

Jean-Baptiste Lully: *Armide*
(*Overture*, and “*Enfin, il est en ma puissance*” with “*Venez seconder mes desires*” from
Act 2, Scene 5)

- Importance of work:
 - “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 [Lully] enjoys growing popularity and scholarly interest.”¹
 - “...the opera [*Armide*] was an immediate success, and was quickly recognized as the masterpiece of the Lully/Quinault creative collaboration.”²
 - “In 1672, through a series of legal maneuvers abetted by his close personal connections with King Louis XIV, Lully purchased a patent from the crown...that gave him the exclusive right to produce sung dramas in France.”³
- Dates
 - Lully:
 - born Giovanni Battista Lulli, in Florence Nov. 28, 1632
 - obtained French citizenship, and changed his name from Lulli to Lully, in 1661
 - died in Paris March 22, 1687
 - *Armide*:
 - completion of composition: *unknown*
 - first performed in 1686 at the Palais-Royale in Paris by the Académie royale de musique.
 - dates of editions: *see below*
 - Revivals of performance (*that is, any subsequent performance given after the initial run of debut performances in 1686*):
 - 1687, 1703, 1713, 1714, 1724, 1746, 1747, 1761, 1764 – Paris;
 - 1687 – Avignon;
 - 1690 – Rome (first French opera given in Italy/private performance);
 - 1689, 1698, 1730 – Lyons;
 - 1695 Brussels (new prologue by Fiocco);
 - 1701- Hague;

¹ Quote by John Hajdu Heyer, dean of the College of Arts and Communication at the University of Wisconsin, Whitewater. Found in: John Hajdu Heyer, ed., *Lully Studies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), first unnumbered page.

² University of North Texas Libraries, “Operas of Jean-Baptiste Lully” available from <http://www.unt.edu/lully/Armide/Armiprnt.html>; Internet; accessed 29 Jan 2007.

³ Mark Evan Bonds, *A History of Music in Western Culture* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc., Prentice Hall, 2006), 239.

- 1745 – Versailles.
- Analysis
- General facts:
 - Consists of five acts and a prologue.
 - Libretto by Philippe Quinault (*Armide* was the last opera of the Lully/Quinault collaboration, which existed for 11 of Lully's 16 *tragédies lyriques*.)
 - Based on a portion of the 16th-century poem, *La Gerusalemme Liberata* by Torquato Tasso.
 - “The plot of *Armide*, in brief, concerns the sorceress Armide, who has an opportunity to kill her enemy, the Crusader Renaud, but discovers instead that she is in love with him. Through magic, she causes him to return her love and transports him to an enchanted palace. Ashamed and troubled by her own behavior, she summons the forces of Hatred, but she is unable to accept their assistance. Eventually, a pair of knights, who have been sent to find Renaud, break the spell and remind him that duty and glory come before love. When Renaud leaves her, an anguished Armide causes the enchanted palace to be destroyed...It is essential to the plot that a large number of seemingly innocuous characters are actually demons in disguises.”⁴
 - Genre:
 - French Baroque Opera, specifically *tragédie lyrique*, a form “which Lully created with Quinault, [and which] remained the dominant form in French opera for a hundred years after Lully's death.”⁵
 - *Overture*
 - Form:
 - French Overture (slow-fast [imitative]-slow, *also* AABA’BA’)
 - Tonality:
 - C major
 - Instrumentation:
 - Unstated...
 - *According to the 1686 first edition by Ballard*, the treble line and three middle lines contain no indication of instrumentation. But the lower bass line is notated as for “Basse-Continue” – yet, there are no indications of figured bass.
 - *According to Neal Zaslaw*, “In the early orchestra chordal continuo instruments may or may not have

⁴ Lois Ann Rosow, “Lully’s *Armide* at the Paris Opera: A Performance History: 1686-1766” (Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1981), 211.

⁵ University of North Texas Libraries, “Operas”.

realized the bass line. Evidence is accumulating, for instance, that dance music was often played without chordal instruments, not only in French operas, but in Italian and English ones as well.”⁶

- *According to Schulenberg* - Larger violin band: violins and bass viola da gamba on outer voices, viola-predecessors on middle 3 lines (see pg. 100 of text).
- Possibly flutes, oboes, crumhorns, and bassoons, as well as strings...⁷
- Also, “opera producers took great pride in special effects of all kind, including sound effects [like wind from a wind machine]”.⁸
- *End of ACT 2, SCENE 5: “Enfin...” and “Venez...”*
 - Form:
 - introduction, vocal Recitative (*Enfin*),
 - second introduction, Air (*Venez*) (AABA’)
 - Tonality:
 - E minor
 - Instrumentation:
 - Soprano and Basso-Continuo (during Recitative and Air); “Violons”, three c-clef lines, and “Basse-Continue” with figured bass (during instrumental introductions).
 - *According to Schulenberg*: basso-continuo consists of harpsichord, lute, and bass viola da gamba (see pg. 100 of text).
 - *According to de La Gorce*: “Two harpsichords, six *basses de viole*, theorbos [type of archlute], lutes and, apparently, one *basse de violon*, may today seem to be a large continuo. However, if one consults other references of the period, one finds this number of instruments to be no exaggeration...[but] not all the instrumentalists of the continuo played together all the time.”⁹
 - Text:
 - see pg. 86 of Anthology for text and translation.
 - Continuation of Recitative:

⁶ Neal Zaslaw, “When is an Orchestra not an Orchestra?” *Early Music* 16, no. 4 (November 1988), 486.

⁷ Jérôme de La Gorce, “Some notes on Lully’s orchestra”, from *Jean-Baptiste Lully and the Music of the French Baroque*, ed. by John Hajdu Heyer (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 110.

⁸ Mark Evan Bond, *Anthology of Scores to A History of Music in Western Culture* (Upper Saddle River, NJ, Pearson Education, Inc., Prentice Hall, 2006), 209.

⁹ Jérôme de La Gorce, “Some notes on Lully’s orchestra”, 108-9.

- Is it thus that I must avenge myself today?/ My rage is extinguished when I approach him/ The more I see of him, the more my vengeance is ineffectual./ My trembling arm denies my hate./ Ah! What cruelty to rob him of the light of day!/ To this young hero everything on earth surrenders./ Who would believe that he was born only for war?/ He seems to be made for love./ Could I not avenge myself unless he dies?/ Oh, is it not enough that Love should punish him?/ Since he could not find my eyes charming enough,/ let him love me at least through my sorcery,/ so that, if it's possible, I may hate him.¹⁰

○ Sources

- Editions:
 - First edition: 1686, by Ballard
 - Second editions: 1713 and 1718, by Ballard
 - “A rival second edition, published in 1710 by the engraver H. de Baussen, was among several that caused a lawsuit which reinforced Ballard's control over French music printing in general and Lully's works in particular.”¹¹
 - 1885, in *Publikationen alterer praktischer und theoretischer Musikwerke*, vol. 14, ed. Robert Eitner (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Hartel)
 - 1971 reprint of vol. 17 of the Paris edition [188?] of *Chefs d'oeuvre classiques de l'opéra français*, by Broude Brothers Limited in New York. This nineteenth century edition is a vocal score with piano reduction, edited by Théodore Michaelis.
 - Facsimile, Beziers: Société de musicologie de Languedoc, 1980.

○ Performance Practices

- Women's roles that were “*dépouves de beauté ou désagréables d'aspect*” would be sung by men.¹²
- *Notes inégales* (“unequal notes”) – when to use them...
 - “...a collection by the Parisian organist Nicolas Gigault had appeared in which...the number of dots...is staggering, and the composer invited the organist to add still more to ‘animate his playing’!...Gigault was...very much in the musical mainstream, having been one of Lully's teachers, among other things...Related Lully sources show much disagreement in dotting. Who can say

¹⁰ Bond, *Anthology*, 209.

¹¹ University of North Texas Libraries, “Operas”.

¹² *Comment by Théodore de Lajarte, in the facsimile introduction to the Broude Brothers reprint.*

that some of it does not represent *notes inégales*? The use of dotting to indicate inequality was not without problems... On the one hand its look of rigidity and uniformity ran counter to the expressive flexibility and the spontaneity that seem to have been important features of the convention... [Jean-Jacques Rousseau] went on to say that in French music one always dotted [eighth notes] ‘a little’... It is rare that one comes across a piece of French music in which one can say with confidence that this passage would have been dotted, that one not, these dots are written *notes inégales* meant perhaps to be underdotted, those were meant to be strict or exaggerated.”¹³

- Overdotting in French Overtures:
 - Scholars have often looked to J.S. Bach’s “Overture in the French Manner” (BWV 831/831a) for a guide into this particular practice, since Bach altered the rhythm in BWV 831 in B minor, from the “straighter” rhythms in BWV 831a in C minor, to (supposedly) better reflect French overdotting. However, how much of the change in notation is “real” and how much is “cosmetic” (as proposed by Schulenberg, according to Matthew Dirst)?¹⁴
- Ornamentation
 - In the Ballard first edition score and the 1885 Robert Eitner edition, embellishments are notated with a “t” above the certain notes to be affected.
 - “Jean-Baptiste Lully, quoted by *Le Cerf de la Viéville, Brussels*: ‘No embellishment! My recitative is only for speaking, I want it to be absolutely plain’ [though in the airs, as opposed to the recitative, Lully permitted his father-in-law, Michael Lambert, to coach his singers in some at least of the currently fashionable free ornamentation (an un-notated variation on the written melody), besides the many smaller ornaments which even from his recitative were not totally excluded].”¹⁵

¹³ David Fuller, “Notes and Inégales Unjoined: Defending a Definition”, *The Journal of Musicology* 7, no. 1 (Winter 1989), 3-6./ Gigault quote is from: *Archives de maître de l’orgue*, ed. Alexandre Guilmant and André Pirro IV, (1902, reprint New York, 1972).

¹⁴ Matthew Dirst, “Bach’s French Overtures and the Politics of Overdotting”, *Early Music* 25, no. 1 (February 1997), 35.

¹⁵ Robert Donington, *Baroque Music: Style and Performance, a Handbook* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1982), 94.

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