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Lully Studies

The historical importance of composer Jean-Baptiste Lully has long been recognized. Regarded as the founder of French opera, as the embodiment of French Baroque musical style and a key figure in the development of court ballet, he enjoys growing popular and scholarly interest. This volume presents the best recent research on Lully's life, his work, and his influence. Eleven essays by American and European scholars address a wide range of topics including Lully's genealogy, the *tragédie lyrique*, Lully's Palais Royal theatre, the collaboration with Molière, the transmission of Lully's work away from the Ile-de-France, and a heretofore unexplored link with Marcel Proust. Illustrated with musical examples and photographs, the volume also contains surprising archival discoveries about the composer's early life in Tuscany and new information about his manuscript sources. It will interest all those involved in the music of Lully and his time, whether musicologists, historians, performers, or listeners.

JOHN HAJDU HEYER is Professor of Music and Dean of the College of Arts and Communication at the University of Wisconsin, Whitewater. He is editor of *Jean-Baptiste Lully and the Music of the French Baroque* (Cambridge University Press, 1989). His scholarly work also includes critical editions of music by Lully and Gilles.

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 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Contents

List of plates [viii]

Foreword by James R. Anthony [ix]

Preface [xvii]

- 1 Lully's Tuscan family [1]
JÉRÔME DE LA GORCE
 - 2 Lully plays deaf: rereading the evidence on his privilege [15]
PATRICIA RANUM
 - 3 The phrase structures of Lully's dance music [32]
REBECCA HARRIS-WARRICK
 - 4 Quinault's libretto for *Isis*: new directions for the *tragédie lyrique* [57]
BUFORD NORMAN
 - 5 The articulation of Lully's dramatic dialogue [72]
LOIS ROSOW
 - 6 The Amsterdam editions of Lully's music: a bibliographical scrutiny with
commentary [100]
CARL B. SCHMIDT
 - 7 "Pourquoi toujours des bergers?" Molière, Lully, and the pastoral
divertissement [166]
JOHN S. POWELL
 - 8 The presentation of Lully's *Alceste* at the Strasbourg Académie de
Musique [199]
CATHERINE CESSAC
 - 9 Walking through Lully's opera theatre in the Palais Royal [216]
BARBARA COEYMAN
 - 10 Gluck and Lully [243]
HERBERT SCHNEIDER
 - 11 Jules Ecorcheville's genealogical study of the Lully family and its influence
on Marcel Proust [272]
MANUEL COUVREUR
- List of works cited* [289]
Index [299]

Plates

- 3.1 Choreography from *Recüeil de Dances contenant un tres grand nombres des meilleures Entrées De Ballet De Mr. Pecourt* . . . (Paris: Feuillet, 1704) [38]
- 8.1 Brossard’s score of *Alceste. ou le Triomphe d’alcide. mis en musique par m^r de Lully* in Brossard’s own hand. F-Pn Vm² 12^{bis} [204]
- 9.1 Israel Silvestre, Palais Royal, exterior, c. 1675 [227]
- 9.2 Carlo Vigarani, Palais Royal, floor plan, c. 1674. Stockholm, Nationalmuseum, CC175 [230]
- 9.3 Carlo Vigarani, Palais Royal, elevation, c. 1674. Stockholm, Nationalmuseum, CC176 [231]
- 9.4 Anonymous, stage candles. Stockholm, Nationalmuseum, THC 614 [235]
- 9.5 Carlo Vigarani, stage decor, *Thésée*, Act V. Stockholm, Nationalmuseum, THC 662 [236]
- 9.6 Jean Berain, stage decor, unidentified. Stockholm, Nationalmuseum, THC 606 [238]
- 9.7 Jean Berain, stage decor, *Hésione*, 1701. Stockholm, Nationalmuseum, THC 688 [240]
- 9.8 Anonymous. Palais Royal, stage machinery. Stockholm, Nationalmuseum, CC186 [241]

Foreword by James R. Anthony

As we welcome another collection of Lully essays, the fourth to appear in the past decade,¹ we must ponder the fact that among those composers who define an epoch, Lully continues today to be more admired and more scrutinized than performed. The *Œuvres complètes* begun by Henry Prunières almost seventy years ago remains incomplete, and there are few if any available performing editions of Lully's dramatic and religious music. Such neglect surely would have amazed the author of the Lully obituary, found in the *Mercurie galante* of March 1687, who wrote: "The world wide acclaim accorded M^r [de Lully] will not let you ignore his death."² In *Les hommes illustres qui ont paru en France pendant ce siècle*, Charles Perrault tells us "Lully had composed pieces of music which have delighted all of France for a long time and which passed beyond the boundaries [of France] to foreign lands."³ We know for a fact that between 1677 and 1725 Lully's operas were performed outside of France in Holland (The Hague, Amsterdam), in Belgium (Brussels, Antwerp, Ghent), in Germany (Wolfenbüttel, Regensburg, Ansbach, Darmstadt, Hamburg, Stuttgart, Bonn), in Italy (Modena, Rome) and in England (London),⁴ surely a remarkable geographic spread considering the relative lack of mobility of opera during that time.

There is hope that Lully's fortunes may improve as we enter the twenty-first century. A newly formed international committee has begun preparation of the *Œuvres complètes* under the direction of Jérôme de La Gorce and Herbert Schneider – this after years of frustration (the first Lully Works committee met at Berkeley in 1977). There have been recent staged

1 These are: HeyerL, Heidelberg87, and Sèvres98. See p. 289 below for full citations.

2 "Le bruit que Mr a fait dans le monde ne vous aura pas laissé ignorer sa mort."

3 "Lully avoit composé des pièces de Musique qui en fait pendant un très longtemps les délices de toute la France, & qui on passé chez tous les Estranges" (Paris, 1696), 85–86.

4 See SchmidtG, 183–211.

Cambridge University Press
 0521621836 - Lully Studies
 Edited by John Hajdu Heyer
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

FOREWORD BY JAMES R. ANTHONY

and concert performances of *Atys*, *Amadis*, *Armide*, *Isis*, *Phaëton*, *Roland*, and *Acis et Galathée*. The staying power of a Lully opera is impressive when it is performed with some knowledge of performance practices and with some attempt to replicate what we know about Baroque staging, dance, and gesture. Since 1987, the production of *Atys* by Les Arts Florissants under the direction of William Christie has been performed more than seventy times for enthusiastic audiences in Paris, Florence, Montpellier, and Brooklyn. The Lully discography continues to grow; presently there are even two different compact disc recordings of *Alceste*.

Writings about Lully and his works date from the lifetime of the composer and increased after his death in 1687. Several are merely anecdotal. Many by aestheticians are preoccupied with the validity of the Quinault *livret* (libretto) seen as tragedy, for as the Abbé Mably wrote: "An excellent Poem is absolutely necessary for the long range success of an Opera. The Music, all by itself, can only give it passing vogue as a novelty."⁵ Charles Perrault was chief among those who supported what Antoine-Louis Le Brun labeled a "tragédie irrégulière." Perrault clearly saw the fallacy of comparing opera with ancient tragedy: "Opera or *Pièces de machines*, not having been invented at the time of Horace, can hardly be subjected to laws made at that time . . . Nothing is less bearable in a Comedy than to resolve the intrigue by a miracle or by the arrival of a god in a machine; and nothing is more beautiful in the Opera than these kinds of miracles and appearances of Divinities when there is some basis for introducing them."⁶ Perrault's spirited defense of Lully and Quinault's *Alceste* provoked an answer from Racine in the preface to his *Iphigénie* of 1674, which in turn elicited a

- 5 "La bonté du Poème est absolument nécessaire pour assurer un succès constant à un opéra. La Musique toute seule ne peut lui donner qu'une vogue passagère dans sa nouveauté." *Lettre à Madame la Marquise de P. sur l'opéra* (Paris, 1741), 6.
- 6 "Les Opéra ou Pièces de Machines, qui n'étant point en usage du temps d'Horace, ne peuvent estre sujettes aux lois en ont esté faites de ce-temps-là . . . Rien n'est moins supportable dans une Comédie que de dénouer l'Intrigue par un miracle, ou par l'arrivée d'un Dieu dans une machine; et rien n'est plus beau dans les Opéra que ces sortes de miracles & d'apparition de Divinitez quand il y a quel-que fondement de les introduire." *Critique de l'opéra, ou Examen de la tragédie intitulée Alceste, ou le Triomphe d'Alcide* (Paris, 1674), 69–70.

Cambridge University Press
 0521621836 - Lully Studies
 Edited by John Hajdu Heyer
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

FOREWORD BY JAMES R. ANTHONY

response from Perrault.⁷ These exchanges between Perrault and Racine may be viewed as an opening volley in what became the “Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns.”

There are relatively few attempts in the seventeenth century to analyze Lully’s music *qua* music, that is, without reference to its text. One such example is the two-page appreciation of Lully found in Charles Perrault’s *Les hommes illustres* . . . where it would seem that an inordinate amount of space in the short article is allotted to an analysis or, better, to an observation of Lully’s skill in composing bass and inner parts for five-part instrumental “*pièces de violon*”:

Before him [Lully], only the *Dessus* in the *Pièces de Violon* was considered: the *Basse* and the middle parts consisted only of a simple accompaniment and heavy counterpoint, which the performers themselves most often composed as they heard the *Dessus*, there being nothing easier to accomplish than such a Composition. But M. Lully made all the *Parties* sing together as agreeably as the *Dessus*; he introduced some totally new *mouvemens* there, which up to this time were almost completely unknown by our Masters.⁸

The term *mouvemens* was used in the seventeenth century to mean tempo. Antoine Furetière wrote in his *Dictionnaire universel* of 1690: “It is the tempo (*mouvement*) that differentiates the courante and the sarabande from gavottes, bourrées, chaconnes, etc.”⁹ One is tempted to conjecture that Perrault’s “totally new tempos” may have been referring to the *airs de*

7 “Lettre à Monsieur Charpentier de l’Académie Française, sur la Préface de l’Iphigénie de Monsieur Racine.” This letter as well as the *Critique de l’opéra* and the preface to *Iphigénie* is found in *Philippe Quinault, Alceste suivi de La Querelle d’Alceste. Anciens et Modernes avant 1680*, ed. William Brooks, Buford Norman, and Jeanne Morgan Zarucchi (Paris, 1994).

8 “Avant luy on ne consideroit que le chant du Dessus dans les Pièces de Violon; la Basse & les Parties du milieu n’estoient qu’un simple accompagnement & un gros Contrepoint, que ceux qui jouoient ces Parties composoient le plus souvent comme ils l’entendoient, rien n’estant plus aisé q’une semblable Composition, mais M. Lully a fait chanter toutes les Parties presque aussi agréablement que le Dessus; il y a introduit des fugues admirables, & sur tout des mouvemens tout nouveaux, & jusques-la presque inconnus à tous les Maîtres.” Charles Perrault, *Les hommes illustres* (Paris, 1696), vol. I, 85–86.

9 “C’est le mouvement qui fait différer la courante, la sarabande, des gavottes, des bourrées, des chaconnes, etc.” vol. II, n.pag.

Cambridge University Press
 0521621836 - Lully Studies
 Edited by John Hajdu Heyer
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

FOREWORD BY JAMES R. ANTHONY

vitesse that Lully introduced in his court ballets. Michel de Pure, writing in 1668, described the frustration of Lully, who was continually embarrassed by the “stupidity of most of the grands Seigneurs,” many of whom appeared quite incapable of mastering the more rapid steps.¹⁰

Very few eighteenth-century analyses of Lully’s music are concerned with harmonic function, voice leading, treatment of dissonance, modulation and the like until we reach Rameau’s famous analysis of the recitative “Enfin il est en ma puissance” from *Armide*. Joel Lester has brought to light one remarkable exception: an anonymous English manuscript that contains a detailed harmonic and melodic analysis of Lully’s *Proserpine* (1680).¹¹ “As an extant dissection of a contemporaneous work by a major composer from this period, this analysis is unique” (Lester, p. 42).

In spite of gross inadequacies, the publication in the 1880s of eleven Lully operas “reduced for piano and voice” under the general title *Chefs d’œuvre classique de l’opéra français* contributed much to a revival of interest in the life and works of Lully.

Nuitter and Thoinan’s *Les origines de l’opéra français* (1886) documents the creation of French opera and so serves as background for all subsequent studies. It was followed in 1891 by *Lully, homme d’affaires, propriétaire et musicien* by Emile Radet, who was one of the first scholars to make use of archival research. From the turn of the century to the First World War there was a proliferation of Lully studies by such notable scholars as Romain Rolland, Lionel de La Laurencie, Jules Ecorcheville, and Henry Prunières. The work of these important “lullistes” is admirably summarized by Manuel Couvreur in these pages.

In her contribution to Cambridge’s first collection of Lully essays (*Jean-Baptiste Lully and the Music of the French Baroque*, 1989), Catherine Massip wrote: “In the field of Lully scholarship, there yet remains an important area to be investigated – that of stylistic analysis.” Five of the essays found in this second collection may be loosely grouped under the rubric “stylistic analysis.” They are by Lois Rosow, Rebecca Harris-Warrick, Buford Norman, John Powell, and Herbert Schneider. With one exception, the remaining essays may be grouped under two subjects: biography (Manuel

10 *Idée des spectacles anciens et nouveaux* (Paris, 1668), 248.

11 “An Analysis of Lully from circa 1700,” *Music Theory Spectrum* 16 (Spring 1994), 41–61.

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 Edited by John Hajdu Heyer
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

FOREWORD BY JAMES R. ANTHONY

Couvreur, Jérôme de La Gorce, and Patricia Ranum) and reception (Carl Schmidt and Catherine Cessac). Barbara Coeyman's contribution creates its own category: the physical layout of the Académie Royale de Musique where Lully's operas were first performed in Paris. Her startling thesis, that Lully may have considered this theatre with all its limitations as only temporary, seems borne out by the facts. She takes us on a guided tour. One wonders what the price of tickets was during Lully's tenure. Was it "double that of any other entertainment," as reported by Riccoboni in the next century?¹²

Typically, most studies of musical characterization in the operas by Lully have emphasized his use of affective melodic intervals and dissonant harmonies to express deep feelings. As early as 1659 in a letter to Archbishop Girolamo della Rovera, Perrin recognized the unique capability of operatic ensembles to "say the same thing at the same time" or to express "diverse sentiments at the same time"¹³ as, for instance, in the "divergent duos" so labeled by Masson. These duos occur very rarely in Lully's work. (One example is found in the duo "Voyez couler mes larmes" in Act IV, scene 4 of *Proserpine*.)

The essays of Lois Rosow and Rebecca Harris-Warrick give us new and original insights. Rosow examines the procedures used by Lully to organize his dialogue scenes. These procedures vary greatly from scene to scene and give evidence of the composer's understanding of how the relationship between poetry and music affects dramatic flow. Harris-Warrick argues that the dramatic context of Lully's operatic dances as well as the text of associated vocal pieces may have imposed a particular structure on the music itself, often resulting in irregular phrase groupings.

Buford Norman views Lully and Quinault's *Isis*, the "opéra des musiciens", as offering an alternative to the linear plot development found at its best in *Atys*. *Isis* presents a new concept of the *tragédie lyrique*: a concept that can accommodate a series of *divertissements* to expose the suffering of the nymph Io. John Powell gives us a wide-ranging and systematic study of the use of the pastoral in the comedy ballets and court *divertissements* by Lully.

12 *Reflexions upon Declamation: or the Art of Speaking in Publick; with an Historical and Critical Account of the Theatres in Europe* (London, 1741, anon. trans. from French original), 153.

13 The letter is found in Louis Auld, *The Lyric Art of Pierre Perrin. Founder of French Opera* (Henryville, NY, 1986), vol. I, 104.

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 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

FOREWORD BY JAMES R. ANTHONY

In so doing, he answers Monsieur Jordain's plaint, "Pourquoi toujours des bergers?" Herbert Schneider examines the writings of Gluck's contemporaries for their treatment of the *tragédie lyrique* as a genre.

Jérôme de La Gorce, with the sure hand of a seasoned archivist, fills in the gaps found in earlier Lully biographies. He reasons, for example, that Lully's claim on his marriage contract to have been the son of "Laurent de Lully, gentil-homme florentin" may have caused the breach between father and son. Patricia Ranum sees the musicians and writers connected to the powerful House of Orléans as a "phalanx" with which Lully was forced to do battle. We learn that because of the Orléans network, Charpentier was able to circumvent Lully's restrictive privileges and compose ten chamber operas in the 1690s.

We learn from Carl Schmidt that about sixty editions of Lully's music were printed by eight Dutch publishers between 1682 and the late 1720s. Surprisingly, four Amsterdam editions of extracts from Lully's *tragédies lyriques* pre-date any Paris publications. Of interest is the fact that Estienne Roger's editions of *Ouvertures avec tous les airs à jouer* are scored in the Italian manner, that is, for *dessus I*, *dessus II*, *taille* and *basse*, rather than the five-part scoring "à la française" (*dessus*, *haute-contre*, *taille*, *quinte*, and *basse*).

From Catherine Cessac we learn that Sébastien de Brossard arranged extracts from Lully's *Alceste* for a performance in Strasbourg – probably at the Académie de Musique founded by Brossard in 1688. Brossard's autograph in the Bibliothèque Nationale dates from about 1691–95 and, Cessac believes, may be based on a Philidor autograph that is found today at the Bibliothèque municipale de Versailles. Like the editors of the Amsterdam collections of *Ouvertures avec tous les airs à jouer*, Brossard modernized his *Alceste* arrangements by employing the Italian *a4* scoring rather than the five-part scoring "à la française." It is safe to assume that gradual change from *a5* to *a4* scoring with the elimination of the *partie de la quinte* was practiced as early as the last decade of the seventeenth century.

The essays in this volume range through the large period from Lully's Tuscan ancestors to the time of Marcel Proust. Even so, there remains much more to be done to shed light on the Lully canon. We have not yet fully met the challenge of librettist Pierre-Charles Roy, who in 1749 despaired that Quinault, unlike Corneille, left no word concerning the genre that he

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 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

FOREWORD BY JAMES R. ANTHONY

“invented and perfected.” We have only begun to “tear from Quinault his secret and to . . . *décomposer* all his operas in order to examine their inner workings, to reconstruct the play . . . to appreciate the adroitness of his expositions, always fashioned within the plot, always condensed (because sung Tragedy does not have the conveniences of declaimed Tragedy); to be conscious of the liaisons between the *divertissement* and the plot, and to be conscious of his particular skill in deriving an interesting situation from a decorative element.”¹⁴ There needs to be a systematic analysis of Lully’s harmonic procedures. Lois Rosow’s innovative study of text and music in Lully’s scene structure opens a new direction of research. The study of verse schemes in the *livrets* of Quinault, once the exclusive territory of the drama historian, has caught the attention of music scholars in recent years. It is fast becoming another tool in the stylistic analysis of Lully’s music. We need to learn more about Lully’s use of orchestral color and the dance in the service of musical characterization. The various functions of the *divertissement* need re-examination. Lastly, perhaps it is time to undertake a critical examination of Lecerf de la Viéville’s monumental *Comparison de la musique italienne et de la musique françoise*, which has served so long as a principal source for Lully studies. In addition to Lully’s live-in page, Brunet, who else supplied Lecerf with information? Can we verify, for example, that “grotesque anecdote” (Zaslaw) that has Lully fatally injuring himself by wounding his toe while conducting his *Te Deum* at the church of the Feuillants? The *Mercure de France* mentions no such event in its description of the performance. Were the death bed scenes (“j’en avois une seconde copie”) genuine or rather a Lecerf fantasy? In any case, it is reasonably certain that the next generation of Lully studies will, *mirabile dictu*, have the new *œuvres complètes* as a point of departure for further research.

JAMES R. ANTHONY

- 14 “Il faut arracher à Quinault même son secret . . . décomposer tous ses Opéra, en examiner les ressorts, en développer le jeu . . . apprécier l’adresse de ses expositions toujours tournées en action, toujours serrées (car la Tragédie chantée n’a pas les commodités de la Tragédie declamée), sentir les liaisons des divertissements à l’intrigue, à l’habileté singulière de tirer d’une décoration une situation intéressante.” “Lettres sur l’opéra,” in *Lettres sur quelques écrits de ce tems*, vol. II (Geneva, 1749), 7–22, 16 (reprint Geneva, 1966).

Preface

This volume contributes to the momentum of research on the music of Jean-Baptiste Lully that has continued to advance in the decade since the publication of *Jean-Baptiste Lully and the Music of the French Baroque* by this press in 1989. Recent Lully scholarship, summarized by James R. Anthony in his foreword, has resulted in several collections of essays and in the issuing of the first volume of previously unpublished works, the motets (*Quare fremuerunt gentes*, LWV 67; *Notus in Judaea Deus*, LWV 77/17; and *Exaudiat te Dominus*, LWV 77/15 issued by The Broude Trust, 1996 as series IV, volume V of *Jean-Baptiste Lully: The Collected Works*) to complement the partial *Œuvres Complètes* prepared under the direction of Henry Prunières in the early part of the twentieth century. Accelerating activity now promises to bring us closer to a completed collected works in the next decade. While several of the studies in this volume, most notably that of Carl Schmidt, continue the important study of the sources of Lully's works that yet must be completed, the majority of essays here offer historical studies, beginning with Jérôme de La Gorce's surprising discoveries in the archives of Tuscany, and concluding with Manuel Couvreur's investigation into Lully matters at the turn of the last century. The broader readership should find these essays both informative and enlightening with respect to this important, yet recondite master.

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The Fonds National de la Recherche Scientifique of Brussels has supported Manuel Couvreur's work for this volume. Jérôme de La Gorce is supported in his capacity as *directeur de recherche au Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS)* of France. I want to express my gratitude to the University of Wisconsin, Whitewater, and to former Chancellor Gaylon

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[More information](#)

PREFACE

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JOHN HAJDU HEYER

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Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Note on the text

Sources in the footnotes that appear more than once are cited in abbreviated form; explanations and full details are supplied in the List of Works Cited on pp. 289–298 below. Library references throughout the book follow the *RISM* sigla.