

REMARKS AND REFLECTIONS ON FRENCH RECITATIVE: AN INQUIRY
INTO PERFORMANCE PRACTICE BASED ON THE OBSERVATIONS
OF BÉNIGNE DE BACILLY, JEAN-LÉONOR DE GRIMAREST,
AND JEAN-BAPTISTE DUBOS

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This study concerns the declaimed performance of recitative in early French opera. Because the dramatic use of the voice was crucial to the opéra genre, this investigation begins with a survey of historical definitions of déclamation. Once the topic has been described, the thesis proceeds to thoroughly study three treatises dealing with sung recitation: Bacilly's Remarques curieuses, Grimarest's Traité de recitatif, and Dubos' Reflexions critiques. Principles from these sources are then applied to representative scenes from the literature. The paper closes with a commentary on the relationship between spoken and sung delivery and on the development of different declamatory styles.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
COPYRIGHT NOTICE.	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
LIST OF FIGURES	vi
LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES.	vii
 Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. <u>BÉNIGNE DE BACILLY AND THE REMARQUES</u> <u>CURIEUSES SUR L'ART DE BIEN CHANTER.</u>	18
The Source	
Musical Example and Application	
III. <u>JEAN-LÉONOR LE GALLOIS DE GRIMAREST AND</u> <u>THE TRAITE DU RECITATIF.</u>	65
The Source	
Musical Example and Application	
IV. <u>ABBÉ JEAN-BAPTISTE DUBOS AND THE CRITICAL</u> <u>REFLECTIONS ON POETRY, PAINTING AND MUSIC.</u>	100
The Source	
Musical Example and Application	
V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.	139
BIBLIOGRAPHY.	170

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. The Hall and Opening Scene of <u>Ballet comique de la reine</u> with Henri III Seated in the Foreground	33
2. Diagram of the Vocal Tract, Noting the Areas wherein Oral Resonance is Most Strongly Felt	46
3-A. Lully's <u>Alceste</u> Performed at Versailles	54
3-B. The Vigarani Theater at Versailles	54
3-C. The <u>Académie Royale de Musique</u>	55
4. Analysis of the Poem for <u>Jephté</u> , Act V, scene i	91

LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES

Example	Page
1. Jean-Baptiste Lully, <u>Armide</u> , Act II, scene v, "Enfin, il est en ma puissance."	50
2-A. Jean-Baptiste Lully, <u>Amadis</u> , Act II, scene iv, "Bois épais, redouble ton ombre."	72
2-B. Jean-Baptiste Lully, <u>Roland</u> , Act IV, scene ii, "Ah! j'attendray long temps."	73
3. Jean-Baptiste Lully, <u>Armide</u> , Act II, scene v, "Venez, venez."	73
4. Jean-Baptiste Lully, <u>Atys</u> , Act I, scene vii, "Et vous me laisserez mourir."	81
5. Michel Pinolet de Montéclair, <u>Jephté</u> , Act V, scene i, "Seigneur, un tendre Père."	88
6-A. "Enfin, il est en ma puissance" in speech notation	121
6-B. "Enfin, il est en ma puissance" in microtonal notation	121
7. "Enfin, il est en ma puissance" in actual declaimed rhythm	123
8. Jean-Philippe Rameau, <u>Castor et Pollux</u> , Act II, scene iv, "Ma voix, puissant maître du monde."	130
9. Jean-Baptiste Lully, <u>Atys</u> , Act V, scene iii, Upper staff: Bérard's version written out. Middle staff: Bérard's version with ornamental symbols. Lower staff: Original version.	164

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It is tempting, from the vantage point of the twentieth century, to see the life-style at the court of Louis XIV (1638-1715; reigned 1643-1715) as a succession of precious delights. Charm and delicacy were very highly valued qualities indeed in the conversation, the art, the amateur music-making, and, above all, the highly elaborate system of etiquette of the court.

In 1659 the great comedian, Molière (1622-1673), wrote what is perhaps his most stinging lampoon of such refined, but often empty mores, Les Precieuses Ridicules (The Silly, Affected Women, 1659). His two protagonists, the cousins Magdelon and Cathos, were so enslaved to their book-learned manners that they were easily deceived by their would-be suitors and by the men's servants. The playwright overtly took aim at social ambition, but he also more subtly attacked false values. Without inward nobility, emulation of the habits of nobles was a vain, self-deluding display.

By similarly stressing the artificial appearance of "preciousness," Louis and his court masked an underlying aggressive tendency. Even within the rather closed circle of the court, intrigues and unrest were all too common, particularly evident in the unsuccessful Fronde uprising (1648-1653). The bloody

battles frequently fought by France during the Sun King's long reign were, to a great extent, simply exhibitions of French glory and power.

During the 1660's and 1670's a handful of French artists tried to explore new means of expressing the State's military and cultural supremacy, as well as a greater variety of feelings than the preciousness and quiet, love-sick languishing so common to much seventeenth-century poetry and song. Jean-Baptiste Racine (1639-1699) experimented with both writing and acting techniques in order to replace the stiff, grand style of Baroque tragedy with a new expressiveness. Analogous reforms in music were attempted by Pierre de Nyert (1597-1682) and his students Bénigne de Bacilly (1625-1690) and Michel Lambert (1613-1696), who sought lyric poetry of particularly high merit for their airs de cour. More importantly, these composers simplified the vocal line, removing inexpressive agréments that conflicted with the poetic structure and meaning. Lambert's son-in-law, Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632-1687), and Philippe Quinault (ca. 1635-1688) collaborated on the creation of French opera.¹ Tragédie lyrique, as it came to be called, was a modern realization of many ancient classical references to a hybrid art form involving music, poetry, dance, spectacle, plastic arts, and drama.

1. Like Claudio Monteverdi's Orfeo (1607) in Italy, Lully's Cadmus et Hermione (1673) may or may not be the first truly French opera; however, it was--again, much like Orfeo--the first French opera to attain a measure of lasting success, both in terms of repeated performance and of the continued creation of other similar works in the genre.

Amatory adventure, once the sole subject of French song, was now contrasted with moral obligation or duty. Rather than the somewhat pastel emotional palette of most airs de cour, Lully's characters expressed the entire range of passions.

Because of the changes being brought to French art works, corresponding modifications had to be made in actual performance methods in order to communicate a newly widened range of thoughts and feelings. Racine's actors were no longer bound to convey only the poetic cadences--that is, the rising caesurae and falling rhymes of the Alexandrines²--but they were freer to deliver the lines expressively, following the poetic structure, as well as the content. Certainly Racinian declamation was not more natural and speechlike than that of earlier performers; it was, however, more passionate and expressive than the previous norm. Vocalists, too, tried to explore new ways of singing, using a pronunciation which was not only accurate, but also dramatically expressive and free from notated musical rhythms. Those singers who were trained by Lully achieved so great a facility with this technique that they were usually called "actors."

Indeed, singers' vocal interpretations of French poetry and drama paralleled to a remarkable degree tragic actors'

2. Georges Lote, "La Déclamation du vers français à la fin du XVIIe siècle," Revue de phonétique II (1912), 313; and Dominique Muller, "Aspects de la déclamation dans le récitatif de Jean-Baptiste Lully," Basler Studien zur Interpretation der alten Musik (Winterthur, 1980), 238-9.

delivery. Extant evidence demonstrates that even the pedagogical methods for developing the craft of declamation were strikingly similar for both actors and opera singers. Because the issue of eloquence was so crucial to the tragédie lyrique genre and to serious drama,³ critics and theoreticians dealt with the concept frequently and at unprecedented length.

Predictably, the French concern with logical description manifested itself in a number of definitions of declamation. These are especially valuable for twentieth-century readers for whom the term is vague, particularly in connection with singing. The problem is demonstrated by the modern dictionary entry below:

dec.la.ma.tion (dek'lə mā'shən), n. 1. the act or art of declaiming. 2. speech or writing for oratorical effect. 3. Music. the proper enunciation of the words, as in recitative. . . .⁴

None of these three definitions clearly refer to acting techniques. Certainly "proper pronunciation" for singers, which should best elucidate the term in the context of opera, is inadequate to describe the process of sung poetic interpretation. Another modern dictionary avoids the term entirely, but offers the following for the related verb form, declaim:

3. It should be stressed that tragedy, whether operatic or dramatic, did not necessarily connote an unhappy ending for the seventeenth-century French. Rather, in keeping with the deeply entrenched concept of separation of genres, the tragédies soberly dealt with serious issues, particularly that of morality.

4. The Random House College Dictionary, rev. ed. (New York: Random House, 1968), 345.

de.claim (dī-klām), v. To speak loudly and with rhetorical effect. . . .⁵

As limited and insufficient as the initial description may be, the second is even more inadequate. Neither volume nor oratorical result was an essential issue in French tragédies.

Lengthier and more specific, eighteenth-century French sources are much more germane and greatly clarify the way in which earlier authorities viewed declamation. In his Dictionnaire de musique (Paris, 1703), Sébastien de Brossard did not directly define this problematic term, but instead cross-referenced the reader to "RECITATIVO, LARGO, ORATORIO, &c."⁶ With regard to French opera and acting, the oratorio definition is the least relevant, merely being a general description of the musical genre, noting the derivation of the texts (usually biblical) and its other external characteristics. On the other hand, Brossard treated recitative quite thoroughly:

RECITATIVO. or abbreviated, Rec^o, or Re^o, or Rec or RO. means, RECITATIF. . . . It is a way of singing which follows Declamation as much as Song, as if one declaimed while singing, or [as] if one sang while declaiming, consequently one pays more attention in it to expressing the Passion than to following exactly a regulated beat. That doesn't prevent one from notating these sorts of Songs in metered music, but as one has the freedom to alter the beats of this measure, and to make some of them longer or shorter than the others, which is ordinarily done when one scores the Basso Continuo of Recitatif below, so that the

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5. Peter Davies, ed., The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (New York: Dell, 1970), 187.
 6. In this and all subsequent citations, the "&" sign is used only when found in the original sources; however, the symbol will not be employed in my translations.

Accompanist can better follow the one who sings, than the one who beats time. . . .⁷

Clearly, the stress Brossard gave to rhythmic freedom in the performance of recitative as a major element in its definition was significant. In defining Largo, the Dictionnaire similarly emphasized this rhythmic liberty:

LARGO. means, VERY-SLOWLY, as in stretching the beat and marking the often unequal large metric units, etc., That which occurs above all in the Recitativo of the Italians, in which one often does not make the beats quite equal, because it is a kind of declamation wherein the Actor, must more closely follow the movement of the passion which excites him or that he wants to⁸ express, than that of an equal and regulated beat.

Once again, recitative was cited as music which closely

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7. "RECITATIVO. ou en abrégé, Rec^o, ou Re^o, ou Rec ou RO. veut dire, RECITATIF C'est un maniere de chanter qui tient autant de la Declamation que du Chant, comme si on declamoit en chantant, ou si l'on chantoit en declamant, par consequent où l'on a plus d'attention à exprimer la Pas-sion qu'à suivre exactement une mesure réglée. Cela n'em-pêche pas qu'on ne note ces sortes de Chants en mesure réglée, mais comme on a la liberté d'alterer les temps de cette mesure, & d'en faire quelques-uns plus longs ou plus courts que les autres, cela fait ordinairement qu'on met en partition la Basse-Continue de Recitatif au-dessous, afin que l'Accompagnateur puisse suivre plutôt celui qui chante que celui qui bat la mesure. . . ." (Sébastien de Brossard, Dictionnaire de musique [Paris, 1703], § R). In this and all subsequent citations, the spelling and punctuation have not been modernized. Likewise, my translations follow the original punctuation and capitalization.
8. "LARGO. veut dire, FORT-LENTEMENT, comme en élargissant la mesure & marquant de grands temps souvent inégaux, &c., Ce qui arrive sur tout dans le Recitativo des Italiens, dans lequel souvent on ne fait pas les temps bien égaux, parce que c'est une espece de declamation où l'Acteur, doit suivre plutôt le mouvement de la passion qui l'agite ou qu'il veut exprimer, que celui d'une mesure égale & réglée." (Ibid., § L).

resembled declamation. Free performance of the notated rhythm rendered greater textual expressiveness.

Offering a linguist's view of declamation, Jean Le Gallois de Grimarest (1659-1713) limited the term to a very specific meaning:

. . . in declaiming one must avoid singing; . . . Declamation and Song have their measures, which are dangerous to mix, when one wishes to execute one or the other correctly. . . . Declamation . . . is the bombastic recitation, that one makes of an oratorical discourse.⁹

According to Dominique Muller's reading of Grimarest, discours oratoire included tragic discourse; one might also admit operatic récits because of their resemblance to the recitations in drama. Whatever "measure" declamation may have had was limited to the syllabic structure of the recited text and was by no means songlike or regular. However, by using ampoulé Grimarest suggested that declamation, like song, was artificially inflated when compared with ordinary speech.

The Mercure galant of November 1713 made explicit and expanded on Grimarest's implicit parallel between declamation and operatic recitative: "would one not guess the words of his [Lully's] recitatives in hearing just his songs? and are

9. ". . . en déclamant on doit éviter de chanter; . . . la Déclamation et le Chant ont leurs mesures, qu'il est dangereux de confondre, quand on veut exécuter l'une ou l'autre avec justesse. . . . La Déclamation . . . est le récit ampoulé, que l'on fait d'un discours oratoire." (Muller, *op. cit.*, 236, 232). The quotations were drawn from the 1707 first edition of Grimarest's Traité du recitatif, 85-6, 361.

10. Ibid. (Muller), 232.

they not as true a declamation as his recitative?"¹¹ Embodying the best of French traits, Lully's music expressed each passion aptly. He managed to write speech rhythms even in the regular measures of songs. Earlier in the Mercure article, the author found Italian music to be particularly deficient in just such metrical songs, which varied more with dance rhythms than with poetic sentiments.¹² Certainly one of Lully's most underrated achievements was his writing of airs (chants) with careful attention to syllable length. He succeeded in what Grimarest saw as a "dangerous" mixing, the real danger being the usual failure of composers to reconcile the seemingly incompatible rhythmic structures of music and poetry.

While most authorities dealt with the rhythmic properties of declamation, the aesthetician, Jean-Baptiste Dubos (1670-1742), defined declamation largely by its melodic properties. For him the ancient Roman practice of notating declamation rendered it not only more uniform, but more forceful. Racine used a modern equivalent of such a system in his dramatic coaching. In the following, Dubos' remarks about written-out delivery seem to apply equally to both the ancients and Racine:

Those composers of declamation artificially raised, depressed, and varied the recitation. The

11. "ne devineroit-on pas les paroles de ses recits à en entendre seulement les chants? & n'est-ce pas une véritable declamation que son recitatif?" (M. de L. T., "Dissertation sur la musique italienne et française," Mercure galant [November 1713], 39).

12. Ibid., 14-5.

actors were obliged sometimes to pronounce a passage according to the notes, lower than the sense seemed to require; but [for] this, that the higher tone, to which he was obliged to mount at the . . . subsequent verse should make a greater impression.¹³

Despite the emphasis Dubos placed on melodic aspects, his concept of declamation was as an artful heightening of speech inflections, or as others had said of declamatory rhythm, an élargissant or an ampoulant of conversational intervals. Dubos was apparently the first French writer of consequence to really recognize the importance of working with larger units than the poetic foot or line in impassioned delivery, particularly in the broadly scaled soliloquies of Racine. Even his declamatory preeminence was surpassed, though, by operatic recitative with its greater melodic range and with its combined use of both musical and poetic parameters in structuring scenes.

Later in the eighteenth century, one of the most important and most extensive explanations of declamation appeared, authored by Jean-François Marmontel (1723-1799). Adequate coverage in the Encyclopédie on the topic required twelve pages, including the subsequent entries for "DÉCLAMATION, (Belles-Lettres),"¹⁴ "DÉCLAMATION (Musiq.)," and "DÉCLAMATION DES

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13. Jean-Baptiste Dubos, Critical Reflections on Poetry, Painting, and Music, 5th ed., 3 vols., tr. Thomas Nugent (London: John Nourse, 1748), III, 108-9.
 14. Marmontel actually gave two entries for this designation, the main entry itself and one of the three follow-up definitions. In the first he dealt with the "functional" declamation of actors, and then with the rhetorically "decorative" art taught by the ancients, the art of making convincing argument on any subject.

ANCIENS, (Littérature)," which were separated from the main entry only for the sake of clarity. Because of its inordinate length, Marmontel's definition of actors' declamation cannot be given here in its entirety, but the following suffices to demonstrate his interpretation of the word: "DECLAMATION . . . is the art of rendering discourse. Each movement of the soul, said Cicero, has its natural expression in the features of the face, in gesture, and in the voice."¹⁵ To use the expression--in particular, vocal expression--which appropriately reflected the passion in the dramatic text was the essence of Marmontel's definition. Because the quotation from Cicero was so brief, it is unclear whether the "movement of the soul" actually meant the desired emotional response from the auditor; the function of declamation, at any rate, was to move the listener.

Singers' declamation, according to the definition in the Encyclopédie, was most clearly evident in recitative. Marmontel's discussion reaffirmed many of his predecessors' notions:

DECLAMATION, (Music) is the name one gives to theatrical song which Musicians have improperly called recitative. See RECITATIVE. This kind of declamation is not and must not be anything other than the expression in song of the sentiment which the words express. See EXPRESSION.

15. "DECLAMATION . . . c'est l'art de rendre le discours. Chaque mouvement de l'ame, dit Ciceron, a son expression naturelle dans les traits du visage, dans le geste, & dans la voix." (Jean-François Marmontel, "DECLAMATION, f.f. [Belles lettres]," Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers par une société de gens de lettres, 35 vols., ed. Denis Diderot and Jean Le Rond d'Alembert [Paris: Briasson, 1751-80], IV, 680).

Old men attached to the fine verses of Quinault, which they learned in their youth with the song of Lulli, reproach modern operas where there is too little verse for declamation. Young people who have savored the brilliance, the variety, the fire of new Music, are bored with too great a quantity of declamation in the old operas. Persons of taste who know how to evaluate things, who are not carried away by any prejudice, and who desire the progress of art, wish that one would carefully preserve the lovely declamation in our operas and that it [declamation] be united to the ingenious divertissemens, to the musical scenes, to the light songs, etc. and finally they think that declamation must be the base and like the main walls of the edifice, and that all the other parts must concur in order to form the embellishments.

The success of the scenes of declamation depends nearly always on the poet: one does not know any well-made scene of this kind which would have been miscarried by a composer, however mediocre he may have been besides. The song of those [scenes] of Medea and Jason has [literally] been made by the abbe Pelegrin [librettist], who was nothing less than a sublime musician.

The effort of genius has been at first to find the song proper to the language and to the genre: it is the same for this invention as in nearly all others [efforts of genius]; the first rays of light that the inventor has emitted have sufficed in order to throw light on those who have come after him: Lulli has made the discovery; this will be proven in the article RECITATIVE. (B).¹⁶

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16. "DECLAMATION, (Musiq.) c'est le nom qu'on donne au chant de scene que les Musiciens ont appellé improprement recitatif. Voyez RECITATIF. Cette espece de déclamation n'est & ne doit être autre chose que l'expression en chant du sentiment qu'expriment les paroles. Voyez EXPRESSION.

"Les vieillards attachés aux beaux vers de Quinault, qu'ils ont appris dans leur jeunesse avec le chant de Lulli, reprochent aux opéra modernes qu'il y a trop peu de vers de déclamation. Les jeunes gens qui ont savouré le brillant, la variété, le feu de la nouvelle Musique, sont ennuyés de la trop grande quantité de déclamation des opéra anciens. Les gens de goût qui savent évaluer les choses, qu'aucun préjugé n'entraîne, & qui desirant le progrès de l'art, veulent que l'on conserve avec soin la belle déclamation dans nos opéra, & qu'elle y soit unie à des divertissemens

While Lully's recitative was the model for all subsequent French composers, his success was largely dependent upon the great poetry of Philippe Quinault's livrettes. Excellence in recitative resulted more from the poetry itself and the singer's delivery than from the quality of the musical setting. In performing récits--particularly poorly composed ones--singers had to let the text guide them more than the music. Even more than others before him, Marmontel saw sung declamation and recitative to be so closely related that they might often be confused.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) offered the briefest of definitions for declamation in his Dictionnaire de musique (1768): "DECLAMATION, In music, is the art of rendering a grammatical and oratorical accent, by the inflexions [sic] and

ingénieux, à des tableaux de musique, à des chants legers, &c. & enfin ils pensent que la déclamation doit être la base & comme les gros murs de l'édifice, & que toutes les autres parties doivent concourir pour en former les embellissemens.

"Le succès des scenes de déclamation dépend presque toujours du poète: on ne connoît point de scene bien faite dans ce genre qui ait été manquée par un musicien, quelque médiocre qu'il ait été d'ailleurs. Le chant de celles de Medée & Jason a été fait par l'abbé Pelegrin, qui n'étoit rien moins que musicien sublime.

"L'effort du génie a été d'abord de trouver le chant propre à la langue & au genre: il en est de cette invention comme de presque toutes les autres; les premiers rayons de lumiere que l'inventeur a répandus ont suffi pour éclairer ceux qui sont venus après lui: Lully a fait la découverte; ce qui sera prouvé a l'article RËCITATIF. (B)." (Ibid., 691).

number of the melody. (Vide ACCENT, RECITATIVE)."¹⁷ If by "inflexions" Rousseau meant pitch stresses and by "number" he meant rhythmic stresses, then he combined the traditional quantitative/metered view of recitative as declamation with Dubos' view of declamation as a kind of melody. Singers were to render the poetic structure and meaning. In Rousseau's recitative entry, he pointed out that declamatory recitative was both speechlike and more than speechlike.¹⁸ In approaching declaimed speech, recitative had to be nonmetrical and to that extent had to approach ordinary conversation rather than song.

Every definition given above mentioned the close connection between declamation and operatic recitative; it is significant that many nonmusical authorities on rhetoric and declamation chose to deal with musical declamation, or recitative, once Lully firmly established his declamatory style. As if he were an actor, the Lullian singer was to deliver heightened speech. Musical rhythms then were seen as an approximation of the syllabic quantities in the poetry. Less regular than song, and yet more inflected than speech, recitative was a passionate middle ground between the two in which poetic expression was paramount.

This highly dramatic recitative was, of course, the primary expressive medium in tragédie lyrique. As the text-oriented

17. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, A Complete Dictionary of Music . . . , tr. William Waring (London: J. Murray, 1779), 115.

18. Ibid., 333-4.

definitions would indicate, French opera was largely a literary genre. Aesthetically, one may see récitatif as the rational component of opera due to this word-emphasis. An art form so well-grounded in reason certainly appealed to the French men of letters who came to the tragédies lyriques with libretto in hand and who saw the same opera over and over.

French opera, following the model of ancient Greek drama, brought together a variety of artistic traditions and art forms into a unified, cogent medium, much as opera did. In France, mid-seventeenth-century performances of Italian operas created an expectation for a related French genre. Italian machine plays brought an eagerness for spectacle, whereas French plays offered passionate poetry and dramatic characterization, also hallmarks of French opera. Additionally, court dancing found its way into ballets, often featuring the graceful Sun King in a key role. Tragédie lyrique satisfied demands for all these forms of expression in a synthesis characterized by balance.

After Lully, this tenuous balance shifted slightly away from text-centeredness to a mixture particularly rich in dance and spectacle. A new lyric genre resulted: opéra-ballet. The changes were partially brought about by the lack of a great lyric tragedian like Quinault and partly by composers less interested in Lully's forceful recitative style, which many saw as being more dramatic than musical. A final shift in French Classical opera was achieved by Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764), whose spectacular musical invention expanded aria forms.

enriched orchestrations, and in general resulted in weightier music than ever had been a part of French opera.

Throughout the era of French Classicism, performance of operatic recitative was extremely important in the success of the works. Accordingly, many French sources discussed operatic declamation, as has been shown above, often insightfully dealing with the specific problem faced by singing actors. A few authors actually cited scenes of recitative for musical illustration. These scenes were famous enough that readers were expected to recognize them from the opening words of their first lines. Modern scholars truly have an embarrassment of riches for studying declamatory practices in this period.

Oddly enough, little has been done to critically evaluate many of the most significant primary sources. For example, until quite recently scholars have dealt with the issue either by summarily generalizing about it in broad-scoped studies or by covering many valuable sources on declamation in too hasty and incomplete a fashion. The excellent studies of Georges Lote, Dominique Muller, Gudrun Rhyning, Lois Rosow, and Mary Cyr focus on individual aspects of many sources.¹⁹ It still remains to

19. Lote, *op. cit.*, and "Voltaire et la déclamation théâtrale," *Mercure de France* CLIII (1922), 669-685; Muller, *op. cit.*; Gudrun Rhyning, "L'Art du chant français au XVIIe siècle selon Bénigne de Bacilly," *Revue musicale de Suisse romande* XXXV/1 (1982), 10-25 and "Quelques remarques sur l'art vocal français de la seconde moitié du 17e [sic] siècle," *Schweizerische Musikzeitung* CXXII/1 (1982), 1-7; Lois Rosow's and Mary Cyr's are ongoing studies of French Baroque expression and declamation, particularly with reference to the music of Lully and Rameau.

more thoroughly examine many authorities and their particular declamatory points of view. The complexity of the issue and the overwhelming number of primary documents are certainly important factors in the unsatisfactory, incomplete current state of research on the topic.

The one treatise which is exclusively concerned with sung declamation, Bacilly's Remarques curieuses sur l'art de bien chanter (1668), has received only one full-length study.²⁰ Unfortunately, from the perspective of recitative, Austin Caswell chose to concentrate on Bacilly's discussion of ornamentation. Two important eighteenth-century works which deal extensively with recitative, Grimarest's Traité de recitatif (1707) and Dubos' Critical Reflexions (1719), have never been thoroughly studied for their declamatory concepts.

The present study is aimed at filling this conspicuous lacuna in musicological research. In each chapter, a primary source will be discussed. The order of works cited will be chronological: first Bacilly's, then Grimarest's, and finally Dubos'. All three works were greatly influential long after the initial dates of their publication, and were frequently reprinted. In order to make more meaningful each writer's commentary, his remarks will be applied to one of three musical examples, recitative scenes from operas representative of the

20. Austin B. Caswell, "The Development of Seventeenth-Century French Vocal Ornamentation and its Influence upon Late Baroque Ornamentation-Practice . . .," 3 vols. (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1964).

three stages of French Classical operatic history: one by Lully, another by Michel Pinolet de Montéclair (1667-1737), and last, one by Rameau. The final chapter of this present study will conclude with a comparison of the three views of recitative. To the extent that the authors agree, one may trace a stable element in French declamation; the points of difference reveal an evolution in attitude toward sung delivery. Because theatrical discourse and récits were so closely related in style, these musically stable or unstable aspects duplicate similar characteristics of tragic actors' recitation.

CHAPTER II

BÉNIGNE DE BACILLY AND THE REMARQUES CURIEUSES SUR L'ART DE BIEN CHANTER

The Source

Published in 1668, the Curious Remarks on the Art of Singing Well and Particularly with Regard to French Vocal Music¹ was one of the most significant treatises on singing to appear before 1750. Like Giulio Caccini's (ca. 1546-1618) introduction to Le nuove musiche (1602), Bacilly's Remarques was an authoritative source for performers of monody, but as the French title indicates, only of French monody. Certainly, the Remarques applied in particular to the singing of airs de cour, but generally the principles espoused therein were equally valid for all French Baroque vocal genres. As the noted early music specialist Nigel Rogers has put it, Bacilly's work "is the Bible for singers of French Baroque music;"² Putnam

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1. Bénigne de Bacilly, Remarques curieuses sur l'art de bien chanter et particulièrement pour ce qui regarde le chant françois (Paris: Ballard, 1668). Caswell's translation of the title, A Commentary upon the Art of Proper Singing (op. cit., I, i), is not entirely satisfactory. Bacilly's careful wording hinted at the loose structure of his observations, as well as at their novelty.
 2. Lecture delivered at the Lute Society of America Summer Workshop at Oakland University, Rochester, Michigan, August 30, 1982.

Aldrich has called the Remarques "the breviary of French singers."³

A highly successful singer, vocal pedagogue, and composer, Bacilly was a court musician of surprisingly vehement opinions, which he forcefully and idiosyncratically recorded in his "method." His way of approaching singing, also espoused by his teacher, Pierre de Nyert, and his colleague, Michel Lambert, and discussed in the Remarques curieuses, led to wider appreciation of a new style of court air. Additionally, Bacilly offered a novel means of evaluating professional singers. Songs which these chanteurs and their more earnest amateur counterparts usually sang were appropriately called airs sérieux; because the texts of the airs nearly always dealt with unrequited love, the poets' sedate expressions were to be mirrored in the text-guided music and in the thoughtful, painstaking performance.

As a nobleman, de Nyert was prevented from singing for a living,⁴ but his beautiful voice and expressive artistry were quite well known and in great demand for court ballets.⁵ A trip to Rome in 1633 with the Maréchal de Crequi de Blanchefort

3. Putnam C. Aldrich, "The Principal Agréments of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1942), xlix.

4. Caswell, op. cit., II, 19.

5. Caswell, "Nyert (Niert, Niel), Pierre de," The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 6th ed., 20 vols., ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), XIII, 455.

(d. 1638) provided the talented French singer with his stimulating first exposure to Italian monodic style in opera and to the Italian technique of singing. Returning to France in 1635, de Nyert experimented with a monodic approach to singing French music. Beginning in the 1640's, many vocal compositions in France began to reflect de Nyert's innovations, and the rhythmic patterns in airs became more varied and speechlike. Although de Nyert himself was not a composer, his influence on composition and performance was remarkable.

Probably the greatest composer of the de Nyert "school" of singing was Michel Lambert. Although as a favored musician at court Lambert was frequently and extravagantly lauded, very little factual information about his life has survived. According to E. J. Bertrand, Lambert learned all of de Nyert's teaching concepts very quickly, but there seems to be no evidence specifying the exact duration of Lambert's period of study.⁶ Equally adept at composing, teaching, and singing, Lambert's threefold contribution to French music led to his epithet, le père du beau chant français.⁷ Following the peculiar fashion of mid-seventeenth-century composers, Lambert's best, or at least most sought-after, airs were either not

6. E. J. Bertrand, "Michel Lambert: vie d'un musicien au XVIIe siècle, Revue et gazette musicale XXVI/2 (1859), 35.

7. Ibid., 10.

published at all or were published anonymously.⁸ Nonetheless, Richer printed a volume of Les airs de Monsieur Lambert, Maître de la musique de la chambre du Roy (1668) just as Bacilly's Remarques curieuses was released. A book of his unpublished airs was bound together in 1710 as Airs de Michel Lambert non imprimez, 75 simples, 50 doubles and manuscript copies were sold by the bookseller Foucault. In addition, at least three of Lully's ballets contain airs, dialogues, or récits by Lambert, and the two musicians' collaboration also included teaching the Académie singers their new roles in Lully's tragédies lyriques.⁹ Both gentlemen had highly developed literary tastes, and both set lyric poetry by Quinault. Lambert's music also graced the poetry of Isaac de Benserade (1613-1691), Charles de Beys (1610-1659), Frédéric-Maurice de La Tour [Duc] de Bouillon (1605-1652), Paul Hay de Chastelet (b. ca. 1620), Charles Vion de Dalibray (d. 1655), Gabriel Gilbert (1610-1680), Jean-Ogier de Gombaut (ca. 1570-1666), Michel Le Clerc (1622-1691), Jacqueline Pascal (1625-1661), Paul Pellisson (1624-1693), Pierre Perrin (ca. 1620-1675), Jean-François Sarazin

8. Caswell, "The Development," I, 27-9. According to Bacilly, published airs were hardly known in Parisian circles. Always striving for the novel and unknown, students and teachers alike tried to seek out new song manuscripts or to notate from memory premiere performances. Certainly modern scholars are faced with a tremendous problem in attributing the anonymous, fine airs to significant composers.

9. André Verchaly, "Lambert, Michel," tr. Ilse Haase, Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 16 vols., ed. Friedrich Blume (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1949-79), VIII, 127.

(1605-1654), Jean Regnauld de Segrais (1624-1701), the Comtesse Henriette de Coligny de La Suze (1618-1673), and others.¹⁰

Lambert's singing was so popular that it was necessary to engage him in order to ensure a party's success. Amateur courtiers and aspiring professionals alike so enjoyed his teaching that the social milieu at his country home in Puteaux rivaled court life at Versailles. Built for him by Lully, the house almost functioned like a second Royal Academy of Music.¹¹

Unlike Lambert, the court musician Bénigne de Bacilly was not a great singer. He sang well enough to be considered a professional, but his real talents were composing, writing poetry, and teaching singing. Even without the Remarques curieuses, Bacilly's written output was substantial: three anthologies of lyric poetry, three sacred collections of airs, twelve books of secular songs, one group of sacred and secular songs, and so on.¹² While the sheer number of songs was certainly impressive, Bacilly's achievement was also significant in its scope; he found appropriate music to express poetry suitable for court, for private devotion, for dance-songs, and for the tavern.

10. Ibid., 127-8. Note that the list contains near-equal numbers of professional poets and amateur courtiers.

11. Benjamin de La Borde, Essai sur la musique ancienne et moderne, 4 vols. (Paris: Pierres, 1780), 441. Given that French society in the grand siècle was so highly centralized, the presence of a rival "court" at a commoner's dwelling was significant. Puteaux is about ten miles north of Versailles and is situated downstream from Paris on the Seine.

12. "Bacilly, Bénigne de," La Grande Encyclopédie, 31 vols. (Paris: H. Lamirault, 1886), IV, 1089.

Before becoming attached to the Parisian Court sometime around 1655, Bacilly sang and composed for the governor of Picardie, Charles de Lorraine, duc d'Elbeuf (1596-1657).¹³ Bacilly dedicated his Remarques curieuses to his former patron's daughter, Marie Marguerite, who may have been a voice pupil. By 1681, the justly famous treatise had been issued in four editions, disseminating far and wide the precepts of Bacilly's teaching. Of course, Bacilly espoused the same pedagogical concepts as his teacher, de Nyert, and Lambert did.

While Bacilly's importance as a composer was undisputed, his Remarques curieuses was his most lasting contribution to music-making. As its title suggests, the treatise attempts to explain both the novelty and idiosyncracies of current vocal practice. Bacilly, the self-appointed spokesman for de Nyert's method of singing, put forth his treatise as the manifesto for the new approach to singing. For seventeenth-century readers, the work's most intriguing aspect was its focus on text-expression. The problems confronting present-day users are of another sort. In illustrating his ideas on text delivery, the author referred to excerpts from his own airs de cour as well as those by Lambert. These were indicated only in the form of

13. Caswell, "Bacilly (Basilly, Bassilly), Bénigne de," The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 6th ed., 20 vols., ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), I, 887.

bibliographic citations.¹⁴ Unfortunately, the musical sources were not given with the treatise, so modern reachers, until rather recently, had no way of discerning the subtle practicalities of Bacilly's method. Caswell has inserted the extant examples in his translation of the treatise,¹⁵ thereby giving the scholar valuable additional information. Caswell's work is not only a boon for English-speaking scholars, but for modern French users of Bacilly as well.¹⁶ Once the "breviary"¹⁷ of teaching manuals for seventeenth-century French singers, the Remarques curieuses can now be read as a practical manual rather than as a theoretical tract.

Unlike many méthodes de chanter, Bacilly's was never intended to be used by all singers in any repertoire; its sole purpose was to provide a singing method for singers of French song, as its full title specified:

. . . for those who wish . . . to learn how to pronounce the words with all the necessary refinement (finesse) and power; to properly observe the length of the syllables so as not to confuse long ones with

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14. For example, "The same is true of page 41 of the quarto book on the word 'fois' which is the last syllable of the following verse:
"mais, Philis, quand i'aime une fois." (Caswell, "The Development," I, 153).
15. Bacilly, A Commentary on the Art of Proper Singing, tr. Austin Caswell (Brooklyn: Institute of Mediaeval Music, 1968).
16. Rhyming, "L'Art de chant," 11; and "Quelques Remarques," 2.
17. Henri Prunières, "Un Maître de chant au XVIIe siècle: Bénigne de Bacilly," Revue de musicologie IV (1923), 156.

short ones, following the rules which are established in this treatise.¹⁸

Leaving the difficulties of tonal production to the personal interaction of teacher and pupil, the author's written method was nearly exclusively concerned with matters of poetic delivery.

The rules referred to in the title consisted of a unique set of hierarchical principles which enabled a singer to grasp the sung poetry's rhythmical structure. While hardly controversial to modern man in general or to French humanistic aestheticians in particular, such organizing precepts were indeed quite objectionable to many singing masters of the 1660's. Actually, one century before, Jean-Antoine de Baïf (1532-1589) formulated what he thought to be the first such rules for the musique mesurée which was performed for the small circle of his Académie. Baïf's rules, however, had been preceded by those of Michel de Boteauville in 1497 (fl. 1490-1500).¹⁹ Whereas these earlier principles of syllable quantity were at times quite arbitrary, pedantic, and rigid, Bacilly's system was, conversely, both practical and flexible. To this end the system he devised was highly complex in its detail.

As soon as Bacilly made known his intention for writing the book, he encountered many who opposed his proposed rules for syllable length. Anticipating an unsympathetic response upon

18. Caswell, "The Development," I, unnumbered page preceding foreword.

19. Gustave Reese, Music in the Renaissance, rev. ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1959), 382.

publication, the author began his work by listing each possible objection along with its rebuttal; the avant-propos therefore served as a defense of the rules.²⁰ Some deriders felt that the rules were so obvious that they hardly needed to be written down. Others saw any codification as a constraint to the teacher and to the singer. Still another view assigned the understanding of syllable length to the inexplicable je ne sais quoi realm of good taste, and finally, there were those who questioned the necessity of rules which they characterized as "imaginary,"²¹ arbitrary, or artificial.

As a poet, Bacilly fully realized that poesie, aside from the iambic hexameter in Alexandrines, was rhythmic, but not regularly metric. Insensitive to the subtle rhythmic character of French poetry, many musicians, composers, and singers alike, made errors in this regard. Bacilly found proof of this lack of awareness in numerous second strophes, or doubles, of airs de cour, which he considered to be improperly set. These awkward musical settings could, by using Bacilly's rules, be corrected by flexible interpretation. All too often, seventeenth-century composers, singers, and teachers were totally unaware of these fundamental problems. Throughout his treatise, Bacilly provided countless examples to address this

20. Caswell, "The Development," I, iv-x.

21. Ibid., I, v.

difficulty. Under these circumstances, Bacilly's rules indeed were indispensable to a sensitive rendering of the text.

Bacilly organized his text into three major sections: general observations, pronunciation for singers, and syllable length.²² At least two-thirds of the work was devoted to textual delivery, quantitative proof that the work's focus as established in its title was its main concern once completed. It must be stressed that the author's pronunciation advice and syllable-length rules applied only to sung French and in no way reflected everyday seventeenth-century speech. Like the elevated spoken usage of tragic actors, singers' pronunciation was quite similar to, but not identical to, the formal language used at court.

To begin his text proper, Bacilly elaborated once more on his central concern, text expression. A variety of techniques and styles which had formerly prevailed were to be replaced--at least in France--by Bacilly's "only one proper and bona fide method of singing."²³ The author specifically asserted that the newness of his approach was its text-centeredness. When text-centered artistry became the singer's focus, purely technical concerns assumed less importance.

By recording his rules for pronunciation and syllable length, Bacilly wanted to make available the aspects of singing which could be "book-learned." Aside from learning how to read

22. Ibid., I, 1.

23. Ibid., I, 12-3.

musical notation and how to interpret poetry according to the rules, singing could only be properly learned first-hand from a qualified teacher. Bacilly's rules were simple, in general, but his list of exceptions was quite long. With a routine of repetition, a singer could easily absorb his principles.²⁴

Once the singer understood musical notation and poetic interpretation, he and his maître could concentrate on technical matters and musical interpretation. Under the best of circumstances, a singing master also had to be a composer: by demonstrating his interpretive ideas to the pupil, the composer could be assured that the student would follow his intentions faithfully.²⁵

Even after a student learned all of Bacilly's rules, his taste would not be refined enough to resolve some of the subtler problems in word expression. Therefore, in selecting prospective teachers, Bacilly's readers were advised to seek educators with a polished, keen awareness of the issues and rules about declamation. Once able to "penetrate into the thought of the poet"²⁶ by applying the rules and consequently able to declaim and to sing well, a singing master was truly qualified. After he had had some experience with declamatory principles, the teacher would notice any errors his students might make in enunciation and would attempt to correct the mistakes, perhaps

24. Ibid., I, 23-4, 32.

25. Ibid., I, 61 ff.

26. Ibid.

by imitating the pupils' incorrect delivery.²⁷ Thorough knowledge and understanding of the French language were not merely desirable traits in a teacher; they were prerequisites.

If one who was considering a particular teacher heard others complain of that maitre's singing with facial "grimaces," Bacilly's advice was to ignore the criticism, provided that grimacing was the teacher's only fault. Probably the problematic grimaces were only the result of careful pronunciation.²⁸ Many of Bacilly's contemporaries felt that rounded and flared lips, necessary to forming the French vowels o and ou and mixed vowels such as eu and u,²⁹ were a facial disfigurement. Some could not even bring themselves to open their mouths to say an a. Of course, the consequent pronunciation was usually mumbled and unclear. While clearly pronounced vowel sounds were of obvious value in day-to-day speaking, adjustments of the mouth beyond the conversational norm, while seemingly affected, were even more necessary for declamatory speech and singing.

According to Bacilly, training of singers varied greatly from one teacher to another. Most students' errors were to be attributed to deficient or inconsistent training. Either young singers had not been corrected, or the educator had passed on his own bad habits. Of many possible vocal faults, Bacilly's list was topped by incorrect pronunciation and insufficient

27. Ibid., I, 66.

28. Ibid., I, 73.

29. Of o (sometimes ɔ) and u, œ (sometimes ø) and y in the International Phonetic Alphabet, hereafter designated as IPA.

attention to syllable length.³⁰ While all voice problems were present in inadequately-trained students, the worst of the lot were declamatory deficiencies.

For Bacilly, proper teaching of singing should include awareness of a voice's "type." In other words, a perceptive teacher would recognize the characteristic sound of a particular kind of voice and know its strengths and weaknesses. A student's repertoire should emphasize his particular talent and play down his limitations. Though certainly any individual weaknesses should be corrected, Bacilly advocated teaching only those airs which capitalized on the pupil's best traits.³¹ Because all vocal categories had some general deficiencies, Bacilly did not single out any one type as being the best. Perhaps he felt that an ideal singer was the one who, through vocal refinement and artistry, overcame all his inborn vocal or interpretive weaknesses and adapted himself to the demands of each work.

Some of Bacilly's most intriguing observations were his evaluations of voice categories. Unfortunately for scholars, his types did not follow a systematic scheme: his way of labeling voices was practical and descriptive, but not rigorously analytical.³² Based on vocal tone quality, variety of coloration, range designations (that is, soprano, alto, and so on),

30. Caswell, "The Development," I, 66. 31. Ibid., I, 33 ff.

32. Henry Pleasants, in his The Great Singers (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1966), was even more vague in his use of

flexibility, and sex, Bacilly's sorting of voices was perhaps diffuse and a bit vague, but really quite apt from the point of view of an experienced voice teacher.

His description of "'touching' or expressive"³³ singers is particularly relevant for the present study. Considering themselves "artists," these singers were found by listeners to be careless in pronunciation.³⁴ Given Bacilly's primary concern that a performance be expressive, his view on this matter seems contradictory. Evidently, the fault was not in the singers' being "moving," but in their overindulgence in emotive devices to the detriment of true expression. Their emotional communication was turned inward rather than outward. Often, these "expressive" singers, while singing with great feeling, failed to project either the words or their voices.³⁵ When ballets which contained airs de cour were performed, the inadequate carrying power of such voices left the words clearly audible only to those at the front of the audience. The figure

labels. His glossary did not even define soprano, alto, tenor, or bass, and while coloratura and lirico spinto were explained, leggiero, dramatico, and other important descriptive terms were omitted. Pleasants freely evaluated singers on the basis of their musical creativity, dramatic personaggio, bel canto line and virtuosity, and vocal color. On the other hand, Richard Miller's English, French, German and Italian Techniques of Singing (Metuchen, N. J.: Scarecrow Press, 1977) is without a doubt the most thorough and systematic analysis of vocal Fachs or types and national tonal preferences to date.

33. Caswell, "The Development," I, 36.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid., I, 49.

pictured on the following page indicates the size of seventeenth-century performance halls for these ballets. Figure 1 depicts the grande salle in the Petit-Bourbon palace, in which many ballets were staged, including Ballet comique de la reine, the one shown. Even though the following illustration slightly predates the seventeenth century, it indicates a setting suitable for a royal spectacle, such as the ballets Bacilly mentioned. Large spaces such as that illustrated necessitated well-focused voices and clearly enunciated words for successful performances. Declamatory expression always aimed at manipulating the listener's emotions.

Another vocal category of concern in this study, oddly enough, is that of women singers. Repeatedly Bacilly condemned their pronunciation deficiencies. For example:

[Women] seem to have a positive revulsion against pronouncing words properly (the letter R in particular), because of a preoccupation they have about the harshness caused by firm pronunciation.³⁶

Bacilly was only dissatisfied here with women's pronunciation problems. However, he continued with a more general complaint, avowing that one of the most senseless of errors, particularly among singing teachers, was to "approve" of anything in women.³⁷ While his intent here was humorous, his other criticisms of female singing were pointedly serious.

36. Ibid., I, 39-40.

37. Ibid., I, 40.



Figure 1. The hall and opening scene of Ballet comique de la reine (1582), with Henri III seated in the foreground.

After offering pedagogical remedies for the ills of feminine e pronunciations,³⁸ the author predicted that few female singers would follow his sage advice:

. . . all women are firmly opposed to any pronunciations which would seem to change the normal formation of the mouth in speaking, viewing any and all changes as ugly grimaces. Thus, they will doubtless ignore this entire chapter with its excellent advice and adamantly remain incurable.³⁹

Once again, vanity or laziness accounted for improperly articulated diction. Even though women may have been more guilty of refusing to "grimace" than men, singers of both sexes often erred in making insufficient effort in pronouncing.

When singing the o vowel, women were again judged negligent. Exaggerated pronunciation of this vowel would have resulted in mannered singing, but women's usual delivery was careless and unclear in sound:

However, it is almost impossible to convince people of the truth of this statement--especially singers of the feminine sex. They feel that it is impossible to interpret a song delicately enough and they will not allow themselves to pronounce a vowel in any way other than flaccidly, taking no consideration of the possibility that some sounds could require more power and some more sweetness.⁴⁰

Singing without the animation and variety which result from accurate, expressively forceful pronunciation, these women were inadequate performers. The o sound gave the most trouble to

38. By feminine e, Bacilly meant e muet in words such as cologne and rose. In poetry these e sounds made a rhyme feminine, because the final rhyming sound was an unaccented neutral e.

39. Caswell, "The Development," I, 267.

40. Ibid., I, 273.

"this group of powdered dillettantes [sic] who confuse the weak with the delicate . . . the o . . . is a completely gut-teral vowel."⁴¹ By improperly placing the o vowel too far forward in the mouth, many women robbed the vowel of its characteristic strength and color.⁴²

As a last defective vowel pronunciation in women, Bacilly mentioned the French eu, a mixed vowel or diphthong. Without enough lip rounding, an e sound resulted.⁴³ These lazy women "wish with all their hearts that the total number of vowels and diphthongs could be reduced down to two--i.e., e and i."⁴⁴ Similarly resisting all their teachers' entreaties to open their mouths to say an a vowel, they could "hardly bear" the sound itself and would "revolt against" attempts to correct this improperly emasculated vowel.⁴⁵ Yet again the perpetrators of bad diction feared facial contortions, even one as simple as "bringing the lips close together" into a flared shape.⁴⁶ Without a rounded eu vowel, words like meurs, rigueur, pleurer, and feu had neither strength of sound nor expressive power.

Despite his numerous complaints of women's slack text-delivery, Bacilly admitted that some women could indeed be praised for their true expression. Present in most female voices was a "husky" quality which some tried to cultivate.⁴⁷

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid., I, 281.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid., I, 40.

This quality was supposedly caused by women's "'bilious' temperament," which had the potential to promote fiery, emotional, and textually-expressive song interpretation. This last skill enabled capable women to sing with soulful feeling, and because of the intelligence of their performances, Bacilly said that they "sang from the head."⁴⁸ Not only was the singing of skillful women correctly and "firmly" pronounced, but their singing was also rich in the expression of word meanings. Naturally gifted by their temperament, these singers had a capacity for construing a text's signification and communicating that by the sound of their voice. Apparently, Bacilly's interpretation of a "bilious" temperament was not as a tendency toward anger, but rather toward emotional volatility; hence, the consequent ability to simulate many emotions. Other commentators on delivery in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries concurred that the best declaimers were usually women: la Champmeslé and Lecouvreur, for example.

Certainly then, the problems many women had in pronunciation were not faults common to the whole sex. Bacilly could not possibly have meant for his complaints to be interpreted in that way; after all, the treatise was dedicated to a woman, Marie Marguerite Ignace de Lorraine d'Elbeuf. The worst offenders were the "powdered dillettantes" (sic) who studied with fashionable teachers and wanted to sing the most popular airs,

48. Ibid.

but who never bothered to practice or even to make an effort to improve during their lessons.⁴⁹

Another vocal type which was characterized by excellent pronunciation was the "brilliant" singer.⁵⁰ Bright in timbre, these songsters had very clear enunciation. As professional singers, they were quite likely to enjoy success, particularly in fast-moving music. Occasionally, brilliant singers were less effective than others at expressing emotion and at sustaining tender, slow melodies.

"Light" voices, on the other hand, often could not "accentuate" sufficiently.⁵¹ While they were easy to teach and flexible in agréments and diminutions, lighter voices lacked the needed force of projection for expressing stresses or dramatically vivid coloration. Wise teachers realized that these students could never excel in works with any dramatic weight, whereas in a repertoire of brunêtes, vaux-de-villes, and other dance-songs, they were quite capable.

For any student who wished to cultivate the skill of declamation, regardless of voice type, Bacilly recommended a daily regimen of vocal exercise. Vocalizing in the early morning, one would begin by practicing accented notes and then by singing fast-moving passages; he would finish by working to lighten

49. Ibid., I, 19, 36, 72-3, 75-7. Throughout the work, Bacilly railed against diletterantism (sic). Problems inherent in such uncommitted study were often in the nature of the teaching, as well as in that of the learning.

50. Ibid., I, 44.

51. Ibid., I, 49.

the voice through messa di voce.⁵² It is significant that the firm attacks were the first part of this process, although certainly stress-accents are not the usual method of bringing out important syllables in French. While syllable length and vowel color were the tools for vivid pronunciation, Bacilly also realized that clean, solid initiation of tone promoted firm pronunciation and good vocal tone.⁵³ Although he provided no exercise for breath control, Bacilly stressed its importance, even for declamation. With insufficient support, singers often had to break up the melodic and poetic lines for catch-breaths.⁵⁴ If a singer had poor breath control, he probably should have added some breath exercises to the morning vocal exercise, but Bacilly left such matters to the individual teacher's discretion.

Once a singer had vocalized, he could practice airs or other repertoire. Analysis of the poetry was a tool a singer might use to subtly interpret the works he prepared. One of these expressive devices involved the treatment of certain monosyllables such as non, oui, ha!, Ah!, and va.⁵⁵ Their meanings as interjections required that they be set apart from

52. Ibid., I, 49-50. Note the striking resemblance between Bacilly's warming-up routine and the procedure of "unfolding the voice" which Dubos related was usual among ancient Roman orators and actors. See Dubos, op. cit., III, 198.

53. Perhaps a firm vocal attack was related to the famous premiere coup d'archet in Lully's orchestral strings.

54. Caswell, "The Development," I, 50.

55. Ibid., I, 123.

the remainder of the poetic line. Particularly when the composer had set these words to long notes, the singer should make the note shorter than the written rhythmic value and let an unwritten rest fill the remainder of the note's duration. Even when a rest preceded one of these monosyllables, the practice of shortening the note was advisable. Although such an interpretation was a subtlety, Bacilly felt that its effects on the music should be obvious.

Another rhythmic interpretation of lyric poetry illustrated words dealing with speed, time, or motion. As long as the overall sense of the poetic line did not negate the meaning of words such as lentement, vite, courir, or even moment, composers usually set them so as to rhythmically exaggerate their meaning.⁵⁶ While Bacilly's comments in this regard were limited to a compositional practice, it is likely that in serious pieces such as operatic récitatif, the singer slightly stretched or subtly compressed the length of the word itself or of the entire line containing the word in order to achieve the proper effect. Such an approach was entirely in keeping with the stylized character of grand siècle declamation.

To a large extent, the variety in French Classical music was due to agréments. When well-executed, ornaments were a source of delight and diverting entertainment. Moreover, when used in moderation and with appropriate intent, French ornaments

56. Ibid., I, 124.

were also brilliant expressive devices. As such, Bacilly felt that "the beautiful and pleasant pronunciation of the words, and the observance of their length"⁵⁷ should be added to the singer's agréments, along with ports-de-voix, tremblements, cadences, and so forth. While Bacilly's description of ornaments is quite thorough and worthy of study in its own right, his commentary on the use of these melodic elaborations as an aid to achieve the forceful and expressive declamation of the text has the greatest significance. The reader is directed to chapters IV and V of Caswell's dissertation for a thorough discussion of this "ornamental" aspect of Bacilly's text.⁵⁸

Any time an ornament was used in vocal music, according to Bacilly, it was an indication of the length or importance of the word to which it was applied. In Lullian or Ramiste recitative, no agréments should be added, but the few ornaments already notated by the composer were evidence of his interpretation of the poetry. Ornaments might emphasize a poem's meaning, enhance the poetic mood, point out a word's meaning or mood, or

57. Ibid., I, 137. Similarly, Montéclair felt that careful pronunciation functioned like an expressive ornament in singing. In closing his discussion of agréments in the Principes de musique, Montéclair states, "The proper pronunciation of words, gives the utmost perfection to French song . . ." ["La bonne prononciation des paroles, donne la dernière perfection au chant François . . ." (Montéclair, Principes de musique, divisez en quatre parties [Paris, 1736], 90)].

58. See also Caswell, "Remarques curieuses sur l'art de bien chanter," Journal of the American Musicological Society XX (1967), 116-20.

indicate the syllabic structure of the word or of the poetic line.⁵⁹

When singing agréments or trying to accentuate the poetry, singers often so exaggerated the loudness of some notes they created an unnatural hoquet or "hiccup" disturbance of the melodic shape.⁶⁰ Often these chanteurs were trying to emulate the expressive style of instrumentalists, who seemed "to speak through their fingers."⁶¹ The proper articulation of the words was a sufficient vocal accent when singing. Bacilly recommended a simple, arch-shaped dynamic line with any variations in intensity gradually executed. In this way, the melodious quality of French declamation was maintained; alterations of the basic phrase shape had to be subtle and appropriate to the poetic expression. Always the overriding rule was good taste and avoidance of exaggerated or "false" expression, both of which Bacilly found to be anathema to true declamation.

Bacilly suggested lengthening or "suspending" the sound of consonants, a technique often effective as a declamatory agrément. Any non-plosive consonant⁶² could be sounded for whatever length of time a speaker or singer had the breath to support it. In French, this practice was called gronder and was a favored declamatory device throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Though the expressive power of consonant

59. Caswell, "The Development," II, 69.

60. Ibid., I, 194.

61. Ibid., I, 193.

62. F, H, J, L, M, N, R, S, V, W, Z.

suspension could be abused by excessive use, the gronder was quite useful, particularly on the sound m at the beginning of a word.⁶³ Many words such as mourir, severe, and vengeance, supported this agrément quite well. Usually the initial consonant of a word was the most appropriate location for this ornament. The sense of the word and the line should always be enhanced by this embellishment. It must be stressed that the gronder was inherently forceful: the word means "to growl, to mutter, to snarl, to roar."⁶⁴ By delaying the sound of the vowel which followed the "growling," the effect emphasized the vowel itself, despite its actually being shortened. The usual force of the effect could also be lessened "for tender expressions"⁶⁵ with greatly enhanced results. Whether an agrément was declamatory or melodic, it indicated both syllable length and poetic significance.⁶⁶

Often Bacilly's pronunciation commentary seems unclear to modern readers, since he provided no phonetic alphabet and the French language has changed considerably from his day to the present. Conversational French then certainly differed from modern usage, but the French of the court and that of the stage were even further removed from present-day norms. Caswell

63. Caswell, "The Development," I, 201.

64. Cassell's French-English English-French Dictionary (New York: Macmillan, 1962), part I, 390.

65. Caswell, "The Development," I, 201.

66. Ibid., I, 209.

recommends a general source on Classical French by Dubois and Lagane⁶⁷ for elucidation of seventeenth-century practice. Some matters in this source are not clear or are completely ignored, particularly the pronunciation of the r, which might have been pronounced with a flip of the front of the tongue or a friction between the back of the tongue and the uvula. Nevertheless, the source is the most complete and authoritative work in the field.

Modern singers are best advised, however, to view some of these "authentic" pronunciations of vowels and liaisons as alternatives to the usual declaimed delivery of twentieth-century French. In some cases, an "authentic" alternative is probably contrary to Bacilly's overriding intent, which was text expression, i.e., for the performer to literally "deliver" an intelligible and comprehensible text to the listener. For example, many of the added consonant sounds, which made specific meanings clearer to Bacilly's audience, would render words incomprehensible to all but the most scholarly of today's audiences. It is interesting to note that "Cajun" French conforms in many respects to Bacilly's indications, particularly the oi, or oy which he transliterates as ou-ai or wE in IPA. In general, when Bacilly's pronunciation indications obscure rather than clarify the text, they probably should be avoided.

A distinction must be drawn, even in twentieth-century usage, between ordinary speech and declamatory speech. Common

67. J. Dubois and R. Lagane, Dictionnaire de la langue française classique (Paris: Librairie classique Eugène Belin, 1960).

conversation, now as then, involves no real "effort"⁶⁸ and aims solely at comprehensibility. Theatrical or oratorical speech, on the other hand, requires "giving weight or gravity to the words which one recites."⁶⁹ The identifiable characteristics of declamation are the force of its delivery and "the principal letters of the alphabet [those which can be manipulated for rhetorical effect] which give weight to the words which are sung and the manner of pronouncing them for this effect."⁷⁰ To pronounce each syllable so that it could be clearly understood was, according to Bacilly, a minimal effort on the part of the performer and was never to be an end in itself.

According to Bacilly's method, the liaison should be used liberally, particularly the additional s or z sound made by linking a word ending in a normally silent s to a word beginning with a vowel. Because text meanings were sometimes clarified in this manner, the new s sound "must be distinctly pronounced so as not to make the lines sound weak and feeble."⁷¹ Without the clarity of "meanings and inferences" in declamatory delivery, lazy pronunciation weakened the poetry.⁷²

On some vowels, Bacilly recommended opening the mouth gradually. The French a vowel and its nasal an could be gradually opened on long notes. Whether this effect was used in conjunction with a gradual dynamic increase is not clear. This

68. Caswell, "The Development," I, 248.

69. Ibid.

70. Ibid., I, 249.

71. Ibid., I, 253.

72. Ibid., I, 254.

coloristic effect on vowels resulted in "tone quality [that] gradually becomes more agreeable to the listener's ear."⁷³ The general mouth opening on an a vowel should be governed by the sense of the word. The comparative sweetness or vigor of the word dictated the opening of the jaws or lips.⁷⁴ Lengthening and widening the opening might both be used for this expressive effect: for example, each could be used on the monosyllables ah and ha, one a sorrowful interjection, the other a joyful or triumphant exclamation. The wide opening was like a smile and should be used for communicating joy.⁷⁵ while a narrow, long mouth opening made a darker, more somber sound.

The effect of the i vowel was delicate and refined.⁷⁴ In order to avoid a nasal tone on this sound, the singer should concentrate "on using the throat."⁷⁷ An o vowel was similarly produced in the throat, though in a different way from the i; it was most effective when "as far back in the throat as the singer wishes."⁷⁸ Pronounced "entirely in the throat,"⁷⁹ the o was wholly guttural and full of "natural power."⁸⁰ o was obviously one of the "principal" letters of the alphabet which might be expressively emphasized to bring out word meanings. To achieve "throatier" o and i vowels, the singer should feel that the sound resonated further back in the mouth. Figure 2

73. Ibid., I, 258.

74. Ibid., I, 259.

75. Ibid.

76. Ibid., I, 268-9.

77. Ibid., I, 269.

78. Ibid.

79. Ibid., I, 273.

80. Ibid.

illustrates this concept with its depiction of the areas of resonance in the mouth. An arrow shows where the "buzzing" sensation must move. In addition, the singer should use more pharyngeal space for these "roomier," less-forward vowel sounds, as marked in Figure 2 with the lower arrow.

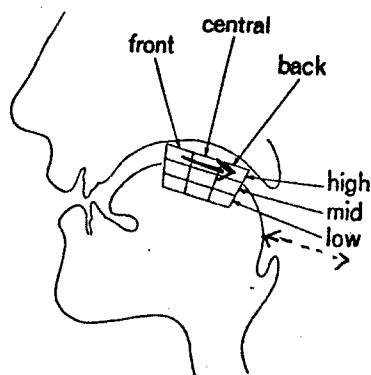


Figure 2. Diagram of the vocal tract, noting the areas where oral resonance is most strongly sensed.

Bacilly concluded his work with a substantial discussion of syllable length. He offered a number of rules and a host of exceptions. Some of these rules would seem to contradict one another, but Bacilly offered a complicated scheme of rule-precedence to resolve the problem. He put forth at least six designations of syllable length: doubly long or very long, long, not-so-long, "semi-long" or somewhat long, "semi-short" or somewhat short, and short. Actually, he admitted that there are infinite shadings of word-length. His technical criteria for determining long syllables included the following: any

monosyllable might be long;⁸¹ usually the final syllable of a masculine, end-stressed word was long;⁸² penultimate syllables in feminine words were normally long;⁸³ no two adjacent syllables should ever be equal in length, especially two otherwise short syllables; and finally, French poetry tended to follow a principle of "symmetry" in balanced, two-syllable groups with long-short or short-long alternations. Pages 127-134 of volume 2 of Caswell's dissertation have provided a valuable summary of Bacilly's rules. Because the rules do not lend themselves well to summarization, however, a full-length study of the author's system is sorely needed and remains to be undertaken.

As espoused by Bacilly in Remarques curieuses, declamation involved forceful, vigorous, effortful word-expression. Repeatedly using words like "power," "strength," and "force," the author continually emphasized the energetic delivery needed for true expression. When word sounds were to be given active traits, a singer had to use his imagination to heighten the sense of the words and his awareness of the beauty of the vowels and consonants themselves. Rather than trying to make the vowels even and consistent in timbre, as in Italianate technique, French delivery should be highly colored, allowing each vowel to have a unique and expressive timbre.

81. Ibid., I, 333 ff.

82. Ibid., I, 400 ff.

83. Ibid., I, 386 ff.

Musical Example and Application

Doubtless, this lively, varied declamation was quite similar to the text expression taught by Lully and Lambert to the Académie singers. Scenes in the tragédies lyriques, with their highly charged emotions, were ideal pieces in which to practice Bacilly's method. One of the most vivid scenes penned by Lully and Quinault was Armide's famous monologue (1686): "Enfin, il est en ma puissance." Having magically induced Renaud's slumber so that she can slay him, Armide suddenly feels great tenderness and longing for her spiritual enemy. Rapidly fluctuating between hate, love, vengeance, and tenderness, Armide was indeed a role requiring virtuosic acting. The translation for the scene follows:

ARMIDE, RENAUD asleep.

ARMIDE, a dart in her hand:

At last, he's in my power,
This fatal foe, this proud victor.
Sleep's charm delivers him to my revenge.
I'll pierce his heart, invincible.
'Twas he who freed my captive slaves,
Now may he feel my rage . . .

Armide goes to strike Renaud, and cannot pursue her design of taking his life.

What motion seizes me and makes me stay?
What is't that Pidy'd say to me for him:
Come, strike! Ye gods, what holds me back?
Now to it . . . I tremble! Revenge . . . I sigh!
It is thus that today I'm avenged?
My anger dissolves whene'er I approach.
The more I behold him, the vainer my rage.
My trembling arm refuses me my hate.
Ah! what cruelty 'twould be to take his life!
To this young Hero everything gives way.
Who'd think that he was born for War alone?

He seems made but for Love.
 Is't only by his death I'd be avenged?
 Ah! would Love's punishments not be enough?
 Since in mine eyes he found not charms enough.
 Then by my spells at least I'll make him dote,
 That I may hate him, if I can.⁸⁴

Lully's setting of the scene is given on the following pages. Harmonically, the scene is fairly static, never leaving the key of e minor. In the music, the focus is the vocal line, its speechlike rhythms and melodic inflections. A long instrumental postlude, not quoted below, leads to the air, "Venez, venez."

Preparatory to learning this scene, Bacilly's method would require that the singer be of the right "type" for the music. Armide obviously could only be portrayed successfully by a female soprano. As would befit the character, Lully's heroine must have a wide vocal range--up to a secure high B^b. While a singer with a "light" voice probably could not project the dramatic "accents," a "heavy"-sounding singer most likely could not execute the agréments. Clearly, a truly "expressive" singer with real dramatic gifts is required. Additionally, the Armide would have to project the character's feelings through her voice, filling the space of the auditorium with expressive

84. English translation by John Underwood in the January 1983 programme book for performances by Ensemble de la chapelle royale, Philippe Herreweghe conducting.

Example 1. Jean-Baptiste Lully, *Armide*, Act II, scene v, "Enfin, il est en ma puissance."

Armide

En - fin, il est en ma puis-san-ce Ce fa-tal En-ne -

Continuo

6 6
4

5

- my ce su-per-be Vain - queur Le char-me du som-meil - le livre à ma ven -

6 6 5 \flat

- gean-ce; Je vais per-cer son in - vin-ci - ble coeur, Par

6 6 \sharp 6

10

luy tous mesca-p-tifs sont sor-tis d'es-cla - va - ge, Qu'il é-prou-ve tou-te ma

\sharp 6 6 \sharp

ra - ge Quel trou - ble me sai - sit? qui me fait he - si -

6# 6

15

- ter? Qu'est-ce qu'en sa fa - veur la pi - tié me veut di - re? Frap - pons...

20

Ciel! qui peut m'ar - res - ter? A - che - vons... je fré -

6

mis! van - geons - nous... je sou - pi - re! Est - ce in - si que je

25

doy me ven - ger au - jour - d'huy? Ma co - le - re s'é - tient quand j'ap - pro - che de

5 6# # 6 4

30

luy. Plus je le voy plus ma vengeance est vai - ne; Mon bras trem-

6 # 6 6# # 6

t

- blant se re-fuse à ma hai - ne. Ah! quel - le cru-au-

6

35

- té de luy ra - vir le jour! A ce jeu-ne He-ros tout ce - de sur la

6 6# 6 6 6

t

Ter - re. Qui croi - roit qu'il fut né seu-le-ment pour la guer-re? Il

6 6 6 b

40 *t*

sem - ble estre fait pour l'a - mour. Ne puis - je me van -

5b

45

- ger à moins qu'il ne pe - ris - se? Hé! ne suf - fit - il pas que l'a - mour le pu -

6. 6

- nis - se? Puis - qu'il n'a pû trou - ver mes yeux as - sez char - mants, Qu'il m'aime au

6

50

moins par mes en - chan - te - ments, Que, s'il le peut, je le ha -

4

- is se.

sound. This space, of course, varied even in the seventeenth century. At Versailles, tragédies lyriques were usually presented out-of-doors in a courtyard, as is illustrated in Figure 3-A. Showing a performance of Alceste, the engraving gives a good visual impression of a performance at the palace. Spectacles at Versailles were also staged at the theatre there

designed by Vigarani, shown in Figure 3-B. As shown here, the Versailles theatre is similar in size, though enclosed. Public performances in Paris of Armide would have been at the Académie,

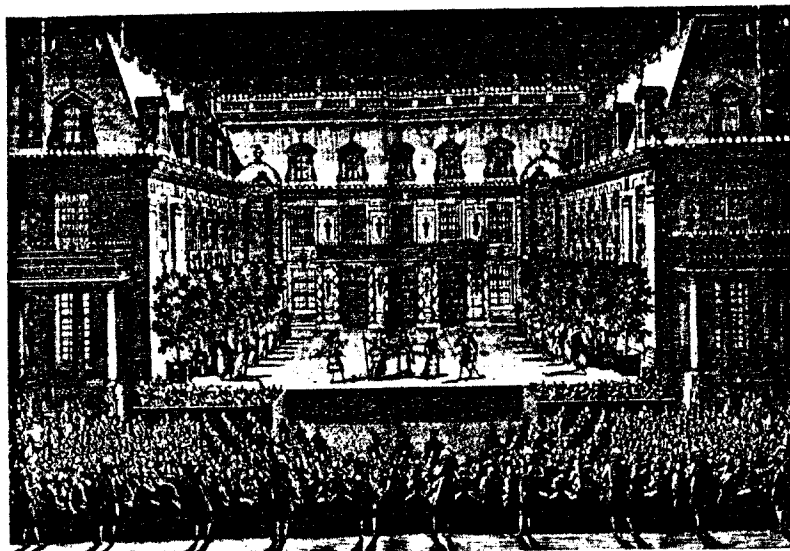


Figure 3-A. Lully's Alceste as performed at Versailles.

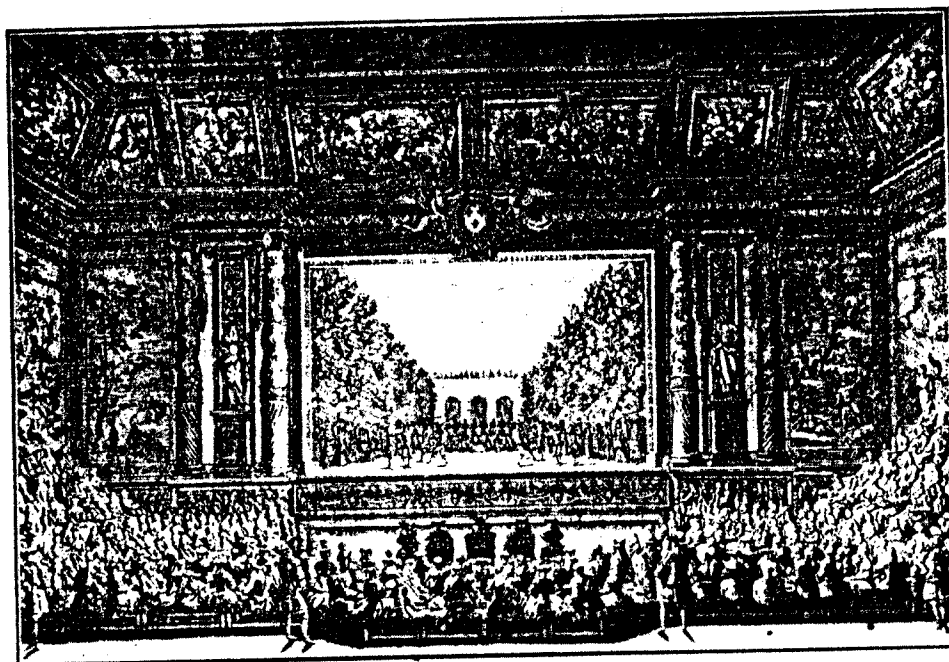


Figure 3-B. The Vigarani theatre at Versailles.



Figure 3-C. Armide at the Academie Royale de Musique.

shown in Figure 3-C. Such auditoriums as those shown necessitated the use of voices with penetrating timbre and excellent diction. In modern theaters, this necessity for projected, well-articulated singing is even greater. Not only must an Armide fill an opera house with sound, but she must be able to vary the timbre of her voice while projecting, particularly in a scene with such vivid, dramatic contrasts.

In both Bacilly's and Lully's teaching methods, the singer began learning a new piece of music by analyzing the text. In his recommended procedure for the study of lyric poetry, Bacilly only mentioned such aspects as the analysis of syllabification and the search for monosyllabic exclamations and interjections. Nonetheless, with his repeated emphasis on bringing out text meanings, the singer would probably be wise to begin working on a scene such as "Enfin, il est en ma puissance" by interpreting the poem. On a superficial level, this interpretation is quite simple: as written by the librettist, Quinault, Armide is a very outward, passionate character. At any given moment, she is either imperious, fearful, furious, or loving. In a line like "Achevons . . . je fremis! Vengeons-nous . . . je soupire!," Armide races between four such vividly contrasted momentary passions. Although Armide is never quietly reflective or introspective, she is nevertheless a very complex persona. She is a queen, a powerful sorceress, and a seductress, but also a woman who

has never been rejected nor even pursued by a man. An interpreter must decide for herself, in such lines as "Par lui, tous mes captifs sont sortis d'esclavage,/Qu'il éprouve toute ma rage," whether Armide is angry because her slaves have been freed--a queen's rage, or because the hero has turned aside her advances--a spurned woman's rage. All these matters of dramatic interpretation should be settled early in the learning process because any subsequent declamatory considerations must be guided by the emotions expressed in the text, as well as by the motivations behind those feelings.

Only after the singer has determined the way she wants to interpret the meaning of the scene should she work on specifics of word interpretation or vowel coloration. For instance, Lully's setting of exclamations almost always follows Bacilly's suggestion that they be set apart from the text with notated or interpretively added rests. The first word of Armide's scene, Enfin (measures 1-2), is just such an exclamation in Lully's recitative, even though it is not one of Bacilly's monosyllables. Both quarter notes to which the word is sung are long in context with the five other eighth notes which follow. Dramatically, the separation of Enfin from the rest of the line immediately emphasizes the importance of the moment. The actress singing Armide must take the time to let the word have its full impact. Frappons and Ciel! (measures 17-8) are Armide's next two exclamations. Their meaning is

obvious, and Lully has expressively set them rather high in the vocal range. In the next line, "Achevons . . . je frémis! vengeons-nous . . . je soupire!," Armide does not actually exclaim: her emotional states are so violent, so fleeting, that her speech is broken up into incoherent one- or two-word fragments, separated by short eighth rests. Lully's rhythms here are subtly varied for each of Armide's half-thoughts. Both times the monosyllable je is used, its rhythm is semi-long on a dotted eighth. Later in measure 32, Lully sets the exclamation Ah! on a long half note, expressively tied into the next bar;⁸⁵ the singer must add an unnotated rest at some point in the latter half of the note. With the a-h spelling, the word must be pronounced with a long, narrow mouth opening and a dark tone color. Because she now feels the sting of her former cruauté, the character must seem to suffer an almost self-indulgent tendresse, suggested by Lully's somewhat artificial inverted melodic arch. The final interjection in this scene is He! (measure 44), which Lully sets to a long, high half-note E. Part of the headlong rush of thoughts at the end of the scene, He! is not followed by a rest. It is interesting that Lully uses the short form of the word,

85. One of the conventions of early music performance practice is the rounded shaping and the importance of notes which are tied across barlines, usually creating a suspended dissonance with the bass line. In this instance, a high pitch rather than a suspended dissonance is the composer's expressive means for setting this exclamation.

rather than the complete Helas! Because Armide begins to stop questioning her cruelty to her enemy just after this line of poetry, perhaps the singer should abruptly break off the word He! as if she were suddenly overwhelmed by yet a new passion, hatred. Clearly, by examining the exclamations and fleeting fragments of thought in the poetry, a singer can find many opportunities for expression.

Another intriguing aspect of Lully's setting of this scene is his use of melodic ornaments. These agréments are, of course, indications to slightly lengthen the notes to which the broderies are affixed. Used very sparingly, Lully's diminutions should not interrupt the dramatic pacing of the scene. In measure 3, the word fatal has such an ornament, despite the relatively short note lengths for the two syllables, a sixteenth note followed by an eighth note. Clearly, both a vowels must be long and open, and the eighth note which has the cross-mark above it must be subtly stretched out. By pointing out that Renaud is "fatally" dangerous for Armide even when he is "powerless" in slumber, Quinault and Lully bring out the self-destructive nature of her attraction to her enemy. Not until measure 23 does Lully call for another agrément, this time on soupire. In this last of Armide's four half-thoughts preceding a series of lines in which she struggles between vengefulness and indecision, she yields to a moment of tender lovesick "sighing." The ornament here must be a slow, tenderly executed adornment suited to this brief moment of sighing, perhaps a subtle

repetition of the note "in the throat." And the vowel with the ornament must be fairly dark, but not overtly throaty. In measure 31, Armide's arms tremblingly refuse to strike the hateful blow. Obviously, a tremblement would be the ideal ornament for a trembling "refusal." Two lines later, everything on earth (terre is ornamented) gives way to the hero. Once again, the ornament occurs in one of Armide's weakened states: she is overcome by Renaud's good looks, which seem made for love, not war. Probably a slow, tender trill is best in this instance. The next line, "Qui croirait qu'il fut ne seulement pour la Guerre?" (measures 37-39) involves two agréments. Placed on the two slight melodic changes of direction in this rising, questioning line, the verb croirait is brought out, as well as the noun "War." The rhythms for both words are already rather long, so only a slight lengthening is called for. For the reflective verb croirait, a quiet little coulé or slow trill would be suitable, whereas for the vivid noun, Guerre, a fiery, short trill would be appropriate. "Il semble fait pour l'Amour" in measures 39-41 involves yet another pair of ornaments: on semble and fait. Although both words are verbs, the tender mood of the line suggests subtle agréments. Generally, it might be noted that no broderies are attached to Armide's decisive, stronger statements. When Armide is more intensely emotional, her lines should move forward more urgently than when she is paralyzed with weaker passions.

Bacilly's advice to use firm consonants and sometimes to gronder them certainly applies to this scene. Among Armide's many opportunities to growl on guttural, strong r's are words such as rage (measure 12), tremblant (measure 30-1), refuse (measure 31), cruaute (measure 33-4), ravir (measure 34), and so on. The meaning of each word would be enhanced in this way. By firmly but tenderly stretching out the ch sound in charme (measure 5), charmants (measures 47-8), and enchantelements (measures 49-50), the "magical" sound of Armide's "charms" is emphasized. Nearly every phrase in the scene offers the singer chances to enhance the dramatic effect by the way she says the consonants. Even the plosives b, d, g, k, p, q, and t, when firmly pronounced, can make words like percer (measures 7-8) sound truly piercing or make guerre (measure 39) sound really warlike. All of these onomatopoeic "effects" heighten the sense of the words.

The strong sound of some vowel pronunciations could similarly enhance the text in such words as puissance (measures 2-3), vainqueur (measures 4-5), charme (measure 5), vengeance (measures 6-7), coeur (measure 9), rage (measure 12), trouble (measure 13), Frappons! (measure 17), Achevons (measures 19-20), and many others. Each of these vowels is set to notes of long duration and can enhance the affective impact of the words if the singer makes the effort to round the lips or open the jaw.

To bring out the aspects of motion or stillness in the poetry, a composer or singer could rhythmically emphasize the

temporal quality suggested by the text. Lully sets Frappons! (measure 17) with a "striking" sixteenth note upbeat. Clear pronunciation of the word is probably a sufficient effort to bring out Lully's effective setting of the violently active verb. Later, when Armide asks who can m'arreter (measures 18-9), she literally stops herself on a quite long half note, followed by two rather long rests. With achevons (measures 19-20), Lully's two sixteenth note upbeats suggest the immediate action called for by the verb. Lully is so successful in capturing musically the active or passive traits of these individual words that the singer should not exaggerate in interpreting their meanings. However, as has been suggested above, the general sense of emotional stasis or of actual action contained in phrases, lines, or groups of lines should be enhanced by the performer's manipulation of the dramatic pacing.

Regarding alteration of Lully's rhythm for Bacilly's syllable "rules," the singer should change very little because the composer has set his text so well. There are some groups of successive notes with identical rhythmic values, usually eighth notes. These groups tend to be small, usually of not more than five notes. The notes in metrically strong positions almost always should be lengthened more than those on offbeats or weak beats, but this practice must be judiciously exercised. In groups of sixteenth notes, Lully is preparing for a long note following the shorter ones--in "je vais percer" (measures 7-8) for example--and the sense of motion toward a long note overrides

other considerations. A long chain of similar note lengths occurs at the beginning of the scene: "il est en ma puissance" with its five successive eighth notes. In this example, word meanings should prevail over note lengths. Important words in this case would be the verb est and puissance, meaning "power." Although a monosyllable, the ma pronoun is secondary to a noun like puissance, especially with Lully's melodic accent on the noun: the phrase climbs to a high G on puis-. Later in the scene, the actress might feel that a chantlike reiterative rhythm prepares the listener for Armide's invocation of demons in the aria which follows: "Venez, venez!"⁸⁶

With a scene as vivid as Armide's famous Act II monologue, the possibilities for forceful, inventive declamation are really limitless. As strongly as these lines must be delivered to be truly effective, the singer must take care to avoid overaccenuation so that the melody is never interrupted by what Bacilly referred to as "hiccups." After all, even Racine's actors were accused of "singing" their lines; such a charge would never have been made if they had given their lines with overly heavy accents. And although Bacilly did not discuss how melodic shapes can enhance the declamation, it is clear that Lully's recited melodies raised the rhythmic and inflected qualities of spoken

86. Armide's aria is strikingly similar in many poetic details and in its jerky, disjunct melody to the aria, "Vieni, t'affretta" in Verdi's Macbeth. In both arias, the singer calls on infernal spirits to strengthen her resolve in carrying out her murderous plans.

French to a new, expressive plateau. In such word-oriented music, the singing actor had to take great pains to insure that all his declamatory agréments suited and heightened the actual meaning of Quinault's marvelous poetry.

CHAPTER III

JEAN-LÉONOR LE GALLOIS DE GRIMAREST AND THE TRAITÉ DE RECITATIF¹

The Source

Grimarest's Traité du recitatif, like Bacilly's Remarques curieuses, was dedicated to a patroness and had as its central concern the just and proper declamation of the French language. But whereas Bacilly brought the actor's approach to sung French, making appropriate allowances for the new medium, Grimarest extended his discussion to include various forms of spoken and sung delivery: that of the actor, of the public speaker, of the advocate, of the lecturer, as well as that of the singer.

With regard to the title of his treatise, Grimarest rejected the more restrictive terms recit and recitation in favor of recitatif. As can be seen from the following remarks, even the term déclamation was too narrow for Grimarest's purposes.

But the first being only the Narration of an adventure, or of an action which has [already] occurred; and Recitation being just the manner of reciting of the Orator, detached from gesture, I believed that I must therefore hold to the one of these three terms

1. The 1760 edition of Grimarest, published in the Netherlands, was quite inconsistent in use of accent marks. Usually recitatif, recit, and other related terms were printed therein without acute accents over the e, and the present study will conform to that orthographic convention.

whose meaning is the most appropriate and the most extensive; And to remove all equivocation, I have added some terms in order to let the Public know that I treat the action of the Reader, of the Orator, of him who declaims, and of him who sings.²

Grimarest, who was born in 1659 and died in 1713, shortly after the publication of the Traité (1707), was uniquely qualified to treat so difficult a subject in such a thoroughgoing manner. Well-known as a man of letters,³ he was a maître de langues in Paris and published a substantial body of criticism.⁴ His historical researches included Les Campagnes de Charles XII (1705), but perhaps his chef d'oeuvre in the field of historiography was his Vie de M. de Molière, published in 1706.

It was in fact in response to an unfavorable review of this work that Grimarest wrote the Traité. The critic disagreed with Grimarest's assertions regarding theatrical action

2. "Mais le premier n'étant que la Narration d'une aventure (sic), ou d'une action qui s'est passée; & la Recitation n'étant que la maniere de reciter de l'Orateur, détachée du geste, j'ai cru que je devois m'en tenir à celui de ces trois termes dont la signification est la plus juste & la plus étendue; Et afin d'ôter toute équivoque, j'ai ajouté des termes pour faire entendre au Public que je traitois de l'action du Lecteur, de l'Orateur, de celui qui déclame, & de celui qui chante." (Jean Léonor de Grimarest, Traité du recitatif [The Hague: P. Gosse, 1760], xxxi in Author's Preface).
3. The uniqueness of the title of the work presently being considered is certainly rivaled by that of Grimarest's Commerces de lettres curieuses et savantes (1700).
4. "Grimarest, Jean-Léonor Le Gallois de," La grande Encyclopédie, 31 vols. (Paris: H. Lamirault, 1886, XIX), 429.

as related to rhetoric.⁵ To counter this criticism and to correct the multitude of pronunciation errors which were frequently committed, Grimarest established his rules for the correct declamation of the French language.

In recitatif, the ideal to which Grimarest pointed was "the noble and agreeable usage of the word,"⁶ which always had been the declamatory aim, but in the Traité the "noble" ideal was adapted to current tastes. The author's rules and peculiar--some would say obscure--word usages were meant to impart an expression with "more fire, more concision, more clarity."⁷ While unconventional, these rules permitted expert readers, along with non-experts, to make use of proper declamatory idioms; residents and non-residents alike could all benefit from knowledge of proper declamation.

The Traité du recitatif was written, then, to deal with general rules of accent, number, and punctuation, which were proper to French in all declaimed media. Once past these principles, the specific applications and requirements of delivering correct pronunciation in each form of recitation were enumerated: oratorical usage, courtroom usage, theatrical declamation and, finally, sung declamation.

5. Grimarest, op. cit., xxv.

6. "l'usage noble & agréable de la parole." (Ibid., xxix).

7. "plus de feu, plus de concision, plus de netteté." (Ibid., xxxi).

Opera's popularity was such in early eighteenth-century Paris that Du Chant, Grimarest's commentary concerning singing, was geared as much for the edification of the parterre as for the singers. If the listener/viewer at an opéra was not "moved"⁸ by either the poetry or music, then either the performer, the poet, or the composer had failed in his or her aesthetic aim. On the other hand, the audience, for its part, had to possess a certain discernment, a knowledgeable appreciation of the stylized approach of French Classical expression in order for that expression to make its effect.

Grimarest adhered to the long-held view that music was a language to which rhetorical principles applied. Vocal music, in particular,

. . . is a kind of language that men are agreed upon . . . , to communicate to one another with more pleasure their thoughts, and their sentiments. Thus he who composes this sort of Music, must consider himself as a Translator, who by observing the rules of his art, expresses these same thoughts, and these same sentiments.⁹

Thus, the music of song was seen by Grimarest as being a translation of lyric poetry. Music's regular measure was incongruous with the unmetrical nature of passionate declamation. Therefore at least in theory:

8. "affecté." (Ibid., 119).

9. ". . . est une espece de langue, dont les hommes sont convenus, pour se communiquer avec plus de plaisir leurs pensées, & leurs sentimens. Ainsi celui qui compose de cette sorte de Musique, doit se considérer comme un Traducteur, qui en observant les regles de son art, exprime ces mêmes pensées, & ces mêmes sentimens." (Ibid., 120).

. . . passion could only know how to be expressed by the accents, by the pronunciation, and by the gestures which are proper to it. But it is impossible, by keeping the rules of Music, to give to passion what I just mentioned; Declamation alone could do that.¹⁰

Song and passionate speech were irreconcilable in Grimarest's aesthetic system, since poetry, when conforming to musical rules, lost its force and its effect. Passion cannot be measured; music must be.

How then was the musician to solve this problem? Apparently only in performance could music bend to the flexible shape of poetry. Accents should vary with the passions expressed; in music this was theoretically impossible. Musical "figures"¹¹ or gestures had to be notated in rather unvarying meters, while rhetorical "figures" changed with each new thought or emotion. The liveliness and nuance of musical gesture and those of passionate gesture were incompatible.¹² An inherent conflict between music and language, which was quite pronounced in French vocal music, could be resolved to a great extent by the artistry and freedom of the performer. Grimarest felt that

10. " . . . la passion ne sauroit 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." (Ibid., 121).

11. Grimarest's use of the term "figure" obviously follows rhetorical usage. Its meaning in musical terms is vague and unfortunately unexplained by the author.

12. Grimarest, op. cit., 121.

a pleasing voice and an actor's "craft" went far toward correcting the lack of declamatory passion and freedom in music.¹³ Deviation from the notated rhythm was essential for effective delivery in song.

Three basic requirements were to be made of the actor who sang: "craft, knowledge and taste."¹⁴ Thus the singer

. . . must have not only the same knowledge [of the effects of the melodic tones on the words, the composer's knowledge] in order to perform well; but also the required intelligence for solving the problems that the Composer, constrained by the rules of Music, will not be able to avoid.¹⁵

Accordingly, the knowledge required of a singer was not solely musical, but also linguistic. With an awareness of the inadequacy of musical notation to indicate declamatory rhythm and other subtleties, the performer, guided by knowledge of the rules, but above all by taste, used his art to sing with passion.

Certainly, the most perfect genre for this type of musical expression was recitative with its changing meters. For Grimarest, the factors producing this agreeable phenomenon were simultaneously the "fastening" of the words to the intervals in the melody and the inextricable linking of the music to the

13. "artifice." (Ibid.).

14. "d'art, de science, & de discernement." (Ibid., 122).

15. ". . . doit avoir non seulement les mêmes connoissances pour bien executer; mais encore l'intelligence nécessaire pour sauver les défauts que le Compositeur, contraint par les regles de la Musique, n'aura pu éviter." (Ibid.).

words.¹⁶ In representing the action perfectly, the recitativ had to insure that neither music nor text dominated.

Airs, on the other hand, often did not evince a strong connection between the music and text. Nevertheless, Grimarest found a powerful unity of expression within the texts of the airs themselves. Whether the subject of the air was a passion, an action, or a thought, the single-minded nature of the poem was notable.¹⁷

Linking syllable lengths to musical rhythms was of paramount concern for Grimarest, whether in the composer's setting of a text or in the performer's interpretation of it. Entering into the sense of the poet's words, the musician had to follow the natural and expressive properties of syllable length and the rules of quantity.¹⁸ Proportional relationships between the words and the syllables themselves should be reflected in the musical rendering. In addition, the situation or the passion expressed within the words was, to an extent, expressed by these proportions. Thus, rhythm served a semiotic as well as a structural function.

In opera, these traits were of the greatest importance. Lully was so outstanding that even his airs were excellent rhythmic settings of French verse. Indeed, because of their remarkably high quality, Grimarest cited airs, not recitatives, as examples of expressive melody and avoidance of musico-textual

16. "assujetties." (Ibid., 123).

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid., 125.

meler or confusion: "Bois épais, redouble ton ombre" from Amadis and "Ah! j'attendrai long tems, la nuit est loin encore" from Roland were singled out by Grimarest,¹⁹ both of which are shown here in Examples 2-A and 2-B. Perhaps even more outstanding is the air "Venez, venez," which closes the famous Act II monologue from Armide, given here as Example 3. In all these examples, artifice in Lully's expressive use of rhythm paralleled his unique handling of melodic intervals, which were also proportioned according to the text.²⁰

Example 2-A. Jean-Baptiste Lully, Amadis, Act II, scene iv, "Bois épais, redouble ton ombre."

AMADIS:

Bois e - pais, re - dou - ble ton om - bre:

19. The "Dissertation sur le musique italienne et françoise" offered a similar appraisal of Lully's text-expression in airs. See page 8 of the present study.

20. Grimarest, op. cit., 125.

Example 2-B. Jean-Baptiste Lully, Roland, Act IV, scene ii,
 "Ah! j'attendray longtemps."²¹

ROLAND:

Ah! j'at-ten-dray long - temps. la

The musical score for Roland's aria is written in a three-staff system. The top staff is the vocal line in bass clef, 2/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are "Ah! j'at-ten-dray long - temps. la". The middle staff is the right-hand piano accompaniment in treble clef, and the bottom staff is the left-hand piano accompaniment in bass clef. The piano part consists of chords and single notes that support the vocal line.

Following the rules of declamation, Lully "entered into" the passions and characters of his operas, and precisely and

Example 3. Jean-Baptiste Lully, Armide, Act II, scene v,
 "Venez, venez."

ARMIDE:

Ve - nez, ve - nez, se - con - der mes dé - sirs.

The musical score for Armide's aria is written in a two-staff system. The top staff is the vocal line in treble clef, 3/8 time, with a key signature of one sharp (F-sharp). The lyrics are "Ve - nez, ve - nez, se - con - der mes dé - sirs." The bottom staff is the piano accompaniment in bass clef, with a key signature of one sharp and a 3/8 time signature. The piano part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some chords. There are fingerings indicated by numbers 6 and # (sharp) below the notes.

21. Grimarest's spelling does not agree with that in the score.

delicately proportioned his modulation.²² Performers of these works by Lully had the advantages of having beautiful music and affective declamation to sing. Such operas were the work of a composer with many gifts. For Grimarest, the composers of his day fell short of Lully's excellence in vocal writing; therefore, he did not include a discussion of their works. Without declamatory knowledge on the composer's part, the music would fail to reach the listener's heart.²³

Affective devices necessary for the musician who wished to move his listeners included the use of silence and certain "figures."²⁴ Grimarest, like Bacilly, felt that the musician must somehow clarify any ambiguity in word-meaning, for example, with homonyms, by setting or singing them with their proper meaning clearly in mind.²⁵ As for silences or rests, their

22. Ibid., 126. Modulation, as used here, certainly does not refer to a harmonic shift. For singers and composers of song, this term meant the use of varied figures and movements in order to expressively, vividly and naturally set poetry into music (see Brossard, Dictionnaire de musique, § M). This meaning was closely related to the modulatio concept of Classical rhetoric (see pp. 114-6 of this study for further comment).

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid., 127. Unfortunately, Grimarest did not specify the passions appropriate to the commonly-used musical figures, nor did he define the exact nature of these "figures" in French Classical terms, but he made it clear that they must be appropriate to the given passion expressed.

25. Bacilly, of course, advocated adjusting the pronunciation so that any vagueness of meaning of a word or words would be clarified.

expressive function was to make the listener wait for what followed, to build anticipatory tension.

Musico-poetic correspondence could exceed the bounds of good taste. By over-concerning oneself with individual words, the musician created an affected art rather than a masterful one. For instance, "It is by no means a rule to put roulades on those [words like], for example, coulez, volez; [or] long-held notes on the following: éternelle, repos."²⁶ Although the effects listed corresponded to the meanings of the terms, the words had no affective significance, no sentiment. Illustrative effects such as these were only appropriate in emotionally charged words and in situations in which the sense of the entire phrase suggested their use. Proper use of these effects could add to the beauty of the singing, provided that such utilization was moderate and appropriate to a proper understanding of the poetry.²⁷ Improper uses of these effects à la mode italienne hampered expression, failed to move the heart, reason or sentiment (feeling), and gave little more than a bizarre variety to the music.²⁸

Grimarest suggested that the French traits of musical style were results of the French language itself. French singers and inherent qualities of the Gallic tongue were factors

26. "Ce n'est point une règle de mettre des roulades sur ceux-cy, par exemple, coulez, volez; des tenues sur les suivantes, éternelle, repos." (Grimarest, op. cit., 129).

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid., 129-30.

in the evolution of a true French musical manner. A less tangible contribution, but nevertheless an important one for Grimarest, was the character of France, or more accurately, of the French people.²⁹ What is particularly remarkable is that Lully, an Italian, so completely assimilated French-language-related musical taste.

In cases wherein the music and text agree in expression, the actor's job was easy. However, at other times:

. . . Music altered the effect of the expression, by rhythms and intervals which don't at all suit it; and . . . we need to compensate for this defect with the sound of a beautiful voice . . . and with the refinement of sentiment of him who sings.³⁰

In these instances, successful performances depended upon the singer's vocal attributes, knowledge, and sensitivity. Therefore, "the [singing] Actor is the one who owes the most to the Spectator."³¹ Specifically, he was required to "express the passions" with gesture, voice, and feeling. Such tools were greater, both in number and in immediacy, than the composer's expressive means, which were at best mere notes and their

29. Ibid., 130.

30. " . . . la Musique altéroit l'effet de l'expression, par des mesures & des intervalles qui ne lui conviennent point; & que nous avons besoins d'être dédommagés de ce défaut par le son d'une belle voix . . . & par la délicatesse de sentiment de celui qui chante." (Ibid., 133).

31. "l'Acteur est celui qui doit le plus au Spectateur." (Ibid.). Grimarest's wording is awkward here; an alternate, less literal translation is: "the Actor is the one of whom most is required by the Spectator."

appropriate disposition or design. Clearly the burden of responsibility in musical expression was greatest for singer-actors.

In order to affect listeners, actors first had to possess attractive voices, building their artistry upon the foundation of innate talent. For Grimarest, real vocal ability was not just making pleasing sounds, but also singing with a beautiful and "touching" quality.³² Thus, even before considering matters of craft, vocal endowment was required of an actor. While these comments referred only to the singing actor, they paralleled exactly the comments made regarding Marie Desmares, known professionally as la Champmeslé. This famous actress, perhaps the greatest tragedienne of the seventeenth-century Parisian stage, was by no means a conventional "beauty," having too dark a complexion and birdlike eyes.³³ Her most important natural gift was an agreeable voice, the expressive qualities of which she assiduously cultivated.³⁴ Louis Racine, son of the well-known tragic poet, Jean Racine, found many natural defects in la Champmeslé:

. . . This woman was not born for the stage. Nature had given her only beauty [!], voice and memory:

32. "touchant." (Ibid., 133-4).

33. Geoffrey Brereton, Jean Racine (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1951), 152.

34. Ibid. Brereton cites the Entretiens galants of 1681. See Brereton's footnote 1--no page given.

besides, she had so little an intellect that he [Jean Racine] had to make her understand [her lines] . . . ³⁵

If this source is reliable, la Champmeslé lacked innate intelligence and acting ability. Only through Racine's tutelage and her own diligent effort was she able to artificially give the appearance of having "natural" acting gifts, largely through vocal expression.

An actress of the generation after la Champmeslé, la (Hippolyte) Clairon, was also not considered to be abundantly gifted in acting, ³⁶ yet she became one of the greatest actresses in an era of many famous comediennes such as la Duclos, la Dumesnil, and Adrienne Lecouvreur. La Clairon was naturally gifted with a well-projected voice which Jean François Marmontel characterized as "noble."³⁷ Like Racine, la Clairon was a very successful dramatic coach, and her comments on vocal ability for actors are particularly worthy of note. She felt that a God-given voice was essential, but that tonal beauty per se was

35. " . . . Cette femme n'étoit point née actrice. La nature ne lui avoit donné que la beauté, la voix et la mémoire: du reste, elle avoit si peu d'esprit, qu'il falloit lui faire entendre . . . " Georges Lote, "La Déclamation du vers français à la fin du XVIIe siècle," Revue de phonétique II (1912), 320. See also Louis Racine, Mémoires sur la vie de Jean Racine (Genève, 1747), 110 ff. for more extensive comments on the actress.
36. Henry Carrington Lancaster, French Tragedy in the Time of Louis XV and Voltaire: 1715-1774, 2 vols. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1950), I, 17, 19-20. According to Lancaster, Dumesnil was clearly more "the born actress than Mlle. Clairon," even during her decline.
37. Alois Maria Nagler, A Source Book in Theatrical History (New York: Dover, 1952), 294.

not absolutely necessary. Rather, the voice had to be "clear, harmonious, flexible, and susceptible of every possible intonation."³⁸ Range and expressiveness were now ideal vocal qualities. Although the actual timbral beauty of an actor's voice no longer seemed to be as essential as it was in la Champmeslé's day, inherently expressive qualities which could be cultivated for dramatic expediency were essential gifts for actors in both generations. In fact, it seems likely that the "expressive" traits of actors' voices were major factors in others' perception of their tonal beauty.

For Grimarest, it was possible to make passable a singer's voice which was by nature "ill-favored" or "deformed."³⁹ Certainly, this transformation required a great deal of effort. At best the results were only deemed acceptable. For moving, expressive performances, merely passable voices were woefully inadequate. Given Grimarest's basic tenet that only affective performances were truly worth hearing and the corollary that vocal beauty was necessary for expressive singing, a well-disposed voice was indeed a singer's requirement for Grimarest.

In order to do justice to the poet, an actor had to take pains to pronounce clearly, regardless of the pitch that the

38. Claire Josèphe Hippolyte Clairon, Memoires of Hippolyte Clairon, 2 vols., tr. anonymously (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1971), I, 35-6.

39. "disgraciée." (Grimarest, op. cit., 134).

composer required him to sing.⁴⁰ Each syllable was to be declaimed clearly so that it could be heard; otherwise, the listener might assume that the poetry was bad. With particularly splendid voices, the listener might even feel that the poetry could be ignored. In French Classical vocal music, "confused" and unclear sounds were totally unacceptable, regardless of the singer's vocal quality.⁴¹ Any poorly articulated words, however "beautifully" sung, distracted from the literary aspect of French song.

To avoid bad diction, the singer should, in Grimarest's words, "consult the range of his voice, in order not to take away from the Auditor the pleasure of being touched by the sentiments expressed by the words."⁴² By "consulting the range," Grimarest meant that the singer had to isolate the notes--and more importantly the words--set at either extreme of his range. Before singing, the actor needed to prepare mentally for the extra effort required to enunciate clearly and still sing well near the limits of his range.

Singers had to be mindful that composers often altered the syllable-length patterns of the words and phrases in order to follow "the rules of [their] art."⁴³ Even Lully could not avoid

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

42. "consulter l'étendue de sa voix, pour ne point dérober à l'Auditeur le plaisir d'être touché par le sentiment exprimé par les paroles." (Ibid.).

43. "les regles de son art." (Ibid., 134-5).

such "errors" in places where the "rules" of music and those of poetry were irreconcilable. Such a problematic setting of verse occurred in "Zangaride's scene" in Atys (Example 4),⁴⁴ with the line "& vous me laisserez mourir." Lully's setting of the two monosyllables, et and vous with et much longer in

Example 4. Jean-Baptiste Lully, Atys, Act I, scene vii, "Et vous me laisserez mourir."

ATYS:

duration than vous, breaks the most basic of the syllable-quantity rules. The final s in vous should have rendered that word slightly longer, rather than much shorter, than the other monosyllable, et. In such cases the "clever"⁴⁵ actor corrected

44. "la scène de Zangaride." (Ibid., 135). Grimarest makes several mistakes here. His spelling did not accord with that in the libretto and score, Sangaride. Actually, the score's list of acteurs de la création offered yet another spelling variant, Zangarite. In addition, the scene is not hers alone, but a dialogue between Sangaride, the nymph, and Atys, her father. Further, the line Grimarest cited was one for Atys, not Sangaride.

45. "habile." (Grimarest, op. cit., 134).

this declamatory fault in the music by singing short syllables short and long syllables long, regardless of note length. This particular instance of text-setting discrepancy could be remedied merely by making vous longer, "stealing" some of the value from et. These sorts of quantitative correction had an expressive function, not just a structural one,⁴⁶ provided that the improvements did not exceed the limits of true expression and "natural" declamation.

Impassioned or serious pieces were not to be metrically sung, i.e., sung so that the listener felt a regularly recurring beat. "The Actor must be the master of his song in order to make it consistent with its expression; and the accompaniment must also be subjugated to this manner of singing."⁴⁷ Neither the composer's rhythms nor concern for the continuo players' or accompagnée players'⁴⁸ expectations were to sway the singing actor from declaiming in the rhythm and expression dictated by the poetry. One must not be too bound by the notated rhythms:

. . . if one sings it [the impassioned piece] like the Actress did, to whom one had confided in the beginning, one will feel all the passion that must be there: . . . [rather] as one usually executes the

46. Ibid., 135.

47. "L'Acteur doit être le maître de son chant pour le rendre conforme à son expression; & l'accompagnement doit aussi aussujetti à sa maniere de chanter." (Ibid.)

48. I.e., players in the accompanied recitatives.

piece, it seems that this air [or récit] has been made [only] to divert the Listener.⁴⁹

Beginners were advised by Grimarest to consult an actor; more knowledgeable singers were to imagine that they were acting while singing. The auditor not only would be delighted in this way, he would also be excited by the dramatic passion.

In order to sing well, Grimarest required that an actor know the rules of syllable quantity, as well as the effects of the passions.⁵⁰ By knowing their effects, the actor could induce their illusory effects within himself. Once again, the syllable-length patterns had an expressive use. With the duration patterns correctly observed and the expression appropriate to the text given, the singer gave force to the words and touched the hearts of the listeners.⁵¹ The passion or figure expressed in a word or phrase determined how much "chest [voice]" must be used.⁵² This use of vocal register for expression and color imitated the effects of the passions upon the voice itself and lent tonal weight to the expressive long syllables. Generally, sadness, love, and pain demanded "tender" tones, while jealousy, rage, hope, and ardor required "strong"

49. " . . . si on le chante comme le fesoit l'Actrice, à qui on l'avoit confié dans les commencemens, on sentira toute la passion qui y doit être: . . . comme on l'exécute communément, il semble que cet air a été fait pour réjouir l'Auditeur." (Grimarest, op. cit., 136).

50. Ibid.

51. Ibid.

52. "poitrine." (Ibid.).

singing.⁵³ By observing Grimarest's rules, the actor rendered an exact character portrayal in song.

Animated, dramatic, and impassioned performances by singers who observed the rules of declamation were few, even in the era of Grimarest.⁵⁴ Beautiful singing could go a long way toward correcting bad text-setting by an ignorant composer, but when the beauty of song itself combined with the beauty of correct declamation, sung poetry was more satisfying for the listener than spoken declaiming alone. The singer-actor "has more parts to put together and more problems to avoid"⁵⁵ than any other performer. To expect many singers to know poetry, music, and acting techniques thoroughly was "to presume" too much,⁵⁶ but by mastering all these crafts, a few singers succeeded in providing delights of the highest artistic order.

For pieces in which theatrical action was absent, the actor should "limit" his expressive vocal actions.⁵⁷ Good taste should guide the performer in this matter. The forcefulness of the declamation, then, was to reflect not only the emotional import of the words being sung, but was also to suit the occasion and place.⁵⁸

53. "foible . . . fort." (Ibid.).

54. Ibid., 137.

55. "a plus de parties à allier ensemble, & des inconveniens à prevenir." (Ibid.).

56. "de le présumer." (Ibid., 138).

57. "épargner." (Ibid.).

58. Ibid.

These rules for singing well, i.e., passionately, did not apply to dance songs, but rather were appropriate for récits and grands airs.⁵⁹ Where thoughts and word-expression were ordinary and common, passion was out of place. On the other hand, ariettes were not to be sung as if the words were nonexistent.⁶⁰ The character of these dances might be less impassioned, but the singer should give them a spirit appropriate to their sentiment. Grimarest felt that composers were particularly to blame for indifferent performances of these songs because most composers set all songs of a kind (for example, all gigue-songs) alike, without any sense of the text and certainly with little regard for the text's syllabification.⁶¹

Grimarest chose to conclude his Traité with remarks to the spectator. If the listener was not moved by a performance, the author suggested that the responsibility not be assigned too hastily to the composer or the poet. Rather, the performer and his audience were the participants in the process of theatrical expression. A keen intelligence and a refined taste were the bases upon which the author could judge the performance.

Like vocal talent and declamatory ability, "spirit" and "taste" were not just inborn strengths, they were qualities that developed through the shaping and refining processes of experience.⁶² Anyone, regardless of birth, was capable of

59. Ibid., 138-9.

60. Ibid., 139.

61. Ibid., 139-40.

62. Ibid., 141-2.

elevated spirit and polished tastes--quite an egalitarian sentiment!

Musical Example and Application

To illustrate the expressive treatment of song advocated by Grimarest, I have chosen a selection from Michel Pinolet de Montéclair's tragédie Jephthé, regarded in the eighteenth century as his chef d'oeuvre. This "Tragedy drawn from the Holy Scriptures"⁶³ centers on the biblical account of an Israelite judge, Jephtha, who sacrificed his daughter in fulfillment of an oath sworn to God in return for military victory.⁶⁴ With such a vivid plot, the libretto is full of scenes of high drama in which the singer must not merely sing expressively, but must, in addition, be a consummate actor.

63. "Tragédie tirée de l'Écriture Sainte." (Michel Pinolet de Montéclair, Jephthé, 3rd ed. [Paris: Boivin, n. d.], title page).

64. See Judges, XI, 29-40. In the eighteenth century, human sacrifice was a very popular subject for drama, especially in musical settings. Georg Friedrich Händel was among several composers who set the Jephtha story; the Iphigenia myth, also extremely popular, is perhaps best remembered in several versions by Christoph Willibald Gluck. In both Händel's and Montéclair's Jephtha settings, the sacrifice is prevented at the last moment. Handel's would-be victim, Iphis (she is nameless in the Bible), is saved by an angel (Act III, scene i), who insists that the worthy offering of the daughter is sufficient if she dedicates her works and chastity henceforth to God. Montéclair's setting has God's voice thundering in the orchestra and then quietly, with two flutes, revealing to the high priest that the recent slaughter of Ammonites who tried to defile and burn the Temple was enough bloodletting to allay God's anger and that Jephthé and Iphise were freed from the vow.

Jephté's inner torment reaches an eloquent nadir in the fifth and final act. Having fully realized the consequences of his prideful oath, he acknowledges that this situation has no satisfactory solution short of divine intervention. He expresses the dilemma thus:

JEPHTÉ, alone:

Lord, a tender Father [Abraham] submitted to your decree;
 Was ready to burn his son [Isaac] for you:
 You see the same tenderness and the same obedience.
 Ah! but I cannot hope
 To obtain the same clemency
 That for him you did show!
 I've built the altar, and I wait now for the victim;
 My heart quakes for the blood that you will receive;
 My sacrifice is my duty,
 But alas! my oath is no less a crime.

With this emotional but simple text by S. J. de Pellegrin, the tenderness of a father's love is effectively contrasted with bitter sorrow and regret. Montéclair's music aptly conveys the intense, but restrained feeling of this reproachful self-examination and confessional prayer.

While the "natural" rhythms of everyday speech were foreign to recitative, the subtle rhythms of declaimed speech should be the singer's goal in performing a scene such as that given below. Even when musical notation was at its most accurate, Grimarest admonished performers of recitative not to follow slavishly the rigid rhythms of metrical music, since the musical notation was only an approximation.

Unfortunately, Grimarest was not very specific about musical notation vis-a-vis declamatory patterns. Montéclair treats

Example 5. Michel Pinolet de Montéclair, Jephté, Act V, scene i, "Seigneur, un tendre Père."

136

JEPHTÉ.

ACTE CINQUIÈME.

*Le Theatre représente la partie extérieure du Temple;
on y voit un Autel dressé.*

SCÈNE I.

Jephté.

Seigneur, un tendre Père à tes ordres, Dieu - m'as;

Fut prêt à t'immoler son fils. Tu vois même tendresse et même o. be. is.

Jephthé, Acte I.

197.

This system contains five staves of music. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef. The second staff is a vocal line in bass clef. The third staff is a piano accompaniment in bass clef. The fourth staff is a vocal line in bass clef with the lyrics: *ance. Ah que ne puis-je me flater! De obtenir la même récompense. Que pour.* The fifth staff is a piano accompaniment in bass clef.

This system contains five staves of music. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef. The second staff is a vocal line in bass clef. The third staff is a piano accompaniment in bass clef. The fourth staff is a vocal line in bass clef with the lyrics: *luy tu ne éclater! J'ay fait dresser l'autel, et j'attens la victime; Mon* The fifth staff is a piano accompaniment in bass clef.

198.

Acte V.

cœur frémit des vains que tu vas recevoir. Mon sacrifice est un de-

voir, Mais hélas! mon serment n'en est pas moins un crime.

Tous.

the changing meters in this scene primarily as a means of following the poetic structure. Jephté's lines are in freely alternating lengths of eight and twelve syllables each, with masculine and feminine rhymes in another pattern of alternation. Nearly every line is end-stopped. The poem follows, with coups,

or breaks, in the twelve-syllable lines noted with a single slash (/); the octosyllabic lines are short enough to prevent strong internal breaks.

JEPHTÉ, seul:

Seigneur, un tendre Père/ à tes ordres soumis;
 Fut prêt à t'immoler son fils:
 Tu vois même tendresse/ et même obeissance.
 Ah! que ne puis je me flater
 D'obtenir la même clemence
 Que pour luy tu fis éclater!
 J'ay fait dresser l'autel,/ et j'attens la victime;
 Mon coeur fremit du sang/ que tu vas recevoir;
 Mon sacrifice est un devoir,
 Mais hélas! mon serment/ n'en est pas moins un crime.

In the table which follows, analytical information is presented about each line of the poem. The first column indicates the line from the poem being considered, while the next

Figure 4. Analysis of poem for Act I, scene v of Jephté.

Line	Syllables	Rhyme Type	Rhyme Scheme
1	12	M	A
2	8	M	A
3	12	F	B
4	8	M	C
5	8	F	B
6	8	M	C
7	12	F	D
8	12	M	E
9	8	M	E
10	12	F	D

column to the left gives the line's number of syllables. Final syllables in feminine-ending lines will not be counted,

although they must be firmly, but quickly, pronounced.⁶⁵ Continuing to the right, the next column denotes the gender of the rhyme, with capital letters M and F indicating masculine and feminine endings. Finally, the column furthest to the right shows the actual rhyme schemes, indicated here with the capital letters A through E. In modern pronunciation, the "A" rhyme is not a pure rhyme: the IPA i sound in soumis and the IPA is sounds in films can today only make an eye-rhyme,⁶⁶ which is particularly ironic, because Montéclair calls attention to these lines by putting a rest after the couplet, the only rest in the vocal part. If the singer wishes to minimize the awkwardness of the near-rhyme, he can simply shorten the long dotted quarter note on soumis. By pushing the rhythm forward, he also lessens the sense of pause between the subject and the verb of the first poetic sentence.

French recitative, with its alternating line lengths and rhyme patterns, provides welcome contrast to the strict poetic schemes of airs. The musically shifting meters echo the charm and variety of the poetic structure. Montéclair placed the final stressed syllables of each line in very strong metrical

65. This practice follows the French Classical convention. See Lois Rosow, "French Baroque Recitative as an Expression of Tragic Declamation," Early Music XI (1983), 469.

66. According to C. Hugh Holman's A Handbook to English Literature, 3rd ed. (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1972), 217, an eye-rhyme is a "Rhyme that appears correct from the spelling, but is HALF-RHYME or SLANT-RHYME from the pronunciation."

positions; of the ten lines in the scene, seven end on downbeats. Only lines 1, 4, and 5 end on secondary metric stresses in Montéclair's setting; in each case, there is a compelling grammatical reason to push the rhythm forward and to complete the thought. Lines 4 and 5, in fact, are not even end-stopped. Within this scene of twenty measures, the composer has carefully manipulated his rhythms so that the ten meter markings and the ten poetic lines nearly always correspond: in eight of the ten lines, the beginning or ending syllabic stresses occur on the downbeats of measures in new meters.

It must be emphasized that the changing of meters does not indicate a change in pace. Whether C, 3 or 2/4, the beat remains a quarter note throughout the scene. Because of this constant pulse, a fairly consistent rhythm prevails, suitable to the unified text; every line expresses the same sense of despair and regret. In keeping with the emotion expressed by Jephthé, a fairly slow tempo--although none is indicated by the composer--is called for, particularly because of the chromatically descending, "lamenting" bass line in measures 4 through 6.

The melodic lines tend to end moving downward, the direction most suitable to the recitative's sorrowful theme. Only one line, line 2, has an upward melodic arc. Twelve-syllable lines should normally end with melodically falling rhymes, but even Montéclair's octosyllabic phrases fall--with the one noted exception. Perhaps this melodic-ascent device reflects Jephthé's emotional state while recalling that God once released Abraham

from a similar vow. This ascending line, concluding the poem's first clause, ends with a colon, a highly unusual end-stop. Additionally, the dominant harmony, supporting files, contributes to the vocal line's sense of disquietude. This musical tension prepares the listener for line 3, "You see the same tenderness and the same obedience," a summary of the conflict which is the theme of the opera; paternal love versus obedience to God.

Along with the falling rhyme, all duodecasyllabic lines normally rise, as Alexandrine couplets do, to the hemistich, or mid-line break. As if he were writing textbook examples, the composer set all but one of these half-lines with the prescribed ascending shape. The exception occurs in line 1, which falls a third on the word, Père. Montéclair recognized that the break here was slight because of the internal punctuation earlier in the line, after Seigneur. Not only did he change the usual hemistich curve, he also rhythmically minimized the coup by setting Père with a mere eighth note, only slightly longer than each of the paired sixteenth notes surrounding it.

To a great extent, Montéclair's text-setting, although it accurately reproduces the poetic structure, never really succeeds in enlivening the drama as does the example by Lully, "Enfin, il est en ma puissance" (Example 1). Performers have the freedom as well as the responsibility to go beyond Montéclair's fairly accurate rhythms and melodic contours. Injecting more dramatic force would entail subtly varying the pacing of the words, phrases, lines, and line-groups: speeding

up to create a slight sense of anticipation and slowing down to depict resolution.

Between lines 6 and 7 of the scene, there is a slight articulation of the overall poetic structure: the exclamation mark ending line 6 separates two rhyming patterns, the ABAB of lines 3 through 6 and the ABBA of the final lines of the poem. In the entire scene, this exclamation mark is the only one which concludes a sentence. This strong punctuation is paralleled in the strong, harmonic cadence in measures 12 and 13, the only real internal cadence in the scene. By subtly accelerating the rhythmic flow in lines 4 through 6, the singer convincingly expresses the sense of hope in these lines. After the cadence, as if realizing that his hope is groundless, a "hopeless hope," the singer playing Jephté can slow his tempo to suggest the character's resignation in the face of suffering. Such patterns of rhythmic tension and release observed at smaller levels in the poetic structure enable singing actors to carry listeners with them in their interpretations.

From the broader aspects of pacing his lines for dramatic shape to the narrower concerns of giving each word its proper weight and color, the actor must allow each element in the scene to make its proper impact. One of the subtlest effects indicated by Montéclair is his use of agréments; their placement suggests which words and syllables should be stressed and lengthened, as well as which have the strongest affective importance. Because of their added emotional significance, the

singer, according to Grimarest's system, should sing these embroidered words with more chest voice. In this scene, the first melodic elaboration occurs in measure 5 on the word Père. In addition to being at the structural coup of line 1, this word signifies not merely a parental relationship, but that of a loving father. Line 2 ends with a similar instance, an accent on the word fils in measure 7. Again, a father's love, this time Abraham's for his son, is stressed. Line 3, in measures 7 to 9, contains two words with agréments: vois and obeissance. As has been mentioned above, this line crystallizes the conflict in the scene, the conflict between parenthood and obedience to God; hence the latter ornament. With a long quarter note on the modifying même, the agrément on obeissance aptly conveys the haltingness of Jephthé's subjugation of his own will to a higher power. God's omniscient vision and Jephthé's awe are suggested by the stretching out and embroidering of the verb vois. Continuing, lines 5 and 6 also have two embellishments each: on même and clémence, and on fils and éclater. Clearly, Montéclair saw this point as the emotional climax of the scene. All four ornamented words refer to the clemency, or pity, which God once bestowed and which Jephthé again seeks. In line 7, the very expressive image of a sacrificial altar calls forth another accent, accompanied by the highly colorful Neopolitan sixth harmony. The line continues j'attens la victime with two more ornaments. Jephthé's anxiety in "waiting" for the rite's "victim" is aptly portrayed. With "quaking heart" at the blood

God "will receive," Montéclair offers four more embellishments. The quaking is literally expressed in trills and little "sighing" accents. Line 9 includes a tritone rather than an agrément to highlight sacrifice, but the voice expressively trembles at the thought of the required devoir. A regretful "sigh" on crime ends the scene, balancing the trill on devoir and emphasizing the irony of the sinful oath, which is "dutifully" realized by a bloody, unlawful act. In his careful selection and placement of ornaments, Montéclair brings into sharp relief the most vivid images and ideas in the poetry.

While the nature of Jephté's scene is one of unrelenting and intense emotion, the large number of agréments suggests that the tempo is not unvarying. With whatever pace the actor shapes the scene, he must avoid at all costs the sense of a regular, recurring beat. As Grimarest insisted, irregular rhythm is what defines recitative: it is musical declamation. "As if he were an actor," the singer must convey the halting inertia of a character who is loath to follow a horrifying, but required, course of action. He must not be constrained by the accompanying instrumentalists, whose job it is to follow him. A scene like this would be meticulously rehearsed, particularly since very intricate lines occur in the accompaniment. Montéclair marked Tous in the final measure of the basse chiffrée line, clearly indicating some change in the bass line instrumentation for the dialogue en récitatif which follows or

for the intervening six-measure interlude.⁶⁷ Montéclair played in the Opéra orchestra and understandably wrote challenging--but not impossible--parts, knowing full well the circumstances of opera rehearsals and performance.

As Grimarest suggested, the singer must note extremes of range in the score in order to technically and artistically prepare to declaim clearly in both the very high and the very low parts of his voice. This scene has a fairly high tessitura for bass or baritone, although its range is just an octave. Montéclair's use of the lower part of the range is not nearly as expressive as his exploitation of the high register. The lowest notes of the scene, D and D[#], are assigned to words like soumis (measure 5), Que and pour (measure 11), dresser (measure 13, and devoir (measure 18). The higher D's, though, are carefully placed to maximize the effect of their tenser sound. The exclamation, Ah! (measure 9), the hopeful éclater (measure 12), and the quavering frémit (measure 15) all are heightened by the expressive sound of the male high voice.

With the aim of realizing a character through the dramatically expressive use of the voice, the singing actor should interpret this scene just as if it were written for a non-operatic actor. In matters of registral color, ornamental stress, and rhythmic structure, the composer's notation provides the

67. The third edition of Jephté, despite "revisions and corrections," is often imprecise in specifying the orchestration; even the instrumentation for the ouverture is not provided.

actor with a guide for making Jephthé, the sorrowful judge, warrior, and father, come alive musically.

CHAPTER IV

ABBÉ JEAN BAPTISTE DUBOS AND THE CRITICAL REFLECTIONS ON POETRY, PAINTING, AND MUSIC¹

The Source

Today, musicians associate the term Classicism primarily with the works of Mozart and Haydn. In France, however, Classicism is understood to refer to the grand siècle and the generation immediately following,² an era capped by the reign of the Sun King, Louis XIV (1643-1715). The aristocratic lifestyle encompassed considerable intellectual activity and artistic patronage, with particular emphasis on salons and academies.³ As did their Italian counterparts, academies in France devoted much of their attention to the humanistic revival

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1. Dubos, Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture, 2 vols., (Paris: Jean Mariette, 1719). Musique was added to the title in later editions. All citations of Dubos in this study draw on the translation, Critical Reflections . . ., by Thomas Nugent (London, 1747).
 2. Alexander Baïf's Académie, founded in 1571, was the first institution in France to formulate the humanistic ideals on which French Classicism was based. Under the centralized control of Louis, the French Classicists made their greatest contributions. The revival of interest in Graeco-Roman criticism waned after Louis' death and completely disappeared as a result of the Revolution.
 3. See Rosalie D. Landres Sadowsky, "Jean-Baptiste Abbé Dubos: The Influence of Cartesian . . . Practice" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1959), 30 ff. for a discussion of academies and salons.

of interest in ancient Greek and Roman sources. As a result of the rediscovery of many of these works and the subsequent translation of a number of them into the vernacular, cultural activity and thought in France were affected by the thoughts of the ancients to a degree which must not be underestimated. Dubos' treatise was a product of this philosophical milieu; in a sense, his work marked the end of an age during which French thinkers defined their environment in terms of an antiquarian past. Clearly, in order to assess Dubos' contributions in the Critical Reflections, one has to understand the humanistic tradition of ideas in France and the role Dubos played in belles-lettres.

Aristotle's Poetics was perhaps the Greco-Roman source most influential in shaping French Classical literary criticism and dramatic theory. Certainly, Aristotle's "rules"⁴--in particular, his notions about the three dramatic unities, time, place, and action--and the clarity of his system appealed to the French, who tended toward, and still favor, the balanced and the logical. Procedures and concepts which might be rationally explained were made even more palatable to French taste by measurable, demonstrable proof. Dividing experience into two types of phenomena, rational/mental and physical/sensory, the French distrusted the often-illusory evidence of immediate

4. Many French and Italian translations of Aristotle distorted his observations on drama so that these comments sounded like systematic rules.

sensory data, preferring to reflect on that information to reliably evaluate an experience. Accordingly, musical criticism focused on the "rules" and craft of composition to the exclusion of concern with inborn talent.

One of the most influential of all philosophical works in the seventeenth century, On the Passions of the Soul (1649) by René Descartes, crystallized the emotive states, known as the passions or the affections, into an amazingly well-conceived, mechanistic theory. According to Descartes, the passions were classifiable, objective phenomena; as "an imbalance in the animal spirits and vapors that flow continually throughout the body,"⁵ the affections were aroused by external or internal stimuli. For example, a pleasurable excitation would stimulate the body to have an "[over-]abundance of thin and agile spirits"⁶ which, in turn, disposed the body so that the person felt joyful. Descartes' study of the passions was strongly influenced by Aristotle's Rhetoric, but Descartes reinterpreted the antiquarian system in light of rationalism. Johann Mattheson's (b. 1681) often mentioned Doctrine of the Affections, or Affektenlehre, similar to many systems⁷ espoused by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century German aestheticians, was closely related to

5. Claude Palisca, Baroque Music, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1981), 4.

6. Ibid.

7. See George J. Buelow, "Johann Mattheson and the Invention of the Affektenlehre," New Mattheson Studies, ed. George J. Buelow and Hans Joachim Marx (New York: Cambridge University

this concept, but the two were by no means synonymous. Many French sources did, nonetheless, use the term affection and its derivations, but only in connection with their understanding of the passions rather than in a rigid Affektenlehre.

As mentioned earlier in this study, the object of music, like that of rhetoric, was to "move" the passions of the listener, i.e., to stir up or agitate the humors and spirits in the body and produce passions in the listener. French aesthetes borrowed heavily from many Greek and Latin sources for their ideas in this area. Accordingly, an orator might politically convince a crowd or successfully debate, and a singer or an actor might literally move an audience to tears. Despite a clearly and logically "grammatical" framework, classical rhetoric depended for effect principally on affective figures of speech which were applied like ornaments. Gestures and declamation were embellishments which also might evoke pathos, or emotional response. Musical rules were the "grammar" for composition, particularly those rules advocating musical adherence to the poetic structure

Press, 1983), 393-407, which presents a compelling argument against the existence of any universal Doctrine of the Affections in the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries. See also Charles William Dill, "French Theories of Beauty and the Aesthetics of Music from 1700 to 1750" (unpublished M.M. thesis, North Texas State University, 1982), which is an attempt to study French aesthetics with--as nearly as is possible--an avoidance of any reinterpretations. Buelow, as well as Dill, brings out the necessity of evaluating historical sources in historical terms; both studies also demonstrate the danger of not consulting primary sources. In light of these studies and to avoid confusion, I will use the word aesthetics in its usual modern meaning, i.e., in reference to Fine Arts criticism. Until quite late in the eighteenth century, the word referred to any evaluation of experience.

of vocal music; agréments, sung declamation, and an operatic acting style contributed greatly to the affective impact on the listener. In French music, certain musical gestures or figures were associated with generalized affective qualities, but were not assigned specific passionate content. Following the lead of Descartes, French writers concentrated on analyzing the process by which musical "figures" worked, rather than on merely identifying or classifying those figures.

Unlike orators, who were limited to one set of procedures for defining, working out, and delivering an argument or a speech, aestheticians had two modes of operation. These were established in Classical Greece by Plato and Aristotle, and the process of reasoning espoused by each often still bears his name: Platonic (inductive) or Aristotelian (deductive). Plato began by building an entire system of thought around a small set of assumed, or a priori, truths. Aristotle, on the other hand, observed everything he found available on a subject and then drew general conclusions that seemed to be true in all or most instances.

Aristotle's deductive procedure, far less popular in seventeenth-century France than induction, was adopted by Dubos in the Critical Reflections. Though Dubos' use of deductive reasoning was unusual for a thinker in the French tradition, it also demonstrates that Dubos was a true humanist, one who examined antiquarian sources (Aristotle in this instance), in the original language rather than relying on others' translations

of and commentaries on the Classics. Dubos' concepts reflected his humanistic leanings in many other ways, as well. He still quoted many Classical Greek and Roman authorities, his favorite being Quintilian. Among his major concerns was rhetorical method, and he carefully maintained a neo-classical sense of balance and proportion in his argument. In many ways, his concepts were much like those of his predecessors.

However, in following the English critics of his day, Dubos broke radically with French tradition by arguing that the primary aesthetic experience was the immediate sensory perception of a work of art. Reason and reflection would prove the validity of the sensible essence of the aesthetic encounter, but were subordinate to the sensory excitation.

Musical aesthetics were profoundly altered by this new shift of focus. Previously, French thinkers had only admitted vocal music to the realm of Fine Art because of its connection with poetry. The meaning and forms of vocal music were dictated to a great extent by the lyric poetry.⁸ The structure and balance of instrumental music were difficult for a listener to discern immediately and were ambiguous in their emotive

8. According to neo-Platonists, the meaning of artworks was revealed in their representation of an object or event. Thus, the signification of a sculpture or of a painting was the thing it depicted, and a drama represented an action. However, music's meaning was unclear; increasingly, French scholars rejected Plato's idea that music was a "sound-picture" of the music of the spheres, of cosmic harmony. Such a view of music and its meaning could not accord with the rigors of French rationalism.

signification, so such music was labeled irrational. Even Dubos, with his emphasis on the sensory element in an aesthetic experience, could not easily incorporate instrumental music into his system without some reservation. It could be commended only for its contextual usage in opéra, both as an imitation of nature--for storm scenes, in particular--and as a delineator of character in "character dances," adding to the spectacle and affective content of the tragédie. However, wholehearted acceptance of independent works for instruments was still about thirty years away. All that purely instrumental music could do, Dubos and his contemporaries felt, was to delight and divert the listener. Though diverting people was one of the goals of any art form, it was of far less consequence than "moving" them to feel a particular passion, the goal of drama, poetry, vocal music, and representational visual art. To the extent that instrumental works delighted the ear, they were sufficiently "artful;" repeated listenings and analyses would reveal the use of compositional "rules" in achieving a pleasing artistic experience.

Similarly, earlier French aestheticians--basing their judgments solely on the "rules" and reason--found opera to be an irrational entertainment because its poetry seemed to be poorly conceived. Livrettes lacked vivid imagery, although their emotional expression was strong and uncluttered. Even though critics were unable to justify lyric theater in terms of their aesthetic systems, they and other members of the aristocratic

circles flocked to the opéra from the 1670's until well beyond Dubos' era. Dubos saw the simple language of opera librettos as one of the genre's greatest strengths. He was the first French aesthetician to wholeheartedly accept the validity of tragédies lyriques. Their irrational power, which other critics found to be inexplicable, was, Dubos felt, the result of a musico-poetic rhetoric which was very closely related to the rhetoric of the tragedies of the ancient Greeks.

Dubos attributed opera's success in France specifically to the rhetorical effectiveness of récitatif lullyste. Lully enhanced the passionate content of Quinault's verses by heightening their melodic inflection. Even more important was the similarity of the melodic shape of the recitative to the inarticulate language of passion and nature; exclamations, sighs, and other passionate cries were the natural models for the melodic intervals in a récit, which had a more unified construction and much greater affective power than any poetry or non-musical tragédie. Poetry communicated its emotional content only through rational, artificial reflection on word-signs, which had meaning only for those who understood a given language. Music, a universal language, transcended poetry because it was not bound by fixed meaning. Dubos no longer restricted music to a slavish, rhetorical adherence to a text; rather, he insisted that the poetry mold itself to the affectively superior music. Thus, in the lyric genre, poetry had to avoid excessive

imagery which would detract from the passionate content of the music itself.

Dubos' conception of musical rhetoric, like Descartes', was essentially mechanistic. However, Dubos' view of music as a natural and passionate language, outside the realm of rationality, conflicted with Descartes' view of music, which was essentially rational. Dubos conceded that music was logical and measurable in the area of rhythm; in that regard, the Critical Reflections advocated a musical subservience to text. Syllabification and rhyme, though not the standard oratorical figures of speech, were indeed rhetorical means for the affective, or pathetic, end of poetry. Dubos and many others called operatic singers actors, not chanteurs, because they were so successful in realizing the passionate feelings in the poetry. These performers were guided by the rhythmic structure of the recitative, which accurately recorded the poetic rhythms, and by Lully's melodies, which captured the essence of passionate utterance.

In French Classical aesthetics, Dubos was certainly a crucial figure. He combined French traditions and current English trends into a distinctly eighteenth-century amalgam of rationalism, empiricism, neo-Platonism, neo-Aristotelianism, and Cartesian metaphysics. Tragédie lyrique, which for about forty years had been an enormously successful art form, but an aesthetic bête noir, was now for Dubos one of the crowning achievements of French art and thought.

Dubos' Critical Reflections, though definitely controversial, were nevertheless enormously popular. They were published in at least seven French editions up to 1770 and were frequently translated. Originally, the text was presented in two parts: the first was a discussion of the various arts and their relationships to beauty, to the "rules," and to each other; the latter amounted to something of a pot pourri with a lengthy discussion of genius and with an exposition of Dubos' theory of climate vis-à-vis artistic sensibility in various national schools.⁹ From the 1740 edition on, Dubos expanded the work into three volumes, principally by enlarging the comparison between ancient and modern tragedy. Originally part of the broadly conceived first volume, this discussion of tragedy comprised the heart of the third volume.¹⁰

Plainly, the organization of Dubos' text does not correspond to the requirements of any rigorous, logical systematization. His writing was often aphoristic and repetitive, consciously avoiding the appearance of pedantry. However, his chatty style and looseness of construction concealed the presence of a substantive and well-worked-out content: a complete aesthetic system and a partial history of Fine Arts.

9. For Dubos, genius was an innate "sixth sense" for artistic creation. In Dubos' theory of climate, he explains the physiological phenomena of artistic tastes within national categories; tastes were, he felt, strongly influenced by weather, particularly by the national temperatures. See Dill, op. cit., 50 for a summary of the theory.

10. Ibid., 50-1.

Additionally, Dubos covered many aspects of each of the arts in some detail, particularly in relation to his concept of the "pathetic" aim of artistic endeavor, i.e., the ultimate goal of the arts to stimulate an emotional response in the viewer or audience.

An understanding of the author's terminology within his framework of neo-classical rhetoric is essential, since in many instances he failed to define crucial terms before using them; modulation, for example, appeared repeatedly in the first volume before its meaning was clarified in the third volume. Rooted in Classical antiquity, his concepts were subtly reinterpreted in light of a peculiarly French Classical sensibility.

By his idiosyncratic word usages, Dubos unwittingly has created a barrier for modern readers. Often, he assumed that the reader would automatically comprehend his meaning. His use of the terms for melody and harmony, much the same as his usage of modulation, does not correspond to modern usage. A great number of Dubos' terms are in fact drawn from Greek and Roman sources, but he subtly reinterpreted this antiquarian vocabulary to agree with his Gallic taste. Therefore, even modern humanists must read Dubos carefully. Historical dictionaries, particularly Sébastien de Brossard's Dictionnaire de musique (1703), shed some light on what eighteenth-century readers understood Dubos' terminology to mean.

Dubos usually referred to the basic elements of music by their Latin and Greek designations: rhythmus or rhythmica,

harmonica, and melopeia. In Quintilianus' system,¹¹ the source for most of Dubos' terms, rhythmus referred to a temporal measure like a modern time signature, in which the danced and sung motions were subjected to the rule of a regular beat;¹² it was the beating of time. According to Plato, "rhythmus is the soul of metre."¹³ Aristotle was more specific: "Metre . . . is only a part of the rhythmus."¹⁴ Another source, De Musica by "Saint Austin [Augustine]," posited that "[one gave] the name of rhythmus to whatever regulated the duration of the execution of compositions."¹⁵ One can plainly see that Dubos defined rhythmus solely in antiquarian terms.

In French opera, composers used changing meters to set the poetic rhythms accurately, yet Dubos left this crucial element in opera and poetry unexplained. Although French composers excelled in rhythm, it nevertheless was secondary in importance to melody in Dubos' system. Giving to music its ability to delight, rhythm enlivened melody and allowed music to imitate the motion of natural sounds.¹⁶ Rhythm played an important role in the process by which operas "imitated" or represented an action. What that role was and how rythme functioned in

11. Dubos used both "Quintilian" and "Quintilianus" somewhat arbitrarily. The present study makes no attempt to regularize this idiosyncrasy.

12. Dubos, Critical Reflections, III, 8, 15.

13. Ibid., III, 16.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid., III, 17.

16. Sadowsky, op. cit., 226. Dubos' use of the term rythme is unclear for the reasons cited above.

dramatic "imitation" are specific matters that Dubos, once again, left unexplained.¹⁷ The rhythmic element was a very important affective component in Lully's airs caractérisées, aiding in establishing character and mood; by the rhythmic-variation techniques used in these airs, Lully further increased and animated the pathos of the scene.¹⁸ He achieved these effects by musically paralleling the movement of passions so that musical motion evoked affective motion. Lully also used his imagination to "characterize" exotic peoples by the rhythms to which they would sing and dance.

The next of the musical elements, harmonica, was the science of music, including the rules of composition, as well as the consideration of the proper concords.¹⁹ In his "characterized airs," harmonica was used imaginatively to identify personages from far-off lands or the distant past.²⁰ Harmony, or harmonica, also played a role in opéra, the musico-poetic "imitation" of a "subject" (an action).²¹ We are not told what role that was, but Dubos compared it with painting: harmony in music was like brushstrokes in painting.

The last of the elements of music, melopeia, or composed melody, included the notation not only of songs, but also of

17. Dubos, Critical Reflections, I, 361-2.

18. Sadowsky, op. cit., 231. See also Dubos, Critical Reflections, III, 129-30.

19. Ibid. (Dubos), III, 6.

20. Ibid., III, 129-30.

21. Ibid., I, 261-2.

all recitative and declamation.²² Ptolemy apologized for using the term melopeia because its signification was so closely bound to poetic art as a whole that it could hardly be considered an independent entity. Indeed, in antiquity melopeia was actually a part of the composition of a poem.²³ Roman poets, however, did not compose the notes of the declamation themselves, leaving that duty to artifices pronuntiandi, professional composers.²⁴ Melopeia was the primary affective element in Dubos' understanding of music; it could reflect the sounds of a person under the effects of a particular passion. Being closer to actual, natural, passionate sound than other poetic elements, melody was not linguistic, i.e., tied to word-signs understood only by those who spoke a given language. In its correspondence to nonverbal utterance, melopeia was clearly superior to other musical elements which imitated sounds that were natural, passionate, or verbal, but were not the sounds of the passions themselves. Like his Greco-Roman predecessors, Dubos defined melopeia as a component of both song and declamation. Indeed, melopeia was tied inextricably to spoken language; the rise and fall of speech, which Martianus Capella called "the connection between acute and grave sound,"²⁵ was melos, the Greek root for melopeia and melody. Distinctions between speech, declamation, and song were largely determined

22. Ibid., III, 8.

23. Ibid., III, 9.

24. Ibid., III, 10.

25. Ibid., III, 42.

by the extent, or the interval, of the acute or grave inflections which each entailed. Thus, the heightened melodic traits of the récit intensified the affective, melodic character of declaimed speech. Dubos considered operatic récitatif as seen in this light to be the epitome of pathetic melodic expression.

As has already been mentioned, modulation is one of the most problematic words in the Critical Reflections for the modern reader. In Rosalie Sadowsky's dissertation, she translates modulation as "the melody" (p. 226), but given the definitions of its Latin root, modulatio, and contemporary definitions such as that by Brossard, her interpretation is hardly satisfactory.²⁶ Eighteenth-century readers would have understood this term in much the same way as Brossard defined it below:

MODULATION, or Modulazione, means MODULATION . . . It is also giving to one's singing a variety of movement and of different figures which render it expressive, without being tedious or too affected. Finally, it is giving to one's composition, that certain I don't know what of sweetness and of grace, which a long and frequent exercise can sometimes give,

26. For example, according to Diomedes, modulatio was "the art of rendering the pronunciation of a continued recitation more agreeable, and the sound more pleasing to the ear." (Ibid., III, 20). Dubos emphasized that, while many sources defined modulatio in exclusively rhythmic terms, a correct understanding of the term should include the notation of melodic inflections. His sole basis for this view of the term was once again Quintilianus, although his logic in making such an interpretation is difficult to follow. Quintilianus merely asserted that the tradition of verse-singing by the Salian priests went back to King Numa's days. Given the length of time involved from the rule of Numa Pompilius (715-ca. 673 B.C.) to the era of Quintilian (ca. 35-ca. 95 A.D.), Dubos assumed that this practice necessarily entailed some sort of notation.

which a prepossessing talent furnishes often, naturally and without effort, and which one calls Fine Singing.²⁷

As can be seen in both of these meanings, Brossard alluded to the use of modulation in performance, in contrast to the antiquarian notion of modulation as an aspect of musico-poetic composition. This "modern" interpretation, still somewhat vague, contained key words which aid the present-day reader in clarifying the newer conceptions of modulation. In the first, Brossard singled out a rhythmic and melodic--perhaps ornamental--variety for purposes of expression, as well as for the sake of variety itself. In the latter definition, he emphasized sweetness and grace, as well as the undefinable "something" with which a fine singer is born. In both meanings, Brossard stressed naturalness. For the expressive performer, then, and for the aesthete, also, truth to nature was paramount. In order for the performer to succeed in moving the listener to a "pathetic" response, he had to expressively and "naturally" vary the rhythm and ornament the melody. Thus he approached the language of passion which was the model for several French poetic and musical genres, chiefly the tragédie lyrique. This

27. "MODULATIONNE, ou Modulazione, veut dire, MODULATION . . . C'est encore donner à son chant une variété de mouvements & de figures différentes qui le rendent expressif, sans être ennuyeux ny trop affecté. Enfin c'est donner à sa composition, ce certain je ne scay quoy de doux & de gracieux, qu'un long & fréquent exercice peut donner quelques fois, qu'un heureux génie fournit souvent, naturellement & sans peine, & qu'un nomme Beau-Chant." (Brossard, op. cit., § M).

pathetic orientation was integral to the poet/composer's conception in the eighteenth century as well as in Classical antiquity. However, given that modulation in its eighteenth-century usage could not be notated or measured, one should hardly be surprised that a French lexicographer relegated it to the realm of je ne scay quoy. By changing the word chant to déclamation in both definitions, Brossard's definition can be extended to include dramatic or oratorical speech.

Whereas Brossard defined modulation in terms of performance, Dubos explored the term by examining the relationships between notation and performance, and between speech and song. It was with this term and the closely-related word carmen that Dubos moved from theoretical speculations and historical commentary to practical concerns. The issues that he raised are crucial to this study, shedding light on the way singers performed recitative and how they elicited powerful responses from listeners.

Roman use of the term modulatio was generally interchangeable with that of carmen, both of which were, according to Dubos, difficult to define. Translated literally, both terms meant "the measure and noted pronunciation of verse."²⁸ Whereas public speakers in ancient Rome were not required to learn thoroughly the musical or inflectional aspect of declamation, it was necessary for actors to master this art, which included

28. Ibid.

expression of the "intire" [sic] composition,²⁹ not just its metrical or rhythmic structure.

Although the "melody" of a Roman poem was composed separately from the text, as noted earlier, in performance the "melody" was an integral part of the poem. If this Roman counterpart to the Greek tragic "melody" was ignored, verses were then said to be only read aloud, not declaimed.³⁰ Roman composers noted these melodic inflections with accent marks above the text, but it must be stressed that this notation was not intended for actual sung performance.³¹ Dubos understood the term modulatio to encompass this notation system. Carmen, a nearly synonymous term, was more limited in its meaning than modulatio, but it is also problematic. Capella stated that carmen only referred to declamation; Quintilian, on the other hand, considered it to mean only melody.³²

Martianus Capella compared speech, declamation, and song, making perceptive distinctions between these three modes of pronunciation, based on their sounds and their performance:

The sound of the voice may be divided into two [three?] kinds with respect to the manner in which it comes out of the mouth: to wit, into continued, and discrete or divided by intervals. The continued sound is the pronunciation used in ordinary conversations. The discrete is the pronunciation of a person who executes a modulation [melody]. Between these two sounds there is a middle sort, which partakes of the continued, and the discrete. This middle sound is not so much interrupted as in

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid., III, 72.

31. Ibid., III, 74.

32. Ibid., III, 51, 71.

singing [!], but its motion is not so continued as that of the sound in ordinary pronunciation.³³

Dubos goes beyond these distinctions; for him, declamation was, of course, notable for its "continued" flow of irregular, speechlike rhythms. However, these rhythms were measured so that they followed the syllable quantities in the poetry being recited, while avoiding regular meters like those in music.

Further, Dubos compared the notation systems of speech, declamation, and song. Usually, speech, or reading aloud, entailed the notation of text alone. The lines were unmeasured and were delivered with a fairly flat inflection. In performing poetry, however, speakers often exaggerated the inflectional patterns of speech into nearly melodic shapes. These shapes, in turn, were notated by actors--or even by poets--with simple acute (´) and grave (`) accent marks. In this system, only the direction of the inflection was indicated; compared to the intervallic precision of modern musical notation, this accentual notation was crude indeed. Nevertheless, actors used it for several thousand years.

In the eighteenth century, drawing a line between spoken declamation and sung recitation, or recitative, was indeed a difficult task. The relationship between the deliveries of speaking actors and singing actors was quite close, and Dubos investigated this key aspect of the French Classical style.

33. Ibid., III, 51.

Some speaking actors of the time, Beaubourg and Molière among them, did indeed mark notes of some sort above the text to assist them in delivering their speeches uniformly.³⁴ Apparently this notated delivery was used only for portions of their roles. It was much like the system of accents used by the ancients; perhaps it was precisely the same system.

Racine used an unspecified, but highly refined, notation as a part of his pedagogical method in preparing his actors for new roles in his plays.³⁵ According to his son, Louis Racine, the procedure for teaching new roles consisted of speaking the lines as written, discussing their meaning, adding appropriate gestures, dictating the melodic tones for the declamation, and finally notating those tones. Records of this notation apparently have been lost, but it must be stressed that Racine's intention for notating the tones was pedagogical. His innovative system was far more specific about inflectional intervals than the relatively crude accent marks of the ancients. Guided by Racine's training and specific notation, his actors declaimed in a highly melodic, passionate style which approached singing. Without first-hand training, however, Racine's notation--or Molière's or Beaubourg's for that matter--would have been meaningless. Because Racine's notation was never adopted by theorists and disseminated in their works, its practical value died with him. Because Racine's notation is lost, we can no

34. Ibid., III, 243.

35. Sadowsky, op. cit., 121.

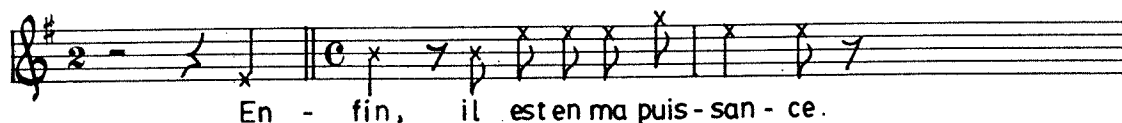
longer perform his plays in the distinctive style which the notation helped to establish.

We do, however, have the closely related style of declamation recorded in Lully's recitatives. The parallels between Racinian and Lullian delivery fascinated Dubos. Although apparently no one else attempted to determine the precise, intervallic relationship between poetic-theatrical speech and recitative speech, Dubos and some of his musician friends determined not only the nature of this connection, but also a means of musically notating theatrical speech. Their solution was to use "the Gamut of our music, provided we give the notes only one half of the ordinary intonation;"³⁶ thus, a sung half-step of intonation would, for declamation, indicate a quarter-step's variance in pitch. I would suggest the additional use of X-shaped noteheads for declamation to make it clearer whether the notation indicated is to be spoken or sung. Thus, for example, if Armide's scene, "Enfin, il est en ma puissance," were notated with such X-shaped noteheads, as shown in Example 6-A, it would be declaimed as if it were notated as shown in Example 6-B, in present-day, microtonal notation.³⁷

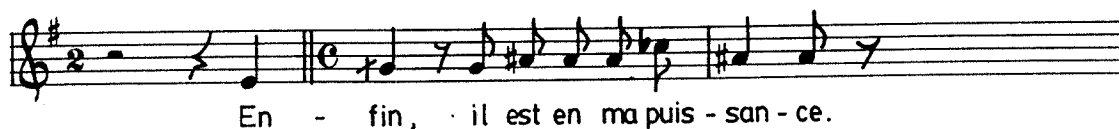
36. Dubos, Critical Reflections, III, 113.

37. Of course, many systems of microtonal notation are used today. Krzysztof Penderecki's is used here because of its simplicity, clarity, and common usage.

Example 6-A. "Enfin, il est en ma puissance" in "speech" notation.



Example 6-B. "Enfin, il est en ma puissance" in microtonal notation.



The simple accent marks of the ancients were clearly insufficient to indicate the myriad nuances of the highly developed style of delivering tragedies in France. Dubos' notational contribution was certainly quite important, but unfortunately for theatrical scholars, was never used outside the area of theoretical speculations. Dubos never indicated whether the musician's type of notation and Racine's were the same. Probably the two were quite different because Dubos apparently felt that the proposed musical notation of declamation was a new concept, whereas Racine's method was essentially a refinement of the Greco-Roman system. Reading the musician's kind of declamation score was a skill of which few, if any, actors of the time were capable. Dubos asserted, however, that

fifteen-year-olds could be effectively taught to understand this new notational practice with six months of training and rehearsing.³⁸ Nonetheless, the new system was not adopted.

In fact, the system's failure to be adopted for theatrical purposes was probably due to resistance among actors themselves to notated declamation. The usual immediate response of these artists to whom this proposed notation was fully explained was downright condemnation.³⁹ Dubos attributed their vehement reluctance to use notation to a natural, human aversion to constraint. Were tragedians to follow the notes in their speeches, Dubos posited, tragedy might equal opera in declamatory force.⁴⁰ It is clear that the melodic sort of declamation, which was Racine's most influential innovation, had been inextricably tied to an actor's understanding of the poetic meaning. Indeed, this nearly tuneful interpretation contributed greatly to the passionate, moving performances of Racine's rather vehement performers. Nevertheless, this strongly pathetic aspect of productions of his plays failed to equal in quality the affective power of French opera.

The rhythm of theatrical delivery might also be notated with this new declamatory notation system, following the same 2:1 proportion employed in the intervals of declamation. As Dubos put it, "I have been also informed, that we should give a

38. Dubos, Critical Reflections, III, 243.

39. Ibid., III, 235.

40. Ibid.

minim only the value of a crotchet, and a crotchet the value of a quaver; and the other notes should be valued according to this proportion, in the same manner as would be practiced in the intonation."⁴¹ To illustrate, Armide's monologue, "Enfin, il est en ma puissance," when declaimed, would sound like Example 7. Dubos did not elaborate on this seemingly quite simple

Example 7. "Enfin, il est en ma puissance" in actual declaimed rhythm.



statement, but its implications for performance practice in both tragedy and opera are far-reaching. I interpret Dubos to mean that operatic acteurs declaimed twice as slowly as nonsinging acteurs. If I am correct, then modern performances of eighteenth-century recits are far too fast.⁴²

That sung declamation in Dubos' time would be much slower than its spoken counterpart is not terribly surprising. In fact, after Lully's death French recitative quickly accumulated a burdensome weight of agréments. Later composers of tragédies

41. Ibid., III, 114.

42. Mary Cyr's remarks on recitative tempo corroborate this interpretation of Dubos. See Cyr, "Declamation and Expressive Singing in Recitative," Opera and Vivaldi (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984), 235 ff.

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lyriques and related genres wrote far more highly embroidered recitative than Lully. In addition, without Lully's direct supervision, singers were at liberty to add ornaments anywhere they wished. Such practices and the resultant norms of taste created an atmosphere in which the frequent revivals of Lully's works resulted in vast reworkings of the musical scores. The added ornamental weight would necessitate much slower tempos if the now-florid lines of recitative were not to sound rushed.⁴³

Indeed, Mary Cyr has demonstrated that in eighteenth-century notation, increasingly smaller note values indicated a slowing of recitative tempo.⁴⁴ Discussing this issue of musical notation as related to actual pace, Dubos revealed a lack of understanding of the history of musical notation:

About a hundred and twenty years ago the songs composed in France were, generally speaking, nothing more than a series of long notes, and what our musicians sometimes call du gros Fa. The movement of the execution was very slow, and neither the singers, nor the players on instruments were capable of executing a more difficult music.⁴⁵

In fact, modern editors of early music often shorten rhythmic values so that performers will execute works at the intended rate of speed assumed by the editor rather than with the slow

43. If, as Grimarest suggested, ornaments were appropriate at places of emotional significance and also where more chest voice was appropriate, these vocal ornaments were indeed becoming less and less the fiery sort used in Bacilly's day, and more and more a slow and "expressive" sort.

44. Cyr, op. cit., 235 ff.

45. Dubos, Critical Reflections, III, 127.

execution advocated by Dubos. From Dubos' earlier account of slow récits versus faster declamation, from his contemporaries' commentaries on recitative pacing, and from notational evidence, it is clear that recitative no longer maintained its vivid Lullian motion, largely because of a more liberal use of agréments.

Apparently, this slowing of the recitative tempo was also encouraged by an increasing taste for "expressive" declamation. In antiquity, declamation suffered from the decadent excesses of expressive orators and actors, reaching its low in effimacy and lack of force at the time of Cicero.⁴⁶ Likewise, French vocal music had fallen victim to a similar lack of moderation over a period of "fourscore"⁴⁷ years, suggesting that Lully's operatic works were written twenty to thirty years into this period of decline. Perhaps the pre-Lullian Golden Age of sung declamation was the 1640's and 1650's, just when de Nyert's students brought recognition to a French monodic style of singing. However, there was also a trend in eighteenth-century spoken acting for the performer to go to extremes of personal expression. One notable example was the actor Michel Baron, who added so many dramatic pauses to his lines that plays in which he appeared lasted thirty minutes longer than when anyone else had his role.⁴⁸ Dubos suggested that sung speech or recitative was even slower than declaimed speech; singers' excessive

46. Ibid., III, 116-26.

47. Ibid., III, 127.

48. Lancaster, op. cit., I, 13.

use of expressive devices probably contributed to this slowing, just as Baron's overuse of pauses contributed to his singularly lengthy portrayals.

While Dubos saw contemporary trends as paralleling those of Cicero's days, that is in being largely decadent in nature, he did acknowledge that then-current performances were superior in grace and tenderness.⁴⁹ Expressiveness, as an end in itself, had considerable positive value in musical performance. When used in excess or where not really appropriate in the musical or poetic context, this trait could spoil music, despite its being intended to "inrich" [sic].⁵⁰

Dramatic and operatic roles in French Classical works required a variety of facial expression, in contrast to the frozen character of ancient Greek masks.⁵¹ Eighteenth-century actors were able to convey alternating "strokes" of character, or changing and conflicting emotions with facial and vocal adjustments.⁵² Thus, the actor or singing actor frequently might spontaneously act out the various passions in the text, thereby giving truth to the declamation.⁵³

Dubos closed his Critical Reflections with thoughts on composed declamation as used in ancient times, evaluating its benefits and the potential effects such composition would have

49. Dubos, Critical Reflections, III, 127.

50. Ibid., III, 130.

51. Ibid., III, 159.

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid.

on French theater. So similar were sung recitation and tragic declamation that Dubos once again suggested, "were a tragedy to have its declamation written in notes, it would have the same merit as an opera."⁵⁴ Clearly, opera had come of age as a literary art form and as a sophisticated genre for affective performance.

Musical Example and Application

An expressive musico-dramatic style reigned in opera until the far-reaching reforms of Christoph Willibald Gluck (1714-1787). Rameau's operas with their incomparable scores epitomized the grace and tenderness which were this style's greatest strengths; therefore, these scores present an optimal test to verify Dubos' theories. In addition, in Castor et Pollux, Rameau and his librettist, Pierre Joseph Bernard, explored an emotion new to opera libretti, fraternal love. Even Jupiter's paternal love received more stress in this work than did traditional romantic passion. In the dialogue scene in which Pollux begs Jupiter to be a substitute in Hades for his brother (the text is given below), the expressive styles of composition and of performing were challenged to convey heretofore uncharted feelings. Clearly, this scene is ideal for proving the validity of Dubos' commentary.

POLLUX, JUPITER.

Jupiter descends.

54. Ibid., III, 235.

POLLUX

My voice, powerful master of the earth,
 Is raised with trembling up to you;
 With just one of your glances dispelling my fright
 Calm also my profound sadness!
 O my father, hear my pleas!
 Immortality, which binds me in chains
 Is henceforth only a horrible torment for your son.
 Castor's no more, and my vengeance is vain,
 If your sovereign voice
 Does not restore him to happier days.
 O father, o my father, hear my pleas!

JUPITER

My love is aroused by these tender alarms;
 But hell has its laws that I cannot break.
 Destiny forbids me to answer your alarms.
 And my love forbids you to think of such.

POLLUX

Oh! why this severe command?
 What Alcide was able [to do] for his friend in hell,
 Could not I [do the same] for my brother?
 Destiny bound Alcmené to your love;
 But the love of Leda, was it less dear to you?

Despite the similarity of vocal ranges in Rameau's setting of the scene (both roles are for baritones or basses), musical characterization is achieved (see Example 8). Harmony is particularly important in the composer's conception of the scene, but has little direct bearing on the declamation. An introductory ritournelle of twenty-two measures establishes the g minor tonic key for the scene, while also providing a contrast of color and mood with the somber récit. Appropriate to Jupiter's entrance in the opera, an orchestral tous--four string parts, three woodwinds--accompanies the god's descent and a scenic transformation; then the two characters and the clavecin

avec un pupitre de V'elles perform the récitatif shown below:

Example 8. Jean-Philippe Rameau, Castor et Pollux, Act II, scene iv, "Ma voix, puissant maître du monde."

RÉCITATIF
Lent

Pollux

Ma voix, puis-sant maî - tre du mon - de sé -

Continuo

- lève en tremblant jus-qu'à toi D'un seul des tes re -

- gards dis-si - pant mon ef - froi, Cal-me aus - si ma dou - leur pro -

10

- fon - - - de! O mon père é - cou - te mes

voeux! L'immorta-li - té qui m'en chaî - ne Pour ton fils dé - sor -

15

- mais n'est qu'un sup - pli - ce af - freux. Cas - tor n'est plus, et ma ven - gean - ce est

vai - ne, Si ta voix sou - ve - rai - ne Ne le ra - pel - le à des jours plus heu -

20 Très lent

- reux. Ô mon père, ô mon père, é -

JUPITER :

25

Mon a-mour s'in-té - res - se à ces ten-dres a -

- cou - te mes voeux!

7 6 4 7 6 9 7 7
5 #

- lar - mes; Mais l'en-fer a des -lois que je ne puis for -

6 7 7

30 +

- cer. Le des-tin me dé - fend de ré-pondre à tes lar-mes, Et mon a -

6 7 6 5 # 6 6 5

- mour te dé - fend d'y pen - ser.

POLLUX:

Eh! pour-quoi cet or - dre sé -

4 8 6 4 # # 2 6 5 8

35

- vè-re? Ce qu'Alcide aux en-fers a pu pour son a -

- mi, Ne le pour-rais-je pour un frè-re? D'Alc-mè-ne a ton a -

- mour le des-tin fut u - ni; Mais l'a - mour de Lé -

40

- da te fut-el - le moins chè-re?

This unique dialogue scene was radically abbreviated in a 1754 revision. Only the opening speech for Pollux was left intact, the remainder falling victim to the tightening of the drama, which included an elimination of even the Prologue. Although the pacing is undoubtedly improved, the following lines

are not nearly as convincing in this crucial decision-making scene:

Act III, scene iii.

POLLUX

My voice, o powerful . . . Hear my pleas!

JUPITER

What charms for me, my son,
 his coming home would have!
 How sweet 'twould be to undertake!
 But hell has laws I cannot break,
 And fate forbids me grant that thou dost
 weeping crave.⁵⁵

These new lines, written by Bernard, weaken the relationship between Jupiter and his immortal son Pollux, which was quite strong in the original. Although the motivation for Jupiter's eventual acquiescence is lessened, the dramatic pace of the scene is more effective in the revised setting.

Coming exactly midway in the symmetrical tragédie structure of the revision, this scene is the first in the opera to use a supernatural element, unless one considers the reluctant demi-god, Pollux. This brother, the son of Jupiter and Leda, wants to substitute himself in Hades for his would-be military enemy and half-brother, Castor. Realizing Castor's love for Pollux's intended bride, Telaïre, the woeful and fraternally grieving Pollux magnanimously offers his own death and

55. "Que son retour, mon fils, aurait pour moi de charmes!/
 Qu'il me serait doux d'y penser!/
 Mais l'enfer a des lois que je ne puis forcer,/
 Et le sort me défend de répondre à tes larmes."
 (English translation by John Underwood in 1981 programme book for English Bach Festival production).

prospective wife. Although in the moralistic scheme of things, Pollux will be rewarded beyond his hopes for his selflessness, this moment in the opera is one of greatest tension and uncertainty, particularly because of its central position in the revised version.

Accordingly, Pollux' impulsive, anxious nature is exploited melodically by Rameau and contrasted with the more mature, less fully-dimensioned, narrower range of the god, Jupiter. The father's words are set to a smoother vocal line, with an unusually shaped, inverse arch. This v-shaped melody climaxes on a high D (measures 31-2), a note on which the younger character repeatedly hammers in the first half of the scene.

Rameau heightens the effect of the high register by setting the passionate exclamations ever higher, on D's and E^b's (measures 11, 20-1, and 32). As Dubos has suggested, these interjections are among the most intense and most melodically effective aspects of operatic settings. In each instance, the high note (O or Eh) is approached from below by leap and left by downward leap. So disjunct is the last exclamation that it is set at a jarring minor ninth above the bass to reemphasize its intensity of feeling. At such points as these, the recitative is least speechlike and most melodic.

Since Dubos stressed the rhetorical function of agréments, Rameau's use of them can prove the validity of Dubos' system. Pollux' first speech begins with three instances of outright

text-painting. In line one monde is set to the lowest pitch in the phrase, while the "voice is raised" literally up a perfect fifth with a "trembling" trill. Apparently, Pollux is so emotional that he even trembles on the solid ground of monde. The accent on toi (line two) subtly stresses how hard it is for Pollux to "raise his voice" to the gods. Since Rameau placed ornaments on the last stressed syllable of nearly every line, it is clearly unnecessary to analyze each instance of his use of this device. The affective nature of words like effroi (line three), profonde sadness (line four), "plea" (line five), etc., is beyond doubt.

Although the tempo must be constantly and "naturally" varied to seem like actual sung acting, Rameau provides two tempo markings, Lent and Très lent. Given the nature of Dubos' discussion and the inference that normally sung recitative was twice as slow as spoken recitation, slow or very slow recitative would indeed be pathetic. In this case, then, the actors, especially the one portraying Pollux, must almost indulge themselves in sorrow. None of the many sixteenth notes, which are, in only one instance, in groups larger than pairs (measure 13), must seem rushed.

One issue Dubos raises cannot be resolved completely in this scene: how much singing and how much speaking the via media ("middle sound") entailed. Logically, when the voice is excited into disjunct, passionate melody, the line should be more sung. Also, when most conjunct, the conversational melody

would seem most likely to be spoken. However, the more song-like his delivery, the less a singer uses speechlike registral and resonance coloring. By experimenting extensively with every line and word of the scene, the singing actor can find a flexible and appropriate via media which leads him to "move" audiences. In short, Dubos gave no set rule for determining how recitative should be sung or recited; the individual circumstances of the composition must guide the performer in singing récits passionately and naturally.

Another of the expressive devices which eighteenth-century actors and singers used most excessively was consonant suspension or gronder. While Lully's singers would have limited such declamatory agréments according to stringent limits of good taste and dramatic expediency, later singers would have likely indulged in consonant lengthening on all or most words with any expressive importance. Pollux' troubled lines are filled with such potentially expressive words as tremblant, effroi, douleur, profonde, voeux, enchaine, vengeance, and vaine. In particular, the less forward consonants, such as r and l, should be lengthened to achieve a darkening effect. If the vowels before these consonants are similarly colored, the affective result can be further strengthened. Also, the force of consonant pronunciation can be varied to contrast the meanings of word pairs such as calme and souveraine, larmes and sévère, and enfens and chère.

Finally, the singer should remember that from the point of view of declamation, post-Lullian récitatif was music in a very excessive style. Any expressive device is in order. In addition, although Dubos does not mention it, vibrato was certainly among the arsenal of ornaments singers used; widening, speeding, slowing or in any way manipulating the vibration of the voice would have been considered a valid and useful tool in impassioning the delivery. In music of this particular era, excess is expected--or should be.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In the foregoing "remarks" and "reflections," one concept is repeatedly stressed: the poetic text of vocal music, along with its interpretation by singing actors. Composers, singers, critics, and audiences alike paid considerable attention to sung words and their meanings. It was precisely this text-awareness which distinguished French vocal music, opéra especially, from its Italian counterpart. This difference is striking when we consider the history of opera and the humanistic roots common to both Italian and French operatic genres. Further, it is curious--perhaps even significant--that Florence provided the creators of both Italian and French opera. In each country, Italy and France, intellectual academies and a host of artists were striving to revive Greek tragedy in modern language.

Thus, opera was a rebirth of the ancient idea of the art of the Muses, Mousik, in which poetry, dance, drama, and music were totally integrated. The notion that these were separate and independent "arts" was as foreign to the Greeks as it was to their humanistic emulators. Though the Muses were separately identifiable, they always sang in chorus, usually directed by Apollo. Classical tragedy and modern opera, then, were both means of reproducing or of imitating the unified combination of

the Muses' arts. These works for the stage had extraordinary expressive power, even beyond the Aristotelian "katharsis of pity and fear." A set of generalized psychic states and their causes had been codified into the Greek Doctrine of the Effects.

In their attempts to revive this unified tragic genre through opera and to induce once again the powerful Effects of ancient music and drama, Italians used stile recitativo as the basic mode for their dramatic expression; the style and literary conception of monodic song dominated these works until after 1637, when the Venetians paved the way for a commercial, popular operatic enterprise at the Teatro San Cassiano. By the 1660's, when Frenchmen were experimenting with unified forms of musical theater, Italian opera had declined from its former state of literary and philosophical seriousness to a display of virtuosity. Significantly, the Venetian opera libretti freely mixed comic and serious genres and largely ignored the three Aristotelian unities: time, place, and action.

However, in France the development of opera was much more homogeneous, and changes in the music, libretti, and performance style, however significant, were more subtle and gradual. These nationalistic differences were due to two important factors: the unique patronage system in France and the highly refined Gallic gôût. Lully's monopolistic Académie assured him both royal patronage and a successful commercial venture in opera. In return, his operas were to be popular musico-theatrical

propaganda for royal absolutism, especially in their allegorical prologues.

While French works were often performed on demand (at the King's expense) in semiprivate gatherings at Versailles, most were given at the Palais Royal for a paying audience. Admission prices varied drastically, but the cheapest tickets were inexpensive enough that almost anyone who wanted to, could attend. In order to be seated in time, audiences arrived an hour early, avoiding the massive crowds and the congested carriage traffic.¹ Although not everyone attended to be spiritually or morally uplifted,² the popularity of the tragédies lyriques themselves was the major reason for their success. In such a system of patronage, the unpredictability of public taste was always tempered by the necessity of obliging the King. Also, the Académie Française's control, since 1635, of the French language, with its rhythmic and melodic inflections, prevented changing musical tastes from altering the essential qualities of French opera. A handful of composers would often set the very same livrette to music,³ or would adapt a proven text to

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1. Robert Isherwood, Music in the Service of the King: France in the Seventeenth Century (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1973), 197.
 2. The Palais Royal was deservedly infamous as a location for meeting prostitutes and procuring promiscuous actresses.
 3. An extreme example is Quinault's text for Armide; nearly one hundred years after Lully set it, Gluck composed his Armide, considered by many critics to be his chef d'oeuvre. While Gluck's rhythmic setting of the text was handled in a markedly different way from Lully's, both composers notated strikingly similar speechlike inflections in their melodies.

ensure the success of their works with a rather conservative public. This operatic audience was quite well-educated; intellectual life in France extended far beyond the intellectual academies, so that a thriving middle-class of literati frequented the Palais Royal. They bought the inexpensive livrettes and carefully followed the drame--often attending many performances of the same work. From these circumstances, one can see that the French language itself exerted a moderating impact on changing musical style, so that any changes occurred gradually.

After Lully's death, French operatic theater deteriorated in many respects. His works were still revived, but Louis was no longer enthusiastic about such spectacles. Grieving over the loss of his confidant Lully, Louis' attention to the arts was further diverted by pressing military problems. In addition, the pious Madame de Maintenon (1635-1719), who exerted great influence on the King, disliked "immoral" entertainments, even the exalted works of Lully. Since the King withdrew enthusiastic support and creative input, and since the newer works lacked the musical and dramatic vitality of Lully's, the marked decline in French opera between Lully and Rameau was inevitable. Nonetheless, the concern with text remained a characteristic French trait.

A few works stand out as exceptional examples of fine French lyric theater between Achille et Polixène, Lully's incomplete last work, and Hippolyte et Aricie, Rameau's first operatic effort. These exceptions notwithstanding, Rameau's operatic

oeuvre, with its bold harmony and imaginative, colorful orchestration, clearly signaled a revitalization of French opera. As a composer of such outstanding works, Rameau certainly was Lully's successor. And yet, Rameau's very strengths indicated that French opera had gradually drifted away from the Lullian ideal.

In Rameau's works, the delicate balance of poetry and music was tipped in favor of the newly intensified music. While he carefully observed declamatory rhythm and melody, Rameau's addition of more récits accompagnées and agréments was seen as a departure from unadorned sung declamation. Perhaps just as important now were the longer, more musically elaborate airs, which, even when in the Italian da capo mold, retained the French traits of simple tunefulness, ornamental variety, and harmonic and rhythmic restraint. Whereas Lully's airs were rhythmically and motivically outgrowths of musical ideas introduced in the récits,⁴ Rameau's musically independent airs were broadly scaled elaborations of character and feeling.

The livrettes which Rameau and his contemporaries set were often of less literary significance than those set by Lully. In fact, a large proportion of Rameau's operatic oeuvre consisted of works outside the tragédie lyrique or tragédie en

4. Armide's second act air, "Venez, venez" is one such example: its tune is clearly derived from the closing phrases of the recitative which precedes it, "Enfin, il est en my puissance."

musique genre.⁵ The tragédies themselves gave greater importance to elaborate airs, choruses, ballets, and orchestra. Nonetheless, such changes should be kept in their proper perspective, the French operatic tradition; after all, even Lully greatly influenced orchestration by standardizing five-part string writing.⁶ We should see these changes in approach as subtle shifts in emphasis, not as sudden upheavals. Whether Rameau's subject matter was tragic, comic, or "mixed," he followed the Lullian model in treating his poetry with great care, maintaining and refining that crucial aspect of the French-Classical vocal style.

Opera's treatment of text provoked a tremendous amount of comment. As was repeatedly stated earlier in this study, both Bacilly and Grimarest stressed syllable length as an important facet of affective sung performance. Musical notation could only approximate the "natural" rhythm of declaimed speech. To appear to be following "natural" declamatory rhythms was paramount because obvious, excessive concern with syllable length and stress was construed to be an affected performing habit. The performer was given the extremely difficult task of adjusting the music to accord with the rules of syllable quantity, a

5. In Rameau's large operatic output, representative examples include opéra-ballets like Les Indes galantes, Zéphyre, and Les Fêtes d'Hébé ou les Talents lyriques; comédiés-ballets such as La Princesse de Navarre and Platée; and an acte de ballet, Pygmalion.

6. Curiously, Venetian composers had experimented with that orchestral texture well before Lully's tragédies, but they never used it consistently.

learned task if ever there was one. And yet at the same time, he had to appear to be totally unencumbered by such intellectual concerns. By lengthening important, expressive words and syllables, this admittedly "studied" type of performing was rendered affective and moving. By this musically unmeasured interpretation, the structure and meaning of poetry could be expressed and enhanced.

Though their comments on syllable quantity were similar, particularly with regard to freedom in performance, Bacilly and Grimarest differed on one important issue. Because their treatises varied in purpose, the authors' syllable-length rules differed in application. Bacilly's rules, for singers only, were elaborate and very specific, whereas Grimarest's rules, for anyone who wanted to effectively communicate in French, were simpler and more general, applying even to prose. A detailed comparison of the two sets of rules is outside the scope of this study, but such an investigation is clearly needed if modern scholars are to have a clear understanding of recitative style.

All three treatises studied here dealt with operatic singing as a form of sung acting. It is significant then that so many French sources on both music and drama so seldom referred to operatic performers as chanteurs. Performing techniques of the spoken theater and those of the operatic stage during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries were indeed close in many respects. Several important performers at the Comédie Française, including the great tragedienne, la Clairon, were also at

other times members of the Opéra ensemble.⁷ The closeness in style and purpose for French operatic and theatrical genres cannot be underestimated, but a significant change, which has enormous implications for present-day performers, occurred in this regard sometime between the era of Lully's and Racine's triumphs and the publication of Dubos' Reflexions.

It is common knowledge that Lully modeled his recitative style on the acting techniques of Racine's troupe, most notably on the delivery of la Champmeslé. Her style, without a doubt extremely important in affective performance practice, was apparently a very musical approach to speech.⁸ Significantly, Racine's actors basically followed the grand manner of seventeenth-century French tragic acting.⁹ His use of some sort of

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7. La Clairon performed at the Opéra from March to September in 1743 after earlier successes at the Théâtre Italien and in Rouen. La Durancy left the Comédie Française in 1762 to perform at the Opéra, where she remained until 1766, returning to the Comédie long enough to play a leading role in Les Scythes, then rejoining the Opéra in October of that year. See Lancaster, op. cit., I, 18, 24.
8. Dominique Muller, op. cit., 231 ff., deals at length with the musicality of Racinian declamation. Her rather unique interpretation of the word chant as a perjorative for boring performances fails to take into account its use in the context of her sources, where it may mean a singsong, plainchant, or monotonous reiteration, as well as a song or melody. In my opinion, the context of each of her many citations makes it perfectly clear whether chant meant a chantlike song or a melodious one.
9. Molière's troupe, on the other hand, did not follow this tradition. Their more naturalistic style of acting--and by extension, of declaiming--was best suited to the comedies which were the staples of their repertoire. They did, however, perform tragedies, including some of Racine's early works. The sublime style of Racine's works was not really

pitch notation for declamation was certainly unique in the history of theater;¹⁰ it probably contributed to the melodious quality of his actors' declamation. Even though notation and Racine's use of it have been discussed extensively by musicologists and biographers, these very authorities ignore the fact that Racine used similar coaching methods with Madame DuParc.¹¹ Once established as the tragic poet of his day, it is not at all unlikely that Racine coached many of the leading players in his works, especially those in his new plays. This Racinian style was so uniquely melodic and passionate that Lully found in it an ideal model for French operatic monody.¹² Significantly, when asked to declaim Quinault's verses for the famous monologue from Armide, Adrienne Lecouvreur, a student of Michel Baron, who in turn was a protégé of Racine, performed in a manner that closely approximated the declamation notated in Lully's recitative.¹³ For those properly trained in Racinian

effective in these naturalistic performances, due to the incompatibility of the styles themselves and to the expectations of a critical audience. See Brereton, op. cit., 65 ff.

10. See the previous chapter, pp.
11. Brereton, op. cit., 95. Some scholars have minimized the importance of his tutoring la Champmeslé and la DuParc, on the basis of his presumed emotional attachments to the actresses.
12. For years, Lully had felt that the French language was inappropriate for operatic setting.
13. Romain Rolland, Musiciens d'autrefois (Paris: Hachette, 1908), 167. Rolland's source is a 1779 account by the Prévost d'Exmes.

declamation, the balanced grandeur of Racine's and Quinault's verses could be expressed in only one way, as far as rhythm and pitch were concerned.¹⁴ In this respect, Lully's notation of recitative was remarkably accurate.

One might say that in a real sense Lully's singers were actors, whereas Racine's actors were singers. So melodic was Racinian declamation that the early-twentieth-century French linguist, Georges Lote, hypothesized that Lully's recitatives influenced Racine's declamatory style.¹⁵ This is, of course, not likely, particularly since Racine's successful tragedies and his performing style predate Lully's first opera by about ten years. Whichever came first, the similarities between the Racinian and Lullian styles were notable. According to one revealing incident related by Racine's son Louis, Racine told his actors they would have to cease production when Lully issued his prohibition against singing outside the Palais Royal: "It [the reason] is that you must know that Lully alone has the privilege to perform song at his theater, and one perceives that [to be] quite unfortunate for your purposes [because] you sing in yours."¹⁶

14. The more bombastic verse of Corneille and the more ordinary lines of Molière had different appropriate means of being correctly recited.

15. Rosow, op. cit., 474.

16. "C'est que vous devez savoir que Lully a seul le privilège de faire chanter sur son théâtre, et on s'aperçoit que fort mal à propos vous chanter sur le vôtre." (Muller, op. cit., 235).

This songlike style was far from natural, everyday speech. Dominique Muller cites the Académie's Grand Dictionnaire article on chant as evidence that Racine, a prominent Académie member with presumed influence in shaping that article, did not favor a melodic declamation. According to the Dictionnaire, "A man who recites, who declaims, Sings, when he pronounces in a manner which is not natural and which approaches song. This player . . . sings."¹⁷ Was this "artificial" singing declamation the impassioned style of Racinian readings or the singsong droning of which so many bad actors were fond? Because of the negative tone of the comments, one must assume that, in this case, chant was not the delivery most scholars attribute to Racine. The "not natural[ness]" of Racine's actors' delivery, in fact, was largely responsible for its effectiveness. After all, declamation, as a rhetorical tool, had never been "natural," being essentially an appeal to the irrational. Rhetoric did not follow the rules of logic, but rather those of emotional manipulation.

Another primary source supports the traditional view that Racine's delivery was melodious. In the anonymous Entretiens galants (Paris, 1681), Bérélie, one of Lambert's better pupils, fictitiously "conversed" with two other illustrious persons about music. She offered the following:

I already regard declamation as another kind of music;
and in my opinion a musician who will know how to

17. "Un homme qui récite, qui déclame, Chante, quand il prononce d'une manière qui n'est pas naturelle et qui approche du chant. Ce Comédien . . . chante." (Ibid., 236).

recite verses well, will have great advantage in order to employ in it an expert and natural note. The récit of Actors is a sort of song, and you will certainly admit to me that la Champmeslé would not please us so much, if she had a less agreeable voice. But she knows how to manage it with much artistry, and she gives with it at the right moments inflexions so natural, that it seems that she truly has her heart filled with a passion, which is only in her mouth.¹⁸

This source clearly affirmed that this sung declamation was part and parcel of the grand passionate style of acting. That Bérélie singled out la Champmeslé as the exemplary exponent of this technique supports the traditional view that Racine built on and intensified then-current practices. More importantly, Bérélie's "conversation" stressed that in this type of delivery, it was largely the voice that conveyed the appearance of the dramatic feeling.

In serious theater and opera, impassioned speech and song were the means for moving auditeurs to tears. Predisposed to such a tearful reaction, many listeners actually went to the theater with the expectation of being moved to weep. Actually, such crying was a part of the aesthetic pleasure of viewing works in these genres. To a very real extent, a performance

18. "Je regarde déjà la déclamation, comme une autre espèce de musique; et dans mon sens un musicien qui saura bien réciter des vers, aura de grands avantages pour y mettre une note savante et naturelle. Le récit des Comédiens est une manière de chant, et vous m'avouerez bien que la Champmeslé ne nous plairait pas tant, si elle avait une voix moins agréable. Mais elle la sait conduire avec beaucoup d'art, et elle y donne à propos des inflexions si naturelles, qu'il semble qu'elle ait véritablement dans le coeur une passion, qui n'est que dans sa bouche." (Ibid., 237).

which did not reduce the audience to tears was a failure. Many accounts attested that these performers quite often succeeded.

Such an emotionally overwhelming style of acting had to utilize tremendous expressive and vocal power. Indeed many critics complained of great shouts, grands éclats de voix, of vocal intensity alone, which often failed to convey strong emotion. One of the chief assets of Montfleury's troupe of tragedians, on the contrary, was the beauty and power of the actors' voices.¹⁹ Their resonant sounds suited the serious repertoire which was that company's specialty. Another source, Bukofzer, noted la Champmeslé's "emphatic inflections."²⁰ Roland went so far as to characterize them as "vehement."²¹ Despite the preponderance of evidence that Lully's Racinian model was both melodic and forceful, Muller nevertheless counters,

. . . a recitation, can be emphatic without being 'singing,' can be 'singing' without being emphatic. Besides, if the song [chant] should be confounded [!] with the vehemence, one does not see how it could have served as the model for récitatif, nor why the role of la Champmeslé had been decisive.²²

19. The Young Racine wrote for this troupe after a short tenure with Molière and his actors.

20. Manfred Bukofzer, Music in the Baroque Era (New York: Norton, 1947), 156.

21. Muller, op. cit., 232.

22. " . . . une récitation, peut être emphatique sans être chantante, elle peut être chantante sans être emphatique. Au reste, si le chant devait se confondre avec la véhémence, on ne voit pas comme il aurait pu servir de modèle au récitatif, ni pourquoi le rôle de la Champmeslé eût été déterminant." (Ibid.).

Admittedly, the forcefulness of Racinian delivery was not unique to his players, but was a dramatic convention. "Bombast was one of the most constant characteristics of tragic declamation of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries."²³

The effort required for theatrical projection was substantial, particularly, as Bacilly pointed out, for clearly understandable delivery. It is nearly impossible for modern actors, and singers of this music, to conceive of this kind of forcefulness in acting, bordering on athletic exertion. As a result of his effortful declamation of Herod's curses in Tristan's Marianne, for example, Montdory was partially paralyzed in 1637.²⁴ Another actor, Montfleury, nearly died onstage in 1667 while declaiming the last lines of Folie d'Oreste.²⁵ Indeed, one of Racine's players was similarly stricken while playing in Alexandre.²⁶ According to Georges Lote, this forceful delivery was part of the spectacle of French theater: "They continued to admire the passionate cries, the modulations of great tonal range which had charmed the contemporaries of

23. "L'enflure fut l'une des caractéristiques les plus constantes de la déclamation tragique des 17e et 18e siècles." (Ibid.).

24. Ibid. Muller cites Georges Mongrédien, Dictionnaire biographique des comédiens français du XVIIe siècle (Paris, 1961), 132, 163.

25. Ibid.

26. Brereton, op. cit., 93, 111.

Richelieu [d. 1642]."²⁷ If indeed such exaggerated and laborious declamation served as a model for Lully's recitative, then most of the modern performances of his works are far from authentic; the historic evidence overwhelmingly supports a more forceful interpretation. In grand siècle declamation and rhetoric, the force of the delivery increased the force of the audience's response. Stylistically, this combined effort and power communicated the "pomp and magnificence"²⁸ of the "grand style."

In consideration of its affective force, Dubos was the first philosophically oriented writer to acknowledge opera's superiority over spoken drama. He cited the emotional content of the poetry, the frequent use of passionate interjections and recitative melodies which were close to the "natural" sound of feeling. Although he refrained from comparing the poetic structure of opéra versus that of drame, the dramatic convention of the spoken Alexandrine, while grand in style, was certainly artificial and inflexible. By contrast, tragédie lyrique texts alternated airs in regular line lengths with recitatives with freely alternating octosyllabic and hendecasyllabic or dodecasyllabic lines. Also, rhyme schemes in operas were far freer than the unvarying and unnatural Alexandrine couplets of plays.

27. "On continua d'aimer les cris forcenés, les modulations à grande étendue tonale qui avaient charmé les contemporains de Richelieu." (Lote, op. cit., 361).

28. Grimarest, op. cit., 120.

Thus, the fluid, yet highly structured verse of livrettes was more direct than the verse of tragedies and was also more effective in adapting to particular emotional situations. Other critics also had to recognize the overpowering impact opera had on audiences, even if they were unsure of the aesthetic reasons for its effect.

Certainly, poetry was more emotionally powerful when sung, and hence it was more "dangerous" in effect. Jansenists, in particular, feared the moral impact of opera, as did a handful of Jesuits. This fear is ironic, considering the neo-Platonic aims--moral, educational, and, in terms of royal absolutism, political--to which lyric tragedy aspired.

In 1666 Armand de Conti criticized all spectacles for their ability to "incite moral laxity."²⁹ After Lully's death, the attack on the "diabolical" powers of opera increased. A Jansenist père, Lelevel, responded to a defense of entertainments³⁰ with his Réponse à la lettre du théologien défenseur de la comédie:

. . . All the dances, all the songs from the operas, all the verses, all the declamations of the comedies, do they give birth to anything but profane sentiments? . . . I see an Academy of Music in which pride and self-confidence are the most sublime virtues, in which one exchanges amorous endearments with another. Miserable creatures affect power and divine majesty there; they want to force all of nature to serve

29. Isherwood, op. cit., 326.

30. Père Caffaro (?), Lettre d'un théologien illustré par sa qualite et par son mérite (1694).

their passions; only profane ideas are aroused there I defy you to find anything stronger in paganism.³¹

According to Lelevel, even the evil of Jesuit theatricals was less destructive than Lully's tragédies lyriques. It should be remembered that Quinault's retirement from livrette-writing was prompted by regret for the sins of his theater career. Despite such repentance, the Bishop of Meaux, Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, complained of "all the perverse endearments, all the maxims of love, and all those sweet invitations to enjoy the good times of youth . . . [which] resound especially in the operas of Quinault."³² Lully's music was even more guilty, for "while one is enchanted by the sweetness of the melody or dazed by the marvels of the spectacle, these sentiments creep in while one is not thinking about them, and conquer the heart without being noticed."³³

Yet another père, de la Grange, attacked opéra in his Réfutation d'un écrit favorisant la comédie for operatic depictions of pagan gods and goddesses who were almost worshipped in the quasi-liturgical récits:

. . . in what manner does one see most operas begin, if not by the Invocation of a divinity Accompanied by a perfectly tuned symphony, an actress invokes a false god and makes sacrifices to him. Softened by amorous lovers and bucolic scenes and lured by music that is militant at first but that soon takes on a religious quality, the spectator is at the mercy of the god by the end of the performance.³⁴

31. Isherwood, op. cit., 327-8.

32. Ibid., 328.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid., 329.

If, indeed, opera was a moral menace, the text and music were equally at fault.

Another area of controversy was a psychological one: many feared that the enchantment of opera was so convincing that spectators would no longer be able to distinguish between the artistic realm, or fantasy, and reality. One parody, Les opéra, was based entirely on that suggestion carried to an extreme. Its author Charles Marguetel de Saint-Denys de Saint Evremond, constructed a satiric plot which focused on the public's reaction to Lully's tragédies. The story revolved around M. Crisard, whose daughter, Crisotine, was literally addicted to opera. "She conversed in song, sang operatic arias repeatedly, and chanted . . . alarming ideas."³⁵ When questioned by a priest, she revealed her new religious devotion to Apollo and Mars. A medical examination was unsuccessful in treating her "malady;" the doctor averred that her illness was fashionable, and that the only topic of courtly discussion was opéra. Next, Crisotine met and fell in love with Tirsolet,³⁶ and soon they believed themselves to be Cadmus and Hermione. After a second examination, the doctor proposed that both be sent to the Palais Royal for a "cure" of six months of endless opera-going. Despite the deliberate exaggeration in such a spoof, the plot

35. Ibid., 244.

36. The lovers' names are derived from the popular shepherd and nymph, Tircis and Clori, who figured so prominently in pastorals.

of Les opéra supported the contention of many moralists and theologians. Tragédies, with their beautiful music, powerful performances, and mythological/legendary subjects, presented a distorted view of experience, which many writers felt was like a potent, addictive drug.

Many listeners were drawn by opera's appeal to the affections. Unlike theater or poetry, opera was outside the realm of reason. Even the livrettes of tragédies lyriques were shrewdly calculated to overwhelm the auditeur, effected by adherence to what Dubos called the "natural language of passion." Operatic music was even more attuned to this non-rational language; only music could follow the heightened inflections of impassioned speech. As Dubos indicated, it was the melody in opera that made it even more powerful than spoken theater. Whereas earlier critics found this power of emotional appeal to be the danger of opera, Dubos pointed out that the power of tragédies was one of rhetorical effectiveness.

Melodic heightening of speech inflections added to the affective result in the same way that increased declamatory force yielded greater rhetorical impact. Thus, Bacilly's frequent use of the words "force" and "effort" for declamatory singing must not be taken lightly by readers. Particularly in regard to vowel pronunciation, these energetic word-formations rendered clear, affectively significant poetry. Later, however, in his chapter, Du Chant, Grimarest mentioned force only once. Conversely, he often mentioned the term "expression." This is

significant because, as Dubos pointed out, the early eighteenth century saw many changes in theatrical and sung declamation. Even in costuming, these eighteenth-century actors favored naturalism, expressivity, and attention to detail over grand effet.

La Clairon's long process of "maturing" was indicative of this naturalistic, expressive trend. Always an actress of intellect rather than of instinct, la Clairon was already a well-established performer before she came to the Comédie-Française in 1743 to be an understudy for la Dumesnil. According to Bachaumont, her voice was too loud and too unrefined at first to move listeners.³⁷ Her friend, the English actor David Garrick (1717-1779), found her delivery often too "violent," while Collé complained of her overblown, chantée declamation, which was as full of gasps and groans as that of old Mme. Duclos.³⁸ The actress took these criticisms to heart, and despite her popular success was determined to reform her technique and style; from her costuming to her gesture and vocal production, la Clairon experimented with more intimate, more detailed, and more naturalistic acting at a very small theater in Bordeaux. Her success there was such that she tried a similarly supple and varied interpretation of Roxane at Versailles. In a small auditorium there, Parisians were overwhelmed by her transformation and by her "authentic" oriental dress sans

37. Lancaster, op. cit., I, 19.

38. Ibid.

hoop.³⁹ It is interesting that Mlle. Clairon's declamatory improvements broadened the compass of her voice so that she could use a variety of pitch inflections rather than harsh accents for emphasis; with her now-melodious lines, critics no longer complained of her declamation's being too chantée.

As has been mentioned earlier, la Clairon was one of many speaking actors who also sang opera. This fact alone suggests that French Classical singing and acting were so interrelated that separating one way of performing from the other was a difficult task. Indeed, many speaking actors were encouraged to observe opera performances, particularly to hear and study sung recitative. Some actors were perhaps too enthusiastic about the opera. In fact, while discipline problems at the opera resulted in the pregnancies of many female singers and various casting difficulties, actresses at the Comédie occasionally feigned attacks of the vapeurs in order to attend the opera. Marie-Madeleine Blouin, for example, who was one of Mlle. Clairon's students, once kept an audience waiting several hours. She never arrived and the ticket monies had to be returned. The actress claimed that she was ill, but when it was discovered that her "sickness" was attendance at the Academy of Music, she was imprisoned and heavily fined.⁴⁰ Just as many actors enjoyed opera performances, singers were encouraged to attend

39. Alois Maria Nagler, op. cit., 293-5.

40. Lancaster, op. cit., I, 24.

performances of speaking actors. In fact, opéra singers were allowed free entry into the Comédie Française to view the most traditional company of actors in France. The creative interaction between actors and singers was clearly quite extensive.

As Dubos pointed out, the notation of declamation was difficult to convey accurately, but it might be a valuable record in showing the relationship between spoken and sung delivery. In his study of spoken declamation, Dubos realized that a highly sophisticated system of speech notation was needed. He required "quantifiable, measurable proof" to substantiate his observations and conjectures. His insights and speculations on notational systems are invaluable for theatrical and musical historians.

Continuity was preserved well into the eighteenth century by Racine's proteges, who were generally held to be the best declaimers of their age. As craftsmen, they passed on their art to younger apprentices, maintaining a written and oral tradition. In fact, at the Comédie Française the declamatory facility that Racinians taught was so highly regarded that members were strongly encouraged to teach that subject; if any of their students were particularly capable declaimers, the maîtres were generously rewarded by the government. The promising pupils were, of course, prime candidates for subsequent admission into the troupe.⁴¹ This emphasis on vocal training was

41. Ibid., I, 10.

necessary because the actors had to be clearly understood in the Comédie's large theater, a 2,000-seat auditorium on the rue des Fossés-Saint-Germain-des-Prés.

Curiously, by Dubos' time, "expressive" sung declamation had come to have more affective power than theatrical speech, despite the slowing down of tempo and the extensive ornamentation of French vocal music.⁴² Dubos rightly attributed the superiority of song to the fairly accurate record of musical notation. It must be admitted, however, that eighteenth-century actors who declaimed well in the neo-classical sense varied their rhythm and pitch patterns little from performance to performance. Nonetheless, the lack of declamatory notation for actors allowed them many more changes and excesses in delivery over long periods of time, both in performance and in perpetuating their tradition.

In eighteenth-century opera the pristine, declamatory tradition of the Lullian style became less and less highly regarded. Despite the regulatory influence of musical notation, individual expression lessened the power of the grand style. Even so, operatic singers' delivery (because the notation prevented any rapid "decay" in the noble art of delivery) was a model for speaking actors studying the older "grand" manner. This was one of the main reasons why opera was so popular with non-singing

42. Even Bacilly felt that many vocal ornaments could be used effectively in declamatory singing, but Lully prohibited any being added to the few he chose for special emphasis.

actors; because musical notation was even more accurate than that of Racine, operas were a more accurate record of the Racinian-Lullian tradition than plays.

Musical notation of operatic recitative might have been quite accurate, but many subtleties of dramatic pace could not be conveyed even with the metric changes in récits. Earlier opera performances had boasted recitative which was nearly spoken; Lully referred to his récit style as a "kind of speech." Accordingly, its vivacious flow should be brisk "like champagne." The magical qualities attributed to it reflect the captivating hold it had on listeners. In examining the music for Lullian recitative, one notes the long-held bass notes and the generally slow-moving harmonies. If they are performed at an eighteenth-century pace, the sense of harmonic continuity and direction is nonexistent. Using the sense of harmonic underpinning and line may indeed be the way to find the most effective tempo in Lully's récits. Forward motion must not be confused with lightness, and even Lully's recitatives should be propelled less quickly than Italian recitativo secco.⁴³

While eighteenth-century actors were experimenting with more personal styles of delivery which were often much more naturalistic, singers also were individually trying new means of speaking-singing their lines. As the division between recitative and air became more blurred, recitative could move from

43. Cyr, op. cit., 233-5, 237.

nearly spoken delivery to fully sung lines. Actually, this change resulted in ever-increasing numbers of récits which were truly sung and, as a consequence, which were slower. According to Dubos, recitative was twice as slow as declaimed speech. Impassioned and varied, French recitative held its listeners in rapt attention; on the other hand, when Charles de Brosses visited Rome in 1740, the Italian recitatives so bored him with their monotony that he used them as occasions to play chess.⁴⁴

By 1759, however, French recitative was so slow that Jean d'Alembert complained of its "fatiguing and odious pace."⁴⁵ Mary Cyr's studies show that the use of smaller note values in this later récitatif actually indicates slower rhythmic pulses. According to Rousseau, the excesses of French singers not only slowed its pace from former Lullian liveliness, but added more false "mannerisms;"⁴⁶ in light of the fact that many "reforms" in delivery were intended to make it more natural, this situation is certainly ironic. In fact, French récits had become so fully sung and overly ornamented that Rousseau found them indistinguishable from airs. Example 9 demonstrates the extent to which recitative style had changed. Lully's lines were nearly unrecognizable in Bérard's 1755 L'Art du chant transformation. The burdensome weight of added embroidery necessitated the subtly reshaped rhythms, and the interpretive clues provided by Lully's rests were completely altered by the revised rhythm.

44. Ibid., 233.

45. Ibid., 233-4.

46. Ibid., 236.

Example 9. Jean Baptiste Lully, *Atys*, Act V, scene iii. Upper staff: Bérard's version written out. Middle staff: Bérard's version with ornamental symbols. Lower staff: original version.

Ciel! quel-le va-peur m'en-vi - ron - ne! Tous mes sens sont trou-
 Ciel! quel-le va-peur m'en-vi - ron - ne! Tous mes sens sont trou-
 Ciel! quel-le va-peur m'en-vi - ron-nel Tous mes sens sont trou-

- blés, Je fré-mis, je fri - son - ne; Je trem - ble et tout à
 - blés, Je fré-mis, je fri - son - ne; Je trem - ble et tout à
 - blés, Je fré-mis, je fri - son - ne; Je trem - ble et tout à

coup. . .
 coup. . .
 coup. . .

Another mannered excess of eighteenth-century singers was with dynamic nuance. The swells and stresses which Bacilly found excessive and inappropriate in song were yet another factor in the ever-slowng pace of recitative,⁴⁷ according to Cyr. Whatever decadence that may have been evident in singing was apparently even more obvious in spoken theater, however. Recitative still had tremendous power when effectively handled. A 1754 account relates that a recitative

. . . stirred such intense feeling, both in us orchestra players and in the listeners, that we all watched each other's faces to observe the change of color it caused in each of us. The affect was not one of sorrow (I remember very well that the words were angry) but a certain coldblooded grimness which really shook one's feelings.⁴⁸

Récits perhaps lost their neo-classical power and restraint, but their emotional expressiveness continued to affect listeners.

In light of what has been shown in this study, it is surprising that French Classical operas are so seldom performed. Their beauty, power and literary worth clearly suggest that--given adequate, thoughtful preparation--these works would succeed, even today. Critics often refer to the recent revival of Baroque opera, which has been limited to Italian works, particularly those by Monteverdi, Cavalli, Handel, and Vivaldi. Nonetheless, the same critics often bewail the stiff libretti, which frequently are overpowered by the splendors of Italian melody.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid., 233.

The past few years have brought a small number of French works to the stage, nearly all by Rameau. For example, since August 1983, Hippolyte et Aricie has been performed a total of eight times at Paris, Lyons, and the London Proms; Platée has had three performances at the English Bach Festival; Naïs and Fêtes de Polymnie were paired for two performances at the English Bach Festival; and Charpentier's Medée was staged at Lyons. Recordings of French Classical opera are similarly numerous only for Rameau. Medée will soon be released in digital and compact-disc format, but there are still only two Lully operas in the catalogue of recorded music: a poorly conceived Alceste under the direction of Jean-Claude Malgoire and an interesting Armide led by Philippe Herreweghe. The Gustav Leonhardt-conducted Le bourgeois Gentilhomme is no longer available.

In what few performances there are of these operas, the recitatives are severely under-rehearsed. Musically complex set pieces are polished, but the dramatically essential récits nearly always lack forcefulness and imagination. Even the best singers of this music, such as Rachel Yakar, Dame Janet Baker, and Jennifer Smith, sing their récits nearly always far too metrically and with too little inflection. Further, the récits of Lully and Rameau sound very similar in modern performances, when, as this study has shown, there are vast differences in their poetry, musical language, and performance style.

Although these operas--especially Lully's--appear in the original score to be rather simple and unspectacular, in performance they should be vivid examples of musical theater. Récits, in particular, are deceptively straightforward, being scored for basse continue and unadorned solo voice. Performers had to transform these recitatives into colorful scenes of dramatic expression. If these works are to have the intended dramatic and literary impact, the performers in modern revivals must more fully explore the techniques of singing récitatif and of theatrical declamation.

If performers are to realize the intentions of French operatic composers, they must have musical scores that accurately reflect those intentions. Unfortunately, very few well-prepared editions are available of French Classical operas--critical, performing, or otherwise. The Rameau Oeuvres complètes, for example, are yet to be completed; further, many of the scores in that particular edition are far from authoritative. Vincent d'Indy's reorchestrations of Rameau obscure the intentions of the composer. Although the Lully Complete Works more accurately convey the composer's scores, that edition is still unfinished. Often, the only edition which fulfills modern singers' practical need for piano-vocal scores is the Chefs d'oeuvre classiques de l'opéra français. This series is unfortunately nothing more than reprints of late eighteenth-century scores. There are no indications of orchestration, nor figures with the basses; also, many of the bass lines have been

altered slightly to include spurious octave doublings. With these editorial inconsistencies, it is hardly surprising that the rerelease of Janet Baker and Robert Tear's recorded performance of Hippolyte et Aricie contains an apology for the edition used. Scholars must remedy this scarcity of reliable editions if the early music revival is to include stylistically accurate tragédie lyrique performances. In addition, I hope that Lully's works will soon be played along with the still-rare Rameau representations.

Meanwhile, there is much study yet to be undertaken about early French opera and its performance practice. Performance histories, dramatic histories, poetic analyses, and dramatic theory and practice are all areas that require more research. Another aspect of French style which is inadequately studied, yet certainly crucial, concerns the rules of syllable length. We really do not understand how Bacilly's rules emerged from the Baïf tradition of measured verse, nor do we comprehend the subtle changes which brought about the simplified system of Grimarest. If the freedom of declamation is to follow the complex poetic rhythms, singers must better understand those quantitative factors.

Finally, as singers and musicologists explore early music and its performance practice, they must eventually undertake a broad comparative study of "authentic" early vocal techniques. Then, as now, there were national schools advocating different approaches to the basic precepts of singing: breathing,

registers, vocal categories, articulation, and ornamentation. Richard Miller's comparisons of modern techniques is a model for a similar historical work. For French opera, a study contrasting vocal training for actors with that for singers would offer practical concepts for singers trying to--as Grimarest suggested--"imagine themselves to be actors."

This study has attempted to clarify some aspects of performance practice in récits. The elements of flexible rhythm, colorful use of vocal registers, expressive consonants, modified vowels, carefully placed ornaments, and poetic analysis are tools singers and coaches must use in preparing tragédies lyriques for performances. Another of the aims of this study has been to counterbalance the many studies only concerned with the intricacies of récitatif rhythm. The most notable aspect of récits is clearly their melodic character. The heightened speech inflections of recitative must be sung, or nearly sung. Accordingly, every source examined in this study agreed that the singing actor's primary concern was acting with the voice. Therefore, singers today must learn to put the drama first without ignoring the demands of the music; after all, in these works, the music embodies the drama, rather than serving it.

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