

## Music in the Plays of Raymond Poisson

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For several dramas by Raymond Poisson, there is evidence that music was intended to be a significant ingredient. This is probably because Poisson was a leading comic actor, equipped with excellent singing and dancing skills and knew the effects of music on stage. In this present edition, we include music for five works by Poisson: *Lubin ou le sot vengé* (1660), *La mascarade du Capitaine* (1665), *Le zig zag* (1667), *Les faux moscovites* (1669), *Les femmes coquettes* (1671) and *Les fous divertissants* (1680). Some of those plays allocate simple tunes to the protagonists while, for two, Poisson collaborated with the leading composers of that time: Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632-1687), and Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1643-1704). Lully seems to have written at least part of the music for *La mascarade du Capitaine* where he took the role of ‘Capitaine’, while Charpentier was in charge of the music for *Les fous divertissants*. The latter, in particular, employs an extensive amount of vocal and instrumental music, so much so that in effect it belongs to the *comédie-ballet* genre. And for this production by Poisson and Charpentier, the monopoly that Lully was granted to restrict the use of music in public theatres other than his own seems to have been relaxed.

The tasks of identifying the music for this edition and tracing its sources encountered various kinds of difficulty. In the case of *Les fous divertissants*, the composer Charpentier included a copy of the music in what is known as his ‘*meslanges autographes*’, a 28-volume autograph collection of his works (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Rés. Vm<sup>1</sup> 259, ff. 1<sup>r</sup> – 13<sup>r</sup>). Charpentier’s score indicates the stage directions and also the names of the singers: de Villiers (= Jean Deschamps) and Guérin (d’Estriché), both of whom were *haute-contres*, La Grange (a tenor), and Verneuil (a bass). The stage directions and the singers’ names are included in our music edition. The text used in Charpentier’s music conforms largely to that in our text edition of the play, apart from the second couplet of the recitative ‘Amants, vous faites bien de quitter ce séjour’ (Acte III, Scène dernière) where Charpentier gives:

Tous deux brillant d’appâts, fidèles amoureux,  
Que vous serez longtemps heureux !  
Vous n’avez nuls souhaits à faire ;  
Les plaisirs devancent vous vœux ;  
L’amour ne songe qu’à vous plaire.  
Tous deux brillant d’appas, jeunes et vigoureux,  
Que vous serez longtemps heureux !

Furthermore, Charpentier specifies in his score that in the second act, the characters Léandre and Angélique sing ‘airs de l’Opera’ in the manner of parody. Those airs are: ‘Que l’absence de ce qu’on aime’ from *Proserpine* premiered in 1680, and ‘Cruelles inquiétudes’ and ‘Que tout parle’ from *Bellérophon* (1679). Both operas were written by Lully and we have consulted the first editions of the respective operas for our versions here.<sup>1</sup>

Locating the music for *La mascarade du Capitaine* has turned out to be more complicated. Schneider’s Lully thematic catalogue (1981) lists this work as ‘Mascarade du Capitaine ou L’impromptu de Versailles’ (LWV 24) and tells us that very little music is surviving.<sup>2</sup> However, Lully seems to have ‘reused’ some of the music of *La mascarade* for his *Ballet des Gardes* (LWV 28) in June 1665. Indeed, in a couple of sources for *Le ballet des Gardes*, the first two instrumental pieces bear the titles of ‘La mascarade de Versailles ou l’Impromptu’. Probably the first piece functioned originally as the overture for *La mascarade* while the second with the title of ‘Gavotte pour les Pages’ provided introductory music for Entrée VIII of *La mascarade* which is a scene involving ‘Les deux Valets’. Our musical

<sup>1</sup> Jean-Baptiste Lully, *Bellérophon* (Paris: C. Ballard, 1679), ff. 50<sup>r-v</sup> and 53<sup>v</sup> – 56<sup>r</sup>; and Idem., *Proserpine* (Paris: C. Ballard, 1680), pp. 155-166.

<sup>2</sup> Herbert Schneider, *Chronologisch-thematisches Verzeichnis sämtlicher Werke von Jean-Baptiste Lully* (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1981), p. 108.

edition of those piece is based mainly upon the Bibliothèque municipale de Toulouse, Cons 1 (1-6), Mf. 1263 ff. 117<sup>r</sup> – 118<sup>r</sup>, a manuscript copied around the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century by Henri Foucault (fl. 1690-1719/20), a music publisher known for his editions of Lully’s operas. We have also consulted the Besançon Bibliothèque municipale, Ms 1373, ff. 137<sup>r</sup> – 139<sup>r</sup>, as the Foucault source contains some errors. For example, between bars 11 and 15, he accidentally duplicated the notes for the *Quinte de violon* part in the *Taille de violon* part which does not make sense musically.

Another item in the text of *La mascarade*, ‘Quel désordre! Quel tintamarre!’, survives with the same title, and with the addition of a melody and bassline in the Stanford University Library, MSS Codex 1151, f. 49<sup>r</sup>. It has no further text underlaid to the music, and the Stanford source is the only surviving one for that music. Moreover, in that source, the item is ascribed to another work by Lully, his *Ballet des Gardes* – as we saw earlier with two other pieces from *La mascarade*. Furthermore, the Stanford manuscript includes an instrumental piece entitled ‘Entrée des Servantes’ (f. 25<sup>r</sup>) amongst those under the title of *Le ballet des Saisons* (also by Lully in 1661, LWV 15). Since *Le ballet des Saisons* contains no scene with servants, this may well have been extracted from Entrée VII of *La mascarade* which does feature servants.

Most problematic has been the identification of the short tunes sung in the plays. In many cases, they seem to be either purloined pre-existing popular songs, or ‘contrafacta’, using the tunes of those songs but with new words suitable for the contexts of the dramas. Moreover, versions once used on stage themselves may later acquire yet newer or adapted words. For example, the text of ‘Ah, le bon vin!’ from *Lubin ou le sot vengé* (Scene 12) seems to have been borrowed partly from a version of ‘Si la Reine allait avoir’, a satirical chanson circulated around 1617. The latter, which criticises the illicit liaison between Queen Marie de Medici and Concino Concini, Marquis d’Ancre, in turn, itself has two variant but related versions (Texts A and B below). Poisson’s ‘Ah, le bon vin’ clearly corresponds to the final five lines of Text B (in italics) found in the famous Clairambault-Maurepas collection.

[Text A]

Si la Reine allait<sup>3</sup> avoir,  
Un enfant dans le ventre,  
Il seroit bien noir,  
Car il seroit d’Ancre,  
O Guéridon<sup>4</sup> des Guéridons, dondaine,  
O Guéridon des Guéridons, don don.<sup>5</sup>

[Text B]

Si la Reine avoit un enfant dans le ventre,  
Il seroit bien noir, car il seroit d’Ancre,  
*O le bon vin! Tu as endormy ma mere,  
Mais jamais, jamais,  
Toureloure, loure,  
Mais jamais, jamais,  
Tu ne m’endormiras.<sup>6</sup>*

After appearing in Poisson’s play, ‘Ah, le bon vin’ was in turn parodied in Evaristo Gherardi’s *La baguette du Vulcan* (1693), Scene 4, where Roger sings ‘sur l’air *O le bon vin tu as endormy ma mere*’:

[Text C]

O le bon temps  
Ou l’Himen servoit d’azile !  
Mais pour à present  
Toure loure loure loure.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>3</sup> ‘Alloit’ in some sources.

<sup>4</sup> Guéridon is a stock-in-trade character in farces and songs in 17<sup>th</sup>-century France.

<sup>5</sup> Paris, the Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Musique Rés. Vma 7-(1), ‘Recueil de chansons choisies en vaudevilles. Pour servir à Lhistoire Anecdote depuis 1600 Jusques Et Compris 1697’, p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> The Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, MS Français 12616, ‘Chansonnier dit de Maurepas. 1<sup>o</sup> “Recueil de chansons, vaudevilles, sonnets, épigrammes, épitaphes et autres vers satiriques et historiques, avec des remarques curieuses”, I Années 1389-164[1]’, p. 333. The Comte de Maurepas (1701-1780) collected a vast number of scandalous verses and those from the 17<sup>th</sup> century in his manuscripts were copied directly from the collection of Pierre Clairambault (1651-1740), Louis XIV’s genealogist.

<sup>7</sup> [Evaristo Gherardi], *Le theatre Italien de Gherardi ou le recueil des toutes les comedies et scenes françoises* (Paris: Chez les Heritirers de Mabre-Cramoisy, 1695), p. 496.

Unfortunately, the music to which Text C was sung is not found in the musical appendix of Gherardi's collection, as it was already a known tune. However, a tune traditionally associated with Text A ('L'air des Guéridons') is able to accommodate Text B, provided the final line of the music is repeated. By contrast, Text C will fit the tune without any repeat of the music. Hence, the Guéridon tune may well have been sung in Poisson's drama. Those kinds of minor adaptations of basic tunes are still common in theatre music, and, indeed, in many slightly irregular strophic songs throughout the tradition. These irregularities with attendant need for minor adjustments seem to be a feature of several other songs indicated in Poisson's texts.

In the case of the music for *Le zig zag*, our work is substantially indebted to the investigations by Charles Mazouer.<sup>8</sup> As he indicated, three tunes used in that play survive in early 18<sup>th</sup>-century chanson collections. In addition, we have managed to identify the music for one more song from *Le zig zag*: 'Venant de Versailles'. Another poem with the same incipit and a similar verse structure is found again in the Clairambault-Maurepas collection,<sup>9</sup> where it bears the indication 'sur l'Air de Lanturla'. In fact, there are two 'Lanturla' melodies which found their way into the music volume of the Clairambault-Maurepas collection,<sup>10</sup> and it is the second of them that accommodates the 'Venant de Versailles' verse in Poisson's drama.

The text at least of the song 'En revenant de Canadas' from *Les faux moscovites* (Scene 7) seems to belong to a group of 'chansons de routiers' of that time, based around Gaultier Garguille's very popular song 'En m'en revenant de Gascogne'.<sup>11</sup> Due to the shared verse structure and common reference to 'branle' (a sideways step in the Renaissance *basse danse*), it appears that the melody used for 'En revenant de Canadas' is most likely to be that of 'En m'en revenant de Saint Nicolas' – though, this tune is not the same as Garguille's 'Gascogne' song which has a different verse structure. The 'Saint Nicolas' melody was published first as part of an *air-de-cour* collection in 1597.<sup>12</sup> In fact, it was one of the most popular in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century through and attracted many arrangements for lute.<sup>13</sup> A version of this melody became known as 'more platino' and served as the basis for the variations for keyboard, *Almande gratie*, attributed to Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck (1562-1621).

*Les femmes coquettess* contains three *chansons*, but only two melodies seem to have been used. This is because Flavie's chansons, 'À quoi servant les maris' and 'Les Galants touchent au cœur' seem to have been sung to one and the same tune; the two share exactly the same verse structure (in terms of the number of lines, the rhyme scheme and the syllabic counts) and Flavie sings them almost in succession. Later (in 1692), Flavie's 'À quoi servant les maris' seems to have become the basis for 'À quoi servant dans un Royaume', an ironic chanson which was written upon Louis XIV's defeat at the Battle of Barfleur. This new text shares its verse structure with Poisson's version. Moreover, the Clairambault-Maurepas collection indicates that 'À quoi servant dans un Royaume' was sung to the traditional air 'Il a batu son petit frère' (which dates back to the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century)<sup>14</sup>, and therefore it seems likely that Flavie's verses were also sung to this tune.<sup>15</sup>

In *Les femmes coquettess* Crispin's brief song 'Répondez à cousines' must have been sung to the last two lines of a famous tune known as 'L'air des Feuillantines'.<sup>16</sup> The Clairambault-Maurepas

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<sup>8</sup> Reference?

<sup>9</sup> The Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, MS Français 12622, 'Chansonnier dit de Maurepas. 1<sup>o</sup> "Recueil de chansons, vaudevilles, sonnets, épigrammes, épitaphes et autres vers satiriques et historiques, avec des remarques curieuses", VII Années 1690-1693', p. 109.

<sup>10</sup> The Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, MS Français 12656, 'Chansonnier dit de Maurepas 4<sup>o</sup> "Recueil d'airs notez, ranges par ordre alphabétique", I A-I, 1701-1800', p. 53.

<sup>11</sup> [Gaultier Garguille] *Les Chansons de Gaultier Garguille* (Paris: François Targa, 1632), p. 31.

<sup>12</sup> [Anonymous], *Airs de cour mis en musique à 4 & 5 parties de plusieurs auteurs* [III] (Paris: Adrian Le Roy et Veuve Robert Ballard, 1597), 4 parties séparées (superius, contra, tenor, bassus), f. 12<sup>v</sup>-13<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> See: Georgie Durosoir (ed.), *Poésie, musique et société: l'air de cour en France au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Mardaga, 2016), pp. 278-279.

<sup>14</sup> *Op. cit.* (See note 9), p. 301.

<sup>15</sup> The melody is found in: *Op. cit.* (See note 10), p. 381.

<sup>16</sup> *Op. cit.* (See note 10), p. 199.

collection includes two satirical verses (from as early as 1646) concerning the Parigian patrician family Lescalopier, sung to this tune. Both share with Crispin's song the final refrain, 'aux Feuillantines'.<sup>17</sup> The second of the poems on the Lescalopier in its third stanza mentions 'Belle-sœur, tante ou cousine'. The text of Crispin's song 'Répondez à cousines' seems to be connected to this content.

In transcribing the music, we have kept editorial alterations and additions to a minimum, except for giving figures, indicating the harmonies in conjunctions with the bass line. The original sources rarely give figures but where found those appear in bold and underlined in our edition. All other editorial additions are shown by square brackets. Original clefs, key signatures and time signatures have been shown on the prefatory staves. And where time signatures change, the original signs used have been given above the new time signatures. The beaming and the use of accidentals have been modernised. The orthography of the text underlaid to the music is adjusted to conform to that given in our text edition. Spelling has been modernised; capitalisation and punctuation have been standardized following modern conventions. In the cases of the songs of which the protagonists in Poisson's dramas sing only a portion (such as 'L'air des Guéridons', 'L'air des Feuillantines' and so on), the texts of the sections which they do not sing are shown in italics.

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<sup>17</sup> The Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, MS Français 12637, 'Chansonnier dit de Maurepas. 1° "Recueil de chansons, vaudevilles, sonnets, épigrammes, épitaphes et autres vers satiriques et historiques, avec des remarques curieuses", XXII Années 1643-1649', pp. 55-56; and pp.57-58.