeance ou de ma mort.
aL2

(dismisses soldiers, walks upstage, turns)

—phf a —n —shq l —ndq d
Terre, pour m’engloutir ouvre moi tes abîmes?
L2

—vhf R B. R.
Mais ce n’est qu’aux Enfers que je dois m’adresser,
trR2

F —shf x chf a—chf
Séjour de l’horreur & du crime,

shf p—R. B.R.
C’est à toi seul de m’exaucer.

vhq x—chq	cx (behind head)—c/ohf	R.—vhf
Quel bruit!	Quelles clameurs!	quel phantôme s'avance!
trL2	rL1	aL2

cex—n/vec
 Courons audevant de ses pas.
 trL1

Bvhf	Bvhf c	cF—	—cdf	chq sh—
Justes	Dieux!	c'est	mon Fils! il demande	vengeance:

cdc_____x

			—sdf x_____x	xf a
Lui-même	il	vient	m'ouvrir	les portes du trépas.
trL2				

chf sh—				Bchf n
Arrête;	je	ne	puis soutenir	tes approches.
rL1 st			aL2 aR2	

		—oE x		—fdf x
Quels	regards	furieux!	quels funestes	reproches!
		rR1		trL1

L —ihq			—shf sw
Tu	m'accuse	tout à la	fois
	sL2		

	cef— cdf st—		—vhq w
De	parricide &	de	parjure;
			aR2

B.R.		Bcdf
Eh bien,	étouffons	murmure,
	rR1	

		Bcec l	Bcdb st
Reçoi	le sang	que je	dois. Il se tuë. Fin
	rL1		

Appendix 2.6

Hippolyte et Aricie

Act III, scene 1

‘Cruelle mère’

Act IV, scene 1

‘Ah! Faut-il?’

text by Simon-Joseph Pellegrin

music by Jean-Philippe Rameau

Appendix 2.6a

score 'Cruelle mère' by Jean-Philippe Rameau

91.

ACTE III^E

Le Théâtre représente une partie du Palais de Thésée sur le rivage de la Mer.

SCENE I^{RE}

PHŒDRE.

p. Viol. Tendrement.

Prelude

2. Viol.

B. C.

Fl.

B. C.

Fl.

Phœdre.

Cruelle mère des Amours Ta vengeance a per

B. C.

92. Fl.

Acte III.

Viol.

du ma trop coupable race; N'en sus pendra tu point le cours?

5 6 5 6 4

Fl.

Ah! du moins à tes yeux que Phœdre trouve grace; Ah! du

6 4

moins à tes yeux que Phœdre trouve grace, que Phœdre trouve

6 5 6

Acte III.

93.

gra - ce.

Fin.

Je ne te reproche plus rien, si tu rends à ma sœur Lippolite son

Fin.

si-ble, Mes feux me font horreur, Mais mon Crime est le tien;

Fin.

Tu dois cesser d'être inflexible, Tu dois cesser d'être inflexi- ble.

Fl.

1^{re} V.

2^e V.

Cruelle

Scène 2^e.

Phædre,

Anone.

Phædre.

Ch bien! viendra-t-il en ces lieux. Ce fatal enne =

Anone.

= mi que malgré moi j'adore? Mippolite bien tôt va paroitre à vos

129.

ACTE IV.^E

*Le Théâtre représente un bois consacré à Diane
situé sur le rivage de la Mer.*

SCÈNE I.^{RE}

HIPPOLITE.

The musical score is written for a single melodic line (treble clef) and a basso continuo line (bass clef). The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is common time (C). The score consists of five systems of staves. The first system contains two staves with a treble and bass clef. The second system also contains two staves. The third system contains two staves. The fourth system contains two staves. The fifth system contains two staves. The lyrics are written below the staves, starting with 'Ah! faut il en un' and ending with 'jour perdre tout ce que j'ai me Mon Père pour jamais me bannir de ces'.

Ah! faut il en un

jour perdre tout ce que j'ai me Mon Père pour jamais me bannir de ces

lieux si chers de Di-a-ne mê-me, Je ne verrai plus les beaux

yeux Qui faisoient mon bonheur, auprès de-moi. Ah! faut-il en un

jour perdre tout ce que j'ai-moi.

Et les maux que je crains, et les biens que je perds, Tout ac

Acte IV.

131.

cable mon cœur d'une douleur ex-trê-me, Souk le maux, yffice dont mes

jours sont couverts, Que de viendra ma gloire aux, yeux de l'uni-vers

Ah! j'ai bien un jour perdu tout ce que j'ai - me

Ah! j'ai bien un jour perdu tout ce que j'ai - me

Acknowledgements

The author joyfully acknowledges the support he has received during the research trajectory from all those involved in the docARTES programme, and expresses to them his heart-felt thanks: to Prof. Frans de Ruiter and Prof. Dr. Rebecca Harris-Warrick, foremost and firstly, for their unflagging faith and support, and to the members of the promotiecommissie; to Javier López Piñón, Henk Borgdorff, Dr. Marcel Cobussen and Dr. Korrie Korevaart for wisdom imparted; and to Peter Dejang and the entire Gent team, for helping him through the initial stages; to Dr. Michiel Schuijjer, Walter van Hauwe and Marianne Gerner, for being the guiding arms and watchful eyes of the Conservatory of Amsterdam; and to Rosita Wouda, for calmly carrying on.

The author equally would like to acknowledge his gratitude to a number of people who, though not officially involved in the research trajectory, generously offered their wisdom and skills, thus abetting its completion: chief among these, to Dr. Julia Muller, a lady of *style*; and to the long-suffering Dr. Michael Burden and the ever-inspiring Jennifer Thorp; to both Maria Angad Gaur and Ken Pierce, for setting my steps straight and my toes at 45 degrees; to Sharon Weller for watching my thumbs; to Anne Smith, for her kindness; to Rebekah Ahrendt, for her smart little slaps; to Annette Fern, Andrea Cawelti and Amy Groves for reflections on performance and punctuation; to Thérèse de Goede for advice harmonical; and to Fernando Alonso Vásquez for cheerfulness during many grim hours at the computer screen.

Special thanks are due to the musicians who helped me to see and hear what I was writing about: Andréanne Brison Paquin, Maarten Koningsberger, Francesco Corti, Sara DeCorso, Joseph Tan, Evan Few, John Ma, Rebecca Rosen, Carolina Perez Bergliaffa, Gabriella Wunsch, Belen Nieto Galan, Panos Iliopoulos, Nika Zlataric, Daniel Ivo de Oliveira, Agnieszka Swiatkowska, Antonia Nemanich, Petri Arvo, Alexandre Pettigrew, Cassandra Luckhardt and Michael Borgstede.

The support of the Organisatie Oude Muziek Utrecht must not be forgotten: many thanks to Xavier Vandamme, Albert Edelman and especially to Jolande van der Klis.

To these, and to many others who listened with patience and reprimanded with gentleness, I make a deep and heart-felt *révérence*.



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Samenvatting

De titel van dit proefschrift ('The Relationship between Gesture, Affect and Rhythmic Freedom in the Performance of French Tragic Opera from Lully to Rameau') duidt het genre aan waarop mijn onderzoek is toegepast: *de tragédie en musique*. Bij het bekijken van dit repertoire was het mijn bedoeling om uit te zoeken hoe expressieve modificaties van het onderliggende ritme mogelijk in verhouding stonden tot het gebruik van gestiek op het toneel en tot de affectenleer, zoals destijds gangbaar in de medische filosofie.

Het proefschrift omvat de volgende hoofdstukken:

Hoofdstuk 1: *Utilia non subtilia*: het fenomeen onderzoek van en door uitvoering, vanuit het oogpunt van de praktijk.

Dit hoofdstuk, waarin ik kritisch kijk naar zowel de aard van mijn werk als mijn persoonlijke betrokkenheid bij het onderzoeksproces, bestaat uit twee delen. Het eerste heeft betrekking op de manier waarop uitvoeringen mijn waardering van informatie uit de bronnen hebben beïnvloed. In het tweede deel bespreek ik een aantal voordelen en valkuilen bij zulk subjectief onderzoek aan de hand van bepaalde aspecten van de reconstructie van de Roerich/Stravinsky/Nijinsky *Le Sacre du printemps* van Millicent Hodson en Geoffrey Archer.

Hoofdstuk 2: Galenistische muzikale affectenleer en de plaats daarvan in het reconstructieproces.

Hier vindt de lezer de medisch/filosofische onderbouwing van mijn werk. Aangezien deze onontbeerlijk is voor het begrijpen van mijn gevolgtrekkingen, leek het noodzakelijk dit onderwerp gedetailleerd te bespreken. Er is onderzoek verricht naar een aantal belangrijke filosofen die over affect hebben geschreven, van Aristoteles tot Descartes. *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* van Mattheson is daarbij in een pan-Europese filosofische context geplaatst. Tevens wordt een inspiratiebron voor mijn werk besproken, *The Passions of the Minde in Generall* (1601) van Thomas Wright. Het laatste deel van dit hoofdstuk is gewijd aan het concept *vérité* in relatie tot de Franse theaterpraktijk; het concept *vérité* ligt ten grondslag aan mijn betoog betreffende de koppeling tussen muziek en gestiek in de *tragédie en musique*.

Hoofdstuk 3: Primaire en secundaire bronnen voor en tegen het nemen van ritmische vrijheden in de *tragédie en musique*.

Dit hoofdstuk bevat bewijsmateriaal uit zowel primaire als secundaire bronnen, zowel voor als tegen het nemen van ritmische vrijheden in de Franse operatraditie tijdens het Ancien Régime. Hier onderzoek ik eerst drie hoofdgroepen uit de bronnen: geschriften over muziek uit de periode 1668-1736, geschriften over ritmische vrijheid die geïnspireerd zijn op de uitvinding van de *métromètre* door D'Onzembray in 1732 en tenslotte werken - pamfletten of boeken - geschreven tijdens de *Querelle des Bouffons*. De eerste groep bronnen is niet besmet door de specifieke polemieken van de *Querelle* zelf. Wat hier geschreven wordt over ritmische vrijheid vormt een onaangetaste basis voor vergelijking met latere bronnen. De tweede groep heeft betrekking op zowel de praktische als de filosofische reacties op de uitvinding van een tikkende metronoom en betreft een enkele, specifieke lijn uit de gedachtenwisseling over rubato; een lijn die ik hier nauwgezet wil onderzoeken. De laatste groep bronnen, uit de literatuur over de *Querelle*, bewijst dat in beide kampen van de elkaar bestrijdende partijen betoogd werd dat de *tragédie en musique* vrij in de maat moest worden uitgevoerd.

Hoofdstuk 4: Affect, gestiek en timing bij de Opéra: medebepalende bronnen

Dit hoofdstuk vormt een inleiding tot de case studies uit Hoofdstuk 5 door de context en toepasbaarheid van de toneelbronnen op hun waarde voor dit onderzoek te taxeren. De beladen kwestie van de toepasselijkheid van specifieke gestes en hun verdere relatie met de teksten van recitatief en monologen, wordt hier vanuit historisch zowel als praktisch perspectief belicht.

Hoofdstuk 5: Case Studies

In dit hoofdstuk staan geschreven commentaren op een aantal videoclipps met uitvoeringen van repertoire van de *Académie royale de musique*. De fragmenten waarmee geëxperimenteerd is, zijn twee scènes uit opera's van Lully ('Que l'incertitude' uit *Phaëton* en 'Enfin il est en ma puissance' uit *Armide*) en twee scènes ('Du plus charmant espoir' en 'Barbares, laissez moi') uit *Polidore* van Jean-Baptiste Stuck. Deze uitvoeringen verschillen van aard: sommige met gestiek, sommige zonder, de één met muziek, de ander alleen gesproken tekst. Ik treed zelf op en benut daarbij mijn kennis van muziek, dans en gestiek als onderzoekswerktuig, maar ben bij dit werk geholpen door leerlingen, vrienden en collega's. De meeste gestes die ik gebruik heb ik zelf ontworpen om bepaalde theorieën uit te proberen. De gestiek in de uitvoering van 'Que l'incertitude' is echter voor mij ontworpen door de specialist in historisch acteren Sharon Weller. Tenslotte lever ik commentaar op twee clips uit de première van de productie van *Hippolyte et Aricie* uit 2009, die ik voor de Nationale Reisopera heb gedirigeerd. Door op deze manier de verschillende vruchten van mijn onderzoek van en door uitvoeringen aan te bieden, hoop ik de levensvatbaarheid van mijn hypothese te laten zien. Na het presenteren van de praktische resultaten van mijn onderzoek, sluit ik het proefschrift af met een aantal conclusies, getrokken uit deze experimenten.

Er zijn twee bijlagen: de eerste bestaat uit een powerpoint presentatie genaamd 'Gilbert Austin's System of Gesture Notations: A Step-by-Step Starter's Kit' die ik heb gemaakt voor een bijeenkomst van de Association pour un Centre de Recherche sur les Arts du Spectacle au XVIIe et XVIIIe Siècles (ACRAS) in Nantes in 2009. Deze kan nuttig zijn voor wie de notatie van Austin niet beheerst en voor wie graag de gestes ontcijfert die ik door het hele proefschrift heen gebruik en waarbij ik zijn systeem hanteer.

De tweede bijlage bevat teksten (de gestes worden daarbij aangegeven) en partituren van de stukken uit de case studies in Hoofdstuk 5.

Onderzoeksvragen:

Hoewel tijdens dit onderzoekstraject veel vragen zijn gesteld, waren deze drie het belangrijkste:

1. Hoe was de koppeling, bij de *Académie royale de musique*, tussen de niet-muzikale aspecten van de toneelpraktijk (zoals gezichtsuitdrukking, lichaamshouding en gestiek) en de ritmische vrijheden in de uitvoering van de muziek zelf?
2. Hoe zou de reconstructie van een dergelijke koppeling bij een hedendaagse uitvoering de verklanking van de partituur beïnvloeden?
3. De laatste onderzoeksvraag betreft stijl en stilistische zaken: het wordt duidelijk uit de toneelbronnen uit die periode dat absoluut naturalisme, zoals wij dat in het hedendaagse theater verwachten, onwenselijk – te laag bij de grond – werd geacht. In plaats daarvan werd van acteurs binnen het genre van de *tragédie* verwacht dat zij de natuur zouden veredelen, liever dan die te imiteren. Tegelijkertijd werd echter grote nadruk gelegd op de eigenschap die bekend stond als *vérité*, waarmee een naturalistische uitbeelding van de menselijke hartstochten werd bedoeld. Hoe zouden deze twee denkbare beelden samengebracht kunnen worden in de acteerstijl van hedendaagse operazangers en hoe zou het publiek daarop reageren?



Curriculum vitae

Jed Alan Wentz was born on July 1st 1960 in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.. After finishing High School at Hickory, Pennsylvania, he entered Oberlin Conservatory of Music in 1977 where he got his Bachelor of Music in 1981 with modern and historical flutes as his major. He has followed courses on music, European history, religion and French literature. His postgraduate education was a specialisation in performance on 18th century flutes at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague, where Barthold Kuijken as his teacher.

Jed Wentz has been a teacher himself since 1988 at the Conservatory of Hilversum, Conservatoire National de Région de Caen, the Royal Academy of Music in London. Since 1994 he teaches courses related to early music at the Conservatory of Amsterdam. Besides this, guest teaching, master classes and lectures have been given by him at a.o. the Hochschule für Künste Bremen, The Curtis Institute, University of North Texas Denton, Oberlin Conservatory of Music, University of California at Los Angeles and Royal College of Music, London.

He was a member of Musica Antiqua Köln and he was the founder of, performer with and conductor of Musica ad Rhenum. He has also performed with a number of other ensembles like De Nederlandse Bachvereniging, Les Musiciens du Louvre, and the Barockorchester Stuttgart.

As a conductor he was involved in performances and productions of Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *Entführung aus dem Serail*, Handel's *Arianna in Creta*, Purcell's *Masque from Timon of Athens* and *Dido and Aeneas*, and Rameau's *Hyppolyte et Aricie*.

Jed Wentz has attended and organised many conferences, especially on the theme of music, timing and gesture, at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, Edinburgh University and St. Hugh's College at Oxford. In 2009 he organised a conference 'The Dutchman and the Honeybees: an international Baroque Dance Symposium' at the Conservatory of Amsterdam and in 2010 the conference 'Gesture on the French Stage, 1675-1800' at the Utrecht Early Music Festival.

Publications of Jed Wentz appeared in *Early Music* magazine and in *Journal for Eighteenth Century Studies*. He is preparing an article 'Eyes, Feet, Ears and Hearts: Baroque Dance in Experimental Times' for inclusion in *The Dutchman and the Honeybees*.

Two CD recordings (Alla rustica and Locatelli's op. 2) were awarded the International Cini Prize, Venice. The recording J.S. Bach: *Complete Chamber Music for Flute* received a Diapason d'Or. His paper, read at the 2008 conference of the Society for Seventeenth Century Music, entitled 'Roxana's Dance: The Persuasive Footwork of Defoe's *The Fortunate Mistress*' was awarded the Irene Alm Memorial Prize.

