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Cambridge Opera Journal / Volume 25 / Issue 01 / March 2013, pp 1 - 36

DOI: 10.1017/S0954586712000316, Published online:

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### How to cite this article:

Jed Wentz (2013). An Annotated *livret* of Lully's *Roland* as a Source for Seventeenth-Century Declamation. Cambridge Opera Journal, 25, pp 1-36 doi:10.1017/S0954586712000316

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# An Annotated *livret* of Lully's *Roland* as a Source for Seventeenth-Century Declamation

JED WENTZ

**Abstract:** The Houghton Library at Harvard University holds a copy of the 1685 *livret* for *Roland* by Philippe Quinault and Jean-Baptiste Lully that has been marked up in three different seventeenth-century hands. The meanings of these markings cannot be conclusively deciphered until further corroborative sources come to light, but they seem to refer to declaimed performances of Quinault's text. The purpose of the current article is to propose possible interpretations of these annotations, guided by seventeenth-century theory of the oratorical pitches (*tons*) and eighteenth-century links between the Académie royale de musique and the Comédie française.

In 1746 the Abbé de Condillac made the following reflections on the relationship between French declamation, musical notation and the *tragédie en musique*:

Although our declamation cannot be notated, it seems to me that one might be able to preserve it in some way. It would be sufficient if a composer had enough taste to observe, in his melody, more or less the same proportions that the voice follows in declamation. Those who had familiarised themselves with this melody could therein rediscover, by ear, the declamation that had served as its model. Would not a man filled with the recitatives of Lully declaim the tragedies of Quinault as Lully himself had declaimed them? However, to make the thing easier, one would wish that the melody were extremely simple, and that its vocal inflections were not distinguished more than was necessary to make them perceptible. The declamation in Lully's recitatives would be even more recognisable if he had put less music into them. One therefore has reason to believe that this would be a great help for those who have a disposition for declamation.<sup>1</sup>

Condillac here not only implies that a general understanding of the relationship between music and recitation would be of great use to those with an inclination to declaim, but specifically states that an eighteenth-century orator could extract Lully's own style of spoken declamation from the musical notation of operatic recitatives. It is well known that Lully was supposed to have based his recitative

<sup>1</sup> All translations are by the author. The original text is as follows: 'Quoique notre déclamation ne puisse pas se noter, il me semble qu'on pourroit en quelque sorte la fixer. Il suffiroit qu'un Musicien eût assez de goût pour observer, dans le chant, à-peu-près les mêmes proportions que la voix suit dans la déclamation. Ceux qui se seroient rendus ce chant familier, pourroient, avec de l'oreille, y retrouver la déclamation qui en auroit été le modele. Un homme rempli des récitatifs de Lulli, ne déclamerait-il pas les Tragédies de Quinault comme Lulli les eût déclamé lui-même? Pour rendre cependant la chose plus facile, il seroit à souhaiter que la mélodie fût extrêmement simple, & qu'on n'y distinguât les inflexions de la voix qu'autant qu'il seroit nécessaire pour les apprécier. La déclamation se reconnoîtroit encore plus aisément dans les récitatifs de Lulli, s'il y avoit mis moins de musique. On a donc lieu de croire que ce seroit là un grand secours pour ceux qui auroient quelques dispositions à bien déclamer.' L'Abbé de Condillac, *Essai sur l'origine des connoissances humaines*, tome second, nouvelle edition (Amsterdam, 1788), 77–8.

style on the declamation of the great French actress Champmeslé, who was instructed in the art by Jean Racine.<sup>2</sup> Condillac's remarks, therefore, suggest the possibility of recovering this underlying seventeenth-century theatrical declamatory style from Lully's scores.

Support is lent to Condillac's claims by certain passages in the letters of Voltaire, who was himself a successful playwright and therefore someone who could be supposed thoroughly to understand the art of theatrical recitation. Even as late as 1773 Voltaire felt that Lully remained the unrivalled master of French declamation. He wrote to Chabanon on 1 February of that year, 'For me Lully will always be the god, and the only god, of declamation'.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, Voltaire wrote that an orator could move his auditors by reciting Quinault's verses while simplifying Lully's musical setting into inflected speech. He noted, in a letter dated 18 December 1767, that

Lully's declamation is such a perfect *mélopée* that I declaim all of his recitative by following his notes, but only softening the intonations; thus I have a very strong effect on the auditors, and there is no one who is not moved.<sup>4</sup>

So it would seem that Condillac's theory was very close to Voltaire's practice; by 'softening' Lully's intervals, Voltaire would have removed some of the 'melody' that Condillac advocated against. Both of these eighteenth-century writers believed that the *tragédie en musique* could serve as a basis for spoken performances. Could the practice have been more general? A heavily annotated 1685 *livret* of *Roland* held in the Harvard Theater Collection at the Houghton Library, Harvard, points to the possibility that by the end of the seventeenth century Lully's compositional style was already seen as a school for spoken declamation.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> See, for instance, Manuel Couvreur, *Jean-Baptiste Lully: Musique et dramaturgie au service du Prince* (Bruxelles, 1992), 308. See also Lois Rosow, 'French Baroque Recitative as an Expression of Tragic Declamation', *Early Music*, 2 (1983), 468–79 and Romain Roland, *Musiciens d'autrefois* (Paris, 1908), 143–69. The close link between Lully's recitative and the declamatory practices of the Comédie Française was still something of a trope in the 1750s. During the *Querelle des bouffons*, Rousseau's attack on *Armide* was rebuffed by a pamphlet claiming that three Parisian stars, Dumesnil, Clairon and Gaussin had all, upon request, recited the text of the monologue 'Enfin il est en ma puissance' using the very same intonations that Lully himself had notated. See [Pierre Estève], *Justification de la musique française, contre la querelle qui lui a été faite par un allemand & un allobrage* (La Haye, 1754), 51.

<sup>3</sup> 'Lully sera toujours pour moi le dieu et le seul dieu de la déclamation'. L.N.J.J. Cayrol and A. François, eds., *Lettres inédites de Voltaire*, tome second, (Paris, 1856), 305.

<sup>4</sup> 'La déclamation de Lully est une mélopée si parfaite, que je déclame tout son récitatif en suivant ses notes et en adoucissant seulement les intonations; je fais alors un très-grand effet sur les auditeurs, et il n'y a personne qui ne soit ému'. [Voltaire], *Œuvres complètes de Voltaire, correspondance générale* (Paris, 1817), 170. The term *mélopée* originally referred to the notated declamations of the ancients, but later became associated with the inflections of contemporary French declamation, both sung and spoken. It is in this latter sense that the word will be used here.

<sup>5</sup> See Jean Baptiste Lully, *Roland: tragédie en musique*, Paris 1685, TS 8092.402 1690, Houghton Library, Harvard University. The author is indebted to a number of people associated with Houghton, especially Annette Fern, who knows the Binney Collection like the back of her hand, and the staff of the reading room, all of whom have been very generous with their time and expertise. Special thanks are due to Andrea Cawelti, of the John Milton and Ruth Neils Ward Collection, whose advice has proven invaluable.

This article aims to introduce the reader to the *livret*, which seems to have escaped scholarly attention until now; to describe its various annotations (focusing particularly on the manuscript markings to Roland's monologues in Act IV), and to explore more generally their links to spoken declamation. This exploration will consist of two parts: the first, an examination of seventeenth-century treatises that describe the use of the so-called *tons* or oratorical pitches; and the second, a presentation of a selection of eighteenth-century sources that link actors from the Comédie française to the Académie royale de musique.

### The *livret* annotations

The full title of the *livret* is *Roland: tragedie en musique representée devant Sa Majesté à Versailles, le huitième ianvier 1685*. It was published by Ballard in Paris in 1685 and is adorned with the well-known frontispiece, engraved by Juan Dolivar after Jean Bérain, showing the onset of Roland's madness at the end of Act IV scene 6. This *livret* has been preserved as part of a collection of 15 stage works by Quinault and Lully (including 12 *tragédies en musique*, a *tragi-comédie*, a ballet and a *pastorale héroïque*), bound together in a leather binding. The title 'Opera de Quinault' [*sic*] appears on the book's spine.<sup>6</sup>

The *livret* of Roland is the only one in this collection with unusual annotations; these, however, are many and various.<sup>7</sup> For instance, the verso of its frontispiece displays script in three different hands (see Fig. 1). The uppermost text, written in confident, somewhat sprawling letters in brown ink, is as follows: 'M. Daniel rue des Boucherres au soleil d'or [c]hez [u]n bonnetier proche le marché' (Mr. Daniel, rue des Boucherres, in the soleil d'Or, at a bonnet-maker's house, near the market). Given the placement of this annotation on the page, it would seem that 'M. Daniel' was the first person to write in the *livret*.<sup>8</sup>

The second hand appears just below M. Daniel's address, where six lines of pastoral poetry have been copied out in very neat script. It is worth mentioning that a further 17 lines of verse written in the same careful hand appear in the margin of page 48. These latter, more copious verses form a *parodie Bacchique* of the duet air 'Vivez en paix' from Act IV scene 3 of *Roland*, and in the *livret* they appear in the margin next to the printed text of that air. Neither these verses nor

<sup>6</sup> It should be mentioned, however, that Quinault was not the exclusive author of all of the texts that are bound into the book: *Le Triomphe de l'amour* was co-written with Benserade, while both Molière and Pierre Corneille contributed to the 1671 version of *Psiché*.

<sup>7</sup> The standard *paraphes* (calligraphic flourishes made to establish the authenticity of the print) and stamps that appear on the other *livrets* in the book are not of interest here.

<sup>8</sup> The identity of 'M. Daniel' has not yet been traced. The Flemish composer Daniel Danielis, who is known to have been in France from at least 1683, seemed a likely candidate. However, Catherine Cessac has kindly confirmed that Danielis' handwriting is not that of M. Daniel. It is interesting to note that Jean Rousseau, on the title page of his *Traité de la viole* (1687), lists his domicile as the 'ruë des Boucheries, proche le Petit Marché, au Soleil d'Or, chez un Bonnetier, Faux-bourg Saint Germain'. Rousseau was a *maître de musique* as well as the author of a popular singing method. The idea that the *livret* could have been linked in some way to his teaching practice is tantalising, but, as yet, unsubstantiated.

M. Daniel rue des Bouchevres  
 au soleil dor her en bonnetier  
 proche le marche  
 nos voix et mignettes  
 rempli d'un ton d'amour  
 Chantent tout le long du jour  
 mille tendres chansonnettes  
 esprit de plaisir, plus charmant  
 que ceux qu'on goûte dans nos camps. IIIIII  
 C'en est fait ta raison achasse de mon coeur  
 l'ingrat qui causait mon martyre  
 Jeune le reçois pour lui dire  
 que je ne suis pour lui qu'une ombre froide  
 mais pour que tu saches de mon indifférence  
 Je n'en ai point d'amour, les jours sont si pleins  
 à briser l'âme plus qu'on ne pense  
 que de dire qu'on aime plus  
 Malheur aux ennemis de ce prince redoutable  
 Heures les peuples sont à son Empire égalant  
 Heures Heures de l'Empire les jours à son empire égalant  
 De ce prince leclat et les traits  
 ces fleurs d'or et d'argent ces fleurs jadis  
 ces ombres et fleurs sont des fleurs de feu  
 Benfaisances arbres qui ne doublent pas  
 ombres fleurs nées de jour les fleurs

Fig. 1: Annotations in three different hands, made to the verso of the frontispiece of the *livret*. Courtesy of Houghton Library, Harvard University.

the six lines on the verso of the frontispiece are marked up in any way. It seems likely that this hand was the second to write in the book.

The text of an *air de cour* by Madame de Saintonge, entitled 'C'en est fait', as well as discontiguous groups of verses by Jean Racine taken from Lully's *Idylle sur la paix* (1685), have been copied out in a third, slapdash hand that is bottom-most on the verso of the frontispiece. The position of these texts on the page indicates that they were probably added last. They are remarkable for the horizontal, rising and descending strokes that have been drawn in above the verses. Further annotations of this nature were made to some of the printed lines of the *livret*: Act I scene 2, Act IV scene 2 and Act IV scene 7 are remarkable for being similarly marked up. It is these latter markings, made to Quinault's text, that form the main subject of investigation in this article.

*Roland* had its première on 8 January 1685 in Versailles, and opened in Paris two months later on 8 or 9 March.<sup>9</sup> If M. Daniel (whose name and Paris address are written along the top of the verso of the frontispiece) was the initial owner, it seems plausible that he could have purchased the *livret* before attending a Paris performance of that year. The text of 'C'en est fait', which appears, marked-up, further down the page, was published, together with the music, in the *Mercurie Galant* in February 1685, where it was described as an 'Air Nouveau'.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, Lully's *Idylle sur la paix*, similarly marked-up verses of which appear just below 'C'en est fait', received its première on 16 July of the same year. This means that all three of the texts that are marked up with lines and dashes – 'C'en est fait', *Idylle sur la paix* and *Roland* – were published in 1685. It seems probable, therefore, that all of the chirographic activity in the *livret* would have taken place not long after the Paris première of *Roland*, when the texts of the *livret*, the *Idylle* and 'C'en est fait', were still fresh.

Such a dating is further supported by an examination of the binding. It seems clear that all of the annotations on the verso of the frontispiece were made before the 15 Lully *livrets* were bound together into a book; at that time the *livret* for *Roland* was cut down, and the tops of some of the letters of M. Daniel's name

<sup>9</sup> See Buford Norman, *Touched by the Graces: the Libretti of Philippe Quinault in the Context of French Classicism* (Birmingham, AL, 2001), 308.

<sup>10</sup> *Mercurie Galant*, février 1685, 137–8. This poem also appeared, without music, in *Le Galant nouveliste* (La Haye, 1693), 229; and in *Poesies diverses de Madame de Saintonge*, seconde edition, tome premier (Dijon, 1714), 88. However, there is a textual discrepancy between the version in the *livret* and that in the *Mercurie Galant*: the second line of the latter is 'L'ingrat qui faisoit mon martire', while the *livret* annotation gives 'L'ingrat qui causoit mon martire'. The two printed versions of the poem also give 'causoit' rather than 'faisoit'. This textual discrepancy suggests that more than one source for the poem was in public circulation at the time the *livret* was marked up. To further complicate matters, Saintonge's text was printed in the twentieth century with quite different music by Edourd Moullé in *Chansons tendres du 12<sup>me</sup> au 18<sup>me</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1910), 21–2. However, a comparison of the *livret*'s annotations to the two musical versions of this text – that of the *Mercurie Galant* and that of Moullé – reveals that former, rather than the latter, more closely conforms to the superscripted markings in the *livret*. For a discussion of the term *air nouveau* in the *Mercurie Galant* see <http://philidor.cmbv.fr/catalogue/intro-mercureairs> (accessed 2-10-2011). Many thanks to Rebekah Ahrendt for her help in tracing this air.

and address were sheared off in the process.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, the verses by Madame de Saintonge and Racine run too far into the gutter to have been copied after the ‘Opera de Quinault’ was bound. Presuming that the book was put together shortly after the publication of the latest of the 15 *livrets* (that of the 1690 revival of *Cadmus et Hermione*), this would date the annotations to the very end of the seventeenth century, a date not inconsistent with the style of the book’s binding. Given the strong circumstantial evidence in support of dating the annotations to somewhere between 1685 and 1700, this article will proceed on the premise that all of the markings in the *livret* date from this period.

### The annotations: musical notation, and function

The first line of ‘C’en est fait’, ‘C’en est fait, la raison a chassé de mon cœur’, will serve as an introduction to the annotations as a whole. As mentioned above, the text of this *air de cour* has been copied onto the verso of the frontispiece and marked with shorter dashes and longer lines (see Fig. 2). When these annotations are compared to the vocal line of the air, a remarkable correspondence is revealed (see Ex. 1).

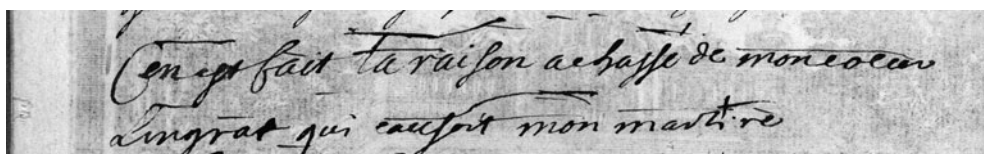


Fig. 2: Annotations made to the text of *C'en est fait*.



Ex. 1: The opening line of *C'en est fait* as published in the *Mercure Galant*, February 1685.

For instance, a line has been drawn in above the words ‘C’en est’, and these words have been set to the same pitch, while the dash above ‘fait’ is lower than the line that preceded it: this corresponds well with the descent of a fifth in the melody. Conversely, the word ‘la’ and the first syllable of ‘raison’ share a line, while the second syllable of ‘raison’ is marked by a higher dash: here the melody rises by a fourth (at some later point, a longer line joining these three syllables together was created above the original shorter lines, as if to indicate a slur of some kind). The three short dashes above ‘a chassé’ convey the rise and fall of these syllables in the score. The word ‘de’ is unmarked in the *livret*. ‘Mon cœur’, on the other hand, is marked with one long line that droops slightly at the end,

<sup>11</sup> The parody text that was added to page 48 was also truncated during the binding of the book.

indicating the descent of a half step in the music; the length of this drooping line would very nicely reflect a *tremblement appuyé* being made at this point.

The same neat relationship between musical intervals and the physical placement of the annotated lines on the page (both in relationship to the words and to each other) is also evident in the annotations made to the text of *Roland* itself. For example, Act IV scene 2 has a small number of annotations: only lines 2–5 and 7–9 of this scene have been marked up. Dashes – horizontal, rising and descending – drawn in above the lines mark individual syllables. The placement of these dashes, and their distance from the tops of the letters above which they are written, again bears a remarkably consistent relationship to the rise and fall of the intervals of Lully's score. Line 5, 'O Nuit, favorisez mes desirs amoureux', may serve as an example. Almost every syllable of this line is supplied with a dash (see Fig. 3). High above 'O' is a short descending dash, pointing towards a much lower horizontal one above 'Nuit'. Similarly, the first and last syllables of 'favorisez' show horizontal dashes at the same level as that on 'Nuit', while the penultimate syllable, 'ri', is marked with one placed higher than those surrounding it. A comparison with Lully's musical notation shows a relationship between the placement of these dashes and the pitches to which the words have been set (see Ex. 2).

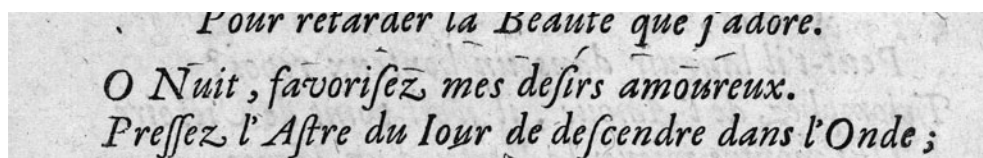


Fig. 3: Annotations made to Quinault's text from Act IV scene 2 of *Roland*.



Ex. 2: A line from *Roland* Act IV scene 2, as set by Lully.

Indeed, such correspondence between the annotations and the musical setting is so consistent throughout the *livret* that it will hereafter be understood as the rule to which only a small number of exceptions occur.

Horizontal dashes are not the only signs used by the annotator to chart the rise and fall of Lully's intervals: sometimes the dashes themselves rise or fall, being drawn in on a slant. As mentioned above, this was the case on the word 'O', and further examination of this same line shows that the word 'mes' and the first syllable of 'desirs' are also marked with falling dashes, while the final syllables of the words 'desirs' and 'amoureux' are marked with rising ones. However, Lully has not set any of these syllables to descending or rising melismas. So, while it is true that the direction of these slanting dashes does reflect the contours of Lully's



line, the question must be asked why the horizontal dashes are not used here, as they are elsewhere in the line, if the intention is accurately to reflect Lully's score.

Is it possible that the annotations here indicate how a line was actually to be sung, rather than Lully's notation of it? Looking again to the score, it is clear that the two rising dashes could be intended to remind the singer to add ornaments from below, for instance *ports de voix*. Similarly – in the case of 'C'en est fait' – the long line above 'mon cœur' could have reflected the addition of an un-notated *appuyé*. Could the *livret*, then, be an *aide-mémoire* marked up by a singer? It is probable that many amateur musicians of the period would have had a tenuous grasp of music theory and even musical notation. Singers in particular seem to have been dependant on the music master in order to learn new songs, at least if an English contemporary, Roger North, is to be believed. The following scornful remark is directed at English ladies, but probably applied more generally to Europeans of both sexes:

Ladys hear a new song, and are impatient to learne it. A master is sent for, and sings it as to a parrot, till at last with infinite difficulty the tune is gott, but with such infantine imperfect, nay broken abominable, graces, in imitation of the good, that one would splitt to hear it.<sup>12</sup>

In this light, it would be easy to see the *livret* as a simple memory aid, marked up for an unskilled singer, with basic pitches and simple ornaments indicated by rising and falling lines; but as attractive as this interpretation seems, it is problematic for a number of reasons. Discrepancies between slanting annotations and Lully's precise notation like those discussed above are simply too frequent always to relate to ornamentation; and, more importantly, they very often occur in passages where the addition of ornaments would be musically improbable at best.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, Ballard's text cannot physically serve as an effective *aide-mémoire* because the *livret* as printed does not repeat text when Lully chooses to do so in his setting. This makes it impossible for a singer to mark up passages in which repeated text is set to differing pitch intervals. This can be illustrated by a passage from Act I scene 2. Here Lully has Angélique repeat the lines 'Mais malgré tous mes soins dans le trouble où je suis / [J]e crain de m'oublier moy-mesme'.<sup>14</sup> They are first stated in A minor, then repeated, with a few significant intervallic and rhythmic

<sup>12</sup> John Wilson, ed., *Roger North on Music: Being a Selection from his Essays Written During the Years c. 1695–1728* (London, 1959), 21.

<sup>13</sup> It is important to note that the annotations contain several examples of vertical lines drawn through the horizontal dashes in such a way as to resemble trill signs, and that these markings sometimes correspond to trills in the score. See, for instance, the mark above the second syllable of the word 'martire' in Figure 2. The score for this *air* (as published in the *Mercurie Galant*) shows a trill on the final syllable of this word: 're'). On the other hand, a similar mark resembling a trill is visible in Figure 10 above the word 'parle'; yet a trill on this word seems highly unlikely. This mark could perhaps indicate the doubling, for expressive effect, of the initial consonant 'p'; such doubling was a standard technique of French opera singers (see [Jean] Blanchet, *L'Art, ou les principes philosophiques du chant* (Paris, 1756), 53–63). However, while a doubling of the 'p' in 'parle' makes sense, the doubling of the 't' in 'martire' in the air 'C'en est fait' seems less tenable.

<sup>14</sup> [Quinault], Act I, scene 2, lines 14–15.

changes, a fourth lower in E minor (see Ex. 3). Though repeated in the score, the words appear only once in the *livret*. The single annotation to this section, remarkably, does not make any attempt to indicate the intervals that differentiate the two musical statements, but rather highlights words whose setting remains basically the same in both versions, though of course transposed: 'dans le trouble' (see Fig. 4). Surely this would be of little use to a singer trying to remember pitches?

Mais mal - gré to[us] mes soins dans le trouble où je suis, Je crains, je crains de m'ou-bli-

er moy mes - me: Mais mal - gré t[ous] mes soins dans le trouble où je suis, Je crains, je

crains de m'ou-bli - er moy mes - me.

Ex. 3: Lully's setting of lines from *Roland* Act I, scene 2. The boxes encompass the section of the text that is annotated in the *livret*.

*Mais malgré tous mes soins dans le trouble où je suis  
le crains de m'oublier moy-mesme.*

Fig. 4: Annotation to Act I scene 2 of *Roland*.

This passage introduces yet another obstacle to seeing the document as an *aide-mémoire*: the different rôles and voice-types associated with the annotated words. The part of Angélique was written for soprano, that of Roland for a bass, and the text 'Malheureux les ennemis' from *Idylle sur la paix* that was copied onto the verso of the frontispiece was set by Lully for *haut-contre*. Yet music for all three parts has been marked up in the *livret* by the same hand. This suggests that the annotator was studying Lully's *mélopée* in general, rather than preparing a specific rôle.

So, if the *livret* is not a singer's *aide-mémoire*, what is it? To whom, other than someone practicing declamation, would it have been useful to map out, above

Quinault's text, the rise and fall of Lully's vocal settings? Given the improbability of the annotations being related solely to musical practice, and the enticing possibility, pointed to by Condillac and Voltaire, that Lully's scores could have served as guides for spoken recitation, the rest of this article will explore the hypothesis that the *livret's* annotations represent a contemporary attempt to distill an underlying spoken declamation from Lully's music.

To return to the scenes of the *livret* examined above, the question arises: what could the meaning of the horizontal and slanted dashes be if they do not represent sung ornaments? Did orators use ornaments? The logical extension of the idea that the horizontal dashes on the page reflect spoken pitch is that the slanting dashes indicate rising or descending microtonal slides: spoken *appuyés* and *ports de voix*.<sup>15</sup> It was proposed above that *ports de voix* would have been appropriate to the musical performance on the words 'desirs' and 'amoureux'. Would spoken *ports de voix* be similarly appropriate to a declamation of the same text? Searching the primary literature for references to theatrical vocal slides is a frustrating exercise: the term *port de voix* is almost exclusively defined in dictionaries as a purely musical term. Tantalisingly, Furetière's *Dictionnaire universel* (1690) does offer the following in defining 'voix': 'This actor has a fine *port de voix*, he raises, he lowers, he manages his voice with propriety.'<sup>16</sup> This, however, merely indicates changes in vocal pitch, without specifically mentioning microtonal sliding.

One of the classic anecdotes of the seventeenth-century French stage, that of Champmeslé interpreting the role of Monime in Racine's *Mithridate*, suggests the possibility that a gigantic slide was made, for dramatic effect, at a climactic moment in the play. L'Abbé Dubos relates that Racine himself instructed Champmeslé to lower her tone to an extraordinary degree, so that:

she easily was able take a pitch one octave higher than that on which she had said these words: *Nous nous aimions*, in order to pronounce *Seigneur, vous changez de visage* at the octave. This *port de voix*, extraordinary in declamation, was an excellent means of pointing out Monime's mental disorder at the moment she realises that her gullibility in believing Mithridate, who only wanted to extract her secret from her, has thrown her and her lover into extreme peril.<sup>17</sup>

Admittedly, Du Bos does not specifically mention a vocal glissando, and it is possible that Champmeslé changed pitch after 'aimons' by jumping up the octave.

<sup>15</sup> It is interesting to note, in this context, that Mersenne described the musical *port de voix* in 1636 as a microtonal slide. See Frederick Neumann, *Ornamentation in Baroque and Post-Baroque Music, with a Special Emphasis on J.S. Bach* (Princeton, 1978), 52.

<sup>16</sup> 'Ce Comedien a un beau port de voix, il élève, il baisse, il menage sa voix à propos.' [Antoine Furetière], *Dictionnaire universel*, 2 vols. (Rotterdam, 1690), 'voix'.

<sup>17</sup> 'Afin qu'elle pût prendre facilement un ton à l'octave au-dessus de celui sur lequel elle avoit dit ces paroles: *Nous nous aimions*, pour prononcer à l'octave, *Seigneur, vous changez de visage*. Ce port de voix extraordinaire dans la déclamation, étoit excellent pour marquer le désordre d'esprit où Monime doit être dans l'instant qu'elle apperçoit que sa facilité à croire Mithridate, qui ne cherchoit qu'à tirer son secret, vient de jeter, elle & son amant dans un péril extrême.' Abbé Dubos, *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture*, septième édition, troisième partie (Paris, 1770), 157–8. The work was first published in 1719.

If, however, she made the transition on the word 'Seigneur' itself, this would indeed have entailed the actress making an unexpected octave slide, a microtonal, ascending *éclat de voix*, to stunning effect (see Ex. 4).<sup>18</sup>



Nous nous ai - mi - ons ... Sei - gneur, vous chan - gez de vi - sa - ge?

Ex. 4: A reconstruction of Champmeslé's declamation of a line from Racine's *Mithridate*, as described by L'Abbé du Bos in *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture*. The notation refers to an oratorical 'ut', rather than to any specific musical pitches. The rhythms, based on remarks by de Grimarest (*Traité du recitatif*) and Richesource (*L'éloquence de la chaire*), have been supplied by the author for the sake of legibility. This example is meant to demonstrate the actress' change of *ton*, or basic pitch level; it is likely, however, that the octave jump served as a basis for a richer *mélodie* than is suggested here.

The dramatic context of the words 'desirs' and 'amoureux' from Act IV scene 2 of *Roland* (see fig. 3) is not nearly as overwrought as the Racinian example cited above, and the gentler quality of the *livret*'s annotated slides (suggested by the variously angled dashes) suits the mood of Quinault's scene: Roland here hopes to meet his love, and wanders, filled with amorous thoughts, alone in a shady wood. His pronunciation would surely be as soft as the music that Lully had provided for him. The sharp rise on the second syllable of 'desirs' fittingly suggests a more energetic pronunciation than does the languorous, nearly horizontal dash above the last syllable of 'amoureux'. Such variety of notation might indicate that the orator here used slides in order to express the passions of the words. It seems, then, that the manuscript dashes indicate places where vocal pitches for specific words – and even for individual syllables – are being gleaned from Lully's score, and that these pitches are sometimes reached by slides. How literally should the idea of pitch be taken in this context? How close to singing was the declamation of the annotator, or for that matter, of Condillac and Voltaire?

### The seventeenth-century context

The 'singing' quality of French declamation was closely related to the use of oratorical pitches, or *tons*, both in church and on the stage. The word 'ton' has

<sup>18</sup> Voltaire, who felt that both Champmeslé and her disciple Mlle. Duclos 'sang', found this style unworthy of imitation. He also heard in Champmeslé's performance the influence of the *air de cour*. He wrote of her delivery, in his *Épître à Mlle. Clairon*: 'Ses accens amoureux & ses sons affétés, / Echo des fades airs que Lambert a notés'. It is interesting, given the annotations to 'C'en est fait' in the *livret*, to find the *air de cour* mentioned in relation to Champmeslé's theatrical declamation. See [Voltaire], *Nouveaux meslanges philosophiques, historiques, critiques, &c. &c.*, troisième partie ([Geneva], 1765), 400.

multiple meanings: anything from the vocal inflections of polite conversation, to an emotionally coloured pronunciation, to the imitation of regional accents or individual eccentricities can be referred to in the rhetorical sources as ‘tons’. There are, however, a number of seventeenth-century sources in which the word clearly relates to specific pitches used in spoken orations. These sources will be examined at some length here, in order not only to throw light on the singing quality of recitation in the period, but also to explore just how the study of Lully’s pitches could have been of use to *déclamateurs*.

It is not insignificant that information about the use of pitches in seventeenth-century public speaking can be found in a work on music. Mersenne, in his *Seconde partie de l’harmonie universelle* (1637), claimed that ‘those who know how to sing have a greater facility in discerning and practicing the oratorical intervals than those who do not know music’.<sup>19</sup> Mersenne goes on to assert that it is more difficult for the orator properly to adjust the pitch of his voice than it is for him to speak at the correct speed. Indeed, Mersenne states that there are many orators who can deliver their speech in the proper tempo,<sup>20</sup> but who

do not have the vocal inflections necessary to pass from one sentence to the next, and who do not take the best pitch [*ton*] of their voices at the places where it must be strongest and most robust. However, to come to this practice one must learn a sermon, or a part of one, in order to recite it in the presence of a friend who is at liberty to insist that the voice take the proper tone and repeat the sentences and vocal modulations until it has grown accustomed to the inflections necessary to express all kinds of passions.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> ‘celuy qui sçait chanter ait plus de facilité à remarquer & à pratiquer les interualles oratoires, que celuy qui ne sçait pas la Musique’. Marin Mersenne, *Seconde partie de l’harmonie universelle, livre de l’vtilité de l’harmonie, et des autres parties de mathematiques* (Paris, 1637), 8.

<sup>20</sup> Mersenne indicates that pronouncing the words *Benedicam Dominum* in one second gives an indication of the maximum intelligible tempo for public speaking. See Mersenne, *Seconde partie de l’harmonie universelle*, 7. Pierre-Alain Clerc calculates that Mersenne proposes from two to six seconds per alexandrine, see Pierre-Alain Clerc, *Le « débit » de la déclamation au XVIIe siècle* (Geneva, 2004), 8. For a different kind of calculation of the speed of delivery on the French stage see Sabine Chaouche, *La Mise en scène du répertoire à la Comédie-Française (1680–1815)* (Paris, in press), II, chap. 3. Although it is a much later source, it is interesting to note that Joshua Steele’s *Prosodia Rationalis* contains the following: ‘For if a person pronounces from six to nine syllables in a second of time, as many people do, an auditor must be extremely attentive to be able to keep up with so rapid an utterance’. Steele follows this with ‘good speakers do not pronounce above three syllables in a second, and generally only two and a half, taking in the necessary pauses’. See Joshua Steele, *Prosodia rationalis: or, an essay towards establishing the melody and measure of speech, to be expressed and perpetuated by peculiar symbols* (London, 1779), 49.

<sup>21</sup> ‘parce que plusieurs donnent vn bon temps à leurs paroles, qui n’ont pas l’inflexion de la voix pour faire passages necessaires de periode en periode, & qui ne prennent pas le meilleur ton de leurs voix aux endroits où elle doit estre plus forte & plus robuste. Or pour paruenir à cette pratique il faut apprendre vn sermon, ou partie d’iceluy, afin, de le reciter en presence d’vn amy qui ait la liberté de faire prendre le propre ton à la voix, & de faire recommencer les periodes & les mouuemens de la voix, iusques à ce qu’elle se soit accoustumée aux inflexions necessaires pour exprimer toutes sortes de passions.’ Mersenne, *Seconde partie de l’harmonie universelle*, 7.

Mersenne then refers his readers to the works of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, agreeing with the latter that the normal vocal range of the orator forms the interval of a fifth; but the Frenchman insists that the expression of emotion can enlarge this vocal range:

However, whatever the intervals used by the ancient orators, it is certain that the range of a preacher is a full octave, and that the accent of anger can suddenly jump up an octave, even though it is customary to stop at the fifth; but, all these intervals must be examined before use, since that which is good for one voice is worthless for another.<sup>22</sup>

Mersenne here proposes a demarcated vocal range – the octave – for preachers, but does not prescribe exact terminal pitches: each individual speaker must find where his voice is ‘strongest and most robust’, and calculate his octave accordingly. Mersenne further suggests that the orator make surreptitious use of one of a number of musical devices designed to help him find his pitches while speaking:

And once the preacher has distinguished the best pitch for his voice, and the intervals in which he most successfully can express all kinds of passions and affections, it will be easy for him to prepare a little stick of brass containing a monochord of either the wind or string variety, by means of which he will be able to adjust his voice to all kinds of pitches, and make most exactly whatever intervals he wishes, without the auditors being able to apprehend this instrument.<sup>23</sup>

Not all churchmen would have agreed with Mersenne's precepts, however. Mazarini's *Pratique pour bien prescher* (1618), for instance, gives quite another point of view, and roundly condemns

those who glory in observing certain pitches [*tons*] in speaking, to the extent that they seem to be singing. . . . This has caused an ancient and excellent rhetorician to say, entirely correctly, that any other vice would be more tolerable in the orator than this one, which is only suitable for the theatre and for plays.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> ‘Or quelques interualles qu’ayent fait les anciens Orateurs, il est certain que la voix d’un Predicateur a vne octaue entiere pour son estenduë, & que l’accent de la cholere peut monter tout d’un coup d’une octaue, quoy qu’elle ait coustume de se terminer au Diapente: Mais tous ces interualles doiuent estre examinez auant que d’en vser, dautant que ce qui est bon pour vne voix, ne vaut rien pour l’autre.’ Mersenne, *Seconde partie de l’harmonie niverselle*, 8.

<sup>23</sup> ‘Et lors que le Predicateur aura remarqué le meilleur ton de sa voix, & les interualles qui luy reüssissent le mieux pour exprimer toutes sortes de passions & d’affections, il luy sera facile de se preparer vn petit baston creux où il y aura vn monochorde à vent ou à chorde, par le moyen duquel il ajustera sa voix à toutes sortes de tons, & fera tels interualles qu’il voudra fort exactement, sans que nul des auditeurs puisse s’appercevoir de cet instrument.’ Mersenne, *Seconde partie de l’harmonie vniuerselle*, 8. This idea may have been inspired by Plutarch’s account of Gaius Gracchus and his pipe-playing slave, a story that appears often in rhetorical treatises of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. For a French translation of the period with interesting commentary see [Plutarch], *Les vie des hommes illustres de Plutarque*, trans. Dacier, tome cinquième (Paris, 1734), 624.

<sup>24</sup> ‘ceux qui font gloire d’observer certains tons en parla[n]t; si biens qu’ils semblent chanter . . . . Ce qui faisoit dire à bon droit à vn ancien & excellent Rhetoricien, que tout autre vice estoit plus tolerable en l’Orateur que cestui-cy [sic], qui n’estant propre qu’aux Theatres & aux Comedies’, Gulio Mazarini, *Pratique pour bien prescher*, trans. I. Baudoin (Paris, 1618), 257.

Such criticism, however, did not impede one of the most influential writers on rhetoric, Michel le Faucheur, from advocating the use of oratorical tones.<sup>25</sup> His *Traité de l'action de l'orateur* (1657) gives detailed instructions to preachers on the use of the voice. Le Faucheur's oratorical technique is based on a default setting of the mean [*médiocrité*], or median, for the three basic vocal qualities of pitch, volume and speed. This enabled the orator to vary his speech according to the content and structure of his text without it becoming unpleasant or unintelligible, even when going to expressive rhetorical extremes. The result was that, in terms of pitches, the use of the outermost limits of the orator's vocal range were discouraged:

... he [the orator] must maintain the mean [*médiocrité*] because the extremities are faulty [*vicieuses*] and disagreeable. Therefore, in terms of elevation, he must never raise his voice to the highest pitches that it can reach, nor must he ever lower it to the lowest pitches to which it can descend.<sup>26</sup>

However, this vocal 'happy medium' still allowed the orator ample room to vary the pitch of his voice, which was in no way meant to be monotonous:

I must add that one must employ variety, because the mean of which I speak does not consist of an indivisible point, but rather has a certain latitude, and certain degrees. For, as to that which concerns the height or lowness of the voice, there are five or six tones between the highest and the lowest. And thus, while the orator avoids the extremes that I condemn, and keeps to a reasonable median, he still has enough space between the two to vary his voice by making use of five or six tones, as he ought.<sup>27</sup>

Le Faucheur's text is somewhat ambiguous as to the exact range of the voice: taken casually, its advocacy of a maximum of six pitches suggests an ideal vocal compass slightly narrower than Mersenne's; if, however, le Faucheur literally means that there were five or six tones at the orator's disposal in between the two outermost pitches, then both writers agreed that the full extent of an octave fell within

<sup>25</sup> For an overview of le Faucheur's work and significance see Lynée Lewis Gaillet, 'Michel le Faucheur (1585–1657)' in *Eighteenth-century British and American Rhetorics and Rhetoricians: Critical Studies and Sources*, ed. Michael G. Moran (Westport, 1994), 70–74.

<sup>26</sup> 'qu'il y doit garder la médiocrité, parce que les extrémités en sont vicieuses & desagréables. Il les doit donc éuiter, à l'égard de la hauteur, en n'esleuant iamais sa voix iusques aux plus hauts tons où elle peut monter, ni ne la rualant iamais iusques aux plus bas où elle peut descendre.' [Michel le Faucheur], *Traité de l'action de l'orateur ou de la prononciation et du geste* (Paris, 1657), 92–3. For a modern edition of the *Traité* with commentary see Sabine Chaouche, ed., *Sept traités sur le jeu du comédien et autres textes: de l'action oratoire à l'art dramatique (1657–1750)* (Paris, 2001), 25–184. The English word 'mediocrity' has been avoided here, because it is felt to be potentially confusing as a translation of the French '*médiocrité*'. The French word indicates a middle ground between extremes rather than a lack of quality. The *Dictionnaire de l'académie françoise* of 1762 defines *médiocrité* thus: 'On dit, *Il faut garder la médiocrité en toutes choses*, pour dire, qu'il faut garder en tout un juste milieu'.

<sup>27</sup> 'L'ay adjousté qu'il y doit apporter de la variété, parce que la médiocrité dont ie parle, ne consiste pas en vn point indiuisible, mais qu'elle a vne certaine latitude, & certains degrez. Car pour ce qui est de la hauteur ou de la bassesse de la voix, il y a cinq ou six tons entre les plus hauts & les plus bas. Et ainsi, encore que l'Orateur éuîte ces tons extrêmes que ie condamne, & qu'il se tienne dans vne médiocrité raisonnable, il ne laisse pas d'auoir assez d'espace entre deux pour diuersifier sa voix, en dispensant ces cinq ou six tons comme il faut.' [Le Faucheur], *Traité de l'action*, 103.

the acceptable range. Either way, there was a wide enough compass of acceptable tones for the orator to vary his pitches without compromising either his vocal quality or intelligibility. That such vocal techniques might have been perceived – for instance, by followers of Mazarini – to be theatrical does not appear to have concerned le Faucheur, who, later in the *Traité de l'action de l'orateur*, in the chapter 'On the variation of the voice according to the passions', recommended training the voice in a theatrical style of declamation:

And, to forget nothing that can contribute to something as important, in the matter of pronunciation, as the variation of the voice, I add that one of the most suitable methods for acquiring the faculty for doing so properly, and in all kinds of subjects, is to read, often and out loud, from comedies, tragedies, dialogues and other works by authors whose style most closely approaches the theatrical.<sup>28</sup>

Even more precise information on the use of oratorical pitches can be found in another seventeenth-century oratorical treatise: in Richesource's *L'éloquence de la chaire* (1665), each individual tone was designated by a different solmisation syllable. This enabled Richesource to actually map out the rise and fall of the orator's voice over the course of a sermon, and allows a modern reconstruction to be made using musical notation. Richesource, like le Faucheur before him, advocates the use of a vocal mean [*mediocrité*]. He limits the compass of the voice to five pitches, insisting that the preacher:

must study the mean and keep his voice in the middle, which is proper, since on the one end it will not break and on the other, not be muffled. When he wants to excite his listeners, he should raise it bit by bit, and by degree, up to a certain point without becoming grating, and, when softening and mitigating the affections, lower it to a certain degree that puts it in its stable range.

Finally it must be remarked that the preacher's voice must never normally rise higher than the fifth, and never to the octave in reproaches, laments and not even in female rage, for such screams are never used in the pulpit, but only in the theatre; it is sufficient that the voice should spread itself out between the two extremities that cantors call 'ut' and 'sol'.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup> 'Et, pour ne rien oublier de tout ce qui peut contribuer à vne chose aussi importante, en matière de Prononciation, qu'est cette variation de la voix; J'ajouste, qu'vn des moyens les plus propres pour acquerir la faculté de le faire bien à propos, en toutes sortes de sujets, est de lire souuent, & tout-haut des Comédies, des Tragédies, des Dialogues, & d'autres Ourages des Autheurs dont le style approche le plus du Dramatique'. [Le Faucheur], *Traité de l'action*, 132.

<sup>29</sup> 'doit étudier la mediocrité & tenir sa voix dans un juste milieu, afin que d'un côté elle ne se casse point & que de l'autre elle ne s'étouffe pas. Il la doit élever peu à peu & par degrez jusqu'à un certain point qui est au dessous de l'aigreur, quand il s'agit d'exciter les Auditeurs, & aussi l'abaisser jusqu'à un certain degré qui la met[t]e dans sa consistance quand il faut adoucir les affections & les mitiger. // Enfin il faut remarquer que la voix d'un Predicateur ne doit jamais s'élever plus haut que la quinte, pour l'ordinaire & jamais à l'octave dans les reproches, les plaintes & la rage du sexe même, ces cris n'ont point d'usage dans la Chaire, mais sur le Theatre seulement, il suffit qu'elle s'étende entre ces deux extremittez que les chantres appellent l'*Vt* & le *Sol*.' Richesource, *L'éloquence de la chaire ou la rhetorique des predicateurs*, seconde edition (Paris, 1673), 351–2. For the translation of 'consistance' as 'middle range' see Richesource, 350, where he seems to refer to a stable middle range for the voice. Furetière's *Dictionnaire universel* defines the word as 'Certain état de perfection où les choses qui peuvent croître ou diminuer, demeurent pendant quelque temps sans augmenter, ni decliner'. See Antoine Furetière, *Dictionnaire universel*, seconde edition (La Haye, 1702), 'consistance'.



Though Richesource very usefully goes on to describe the rhetorical applications of each pitch, parts of his text are cumbersome and ambiguous. Fortunately, however, this section of *L'eloquence de la chaire* was reprinted in the eighteenth century in condensed form in Dinouart's *L'eloquence du corps ou l'action du prédicateur* (1761). Because it presents the essentials of Richsource's explanation in an easily digested form, Dinouart's summary will be cited here first, and thereafter elucidated with specific examples from Richsource's original:

The *ut*, being the first pitch, is used in explications, expositions, hypotheses, etc., which demand a manly, natural and steady voice. The *re*, added to the *ut*, elevates the vowels at the end of incisions or hemistiches, and at pauses, which is the smallest inflection or elevation of the voice. The *mi*, called the third [*tierce*] is for the sweet, gentle passions that are raised in the body of the sermon; which is called the 'little pathos' [*le petit pathétique*]. The *fa*, which is the fourth [*quarte*] is for strong emotions, when one must develop the grandeur of the soul's feelings and the heart's emotions concerning some particular truth. The *sol*, which is the fifth [*quinte*], only appears in the 'grand pathos' [*le grand pathétique*].<sup>30</sup>

Dinouart, following Richesource, relates the proper oratorical pitch to the emotional content of the text. Rational discourse, scriptural exegesis and the reduction of the general to the particular [*hypothèse*] occur on *ut*, with *re* used as an inflection for the sake of variety and intelligibility: thus, unemotional text is pronounced on the two most stable tones, where the voice is full, consistent and uninflected by strong feeling ('manly, natural and steady'). In contrast, the higher pitches are well suited to the expression of emotion: the *mi* is used for the gentler emotions, the *fa* for more violent ones, and the *sol* is reserved for the strongest passions, or 'grand pathos'. Thus, the voice rises up the gamut as the emotional intensity of the text increases.

In *L'eloquence de la chaire*, Richesource gives specific examples of the use of pitch in a sermon, which help to elucidate what the 'singing' quality of this type of church oratory was like. His illustration for the proper use of *ut* and *re* is the text 'Et le Sauveur du monde aiant chargé sa Croix' (And the Savior of the world having taken up his cross):

All of the syllables must be pronounced in a firm and manly tone and with the same tenor and consistency of voice, as on the *ut*, which is the first pitch; and the final syllables, being *Monde* and *Croix*, must be pronounced on the pitch *re*, which is to say a pitch higher than the preceding syllables of the same verse.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup> 'L'*ut*, comme le premier ton, est pour l'explication, l'exposition, les hypothèses, &c. qui demandent une voix mâle, naturelle & consistante. Le *ré*, ajouté à l'*ut*, élève les voyelles à la fin des incisions ou des hémistiches, & du repos qui est la plus petite inflexion ou élévation de la voix. Le *mi*, nommé *tierce*, est pour les passions douces & paisibles qui s'excitent dans le corps du Sermon; ce qu'on peut appeller le petit pathétique. Le *fa*, qui est la *quarte*, est pour les grands movemens, quand il faut développer la grandeur des sentimens de l'ame & des mouvemens du cœur à l'égard de quelque vérité. Le *sol*, qui est la *quinte*, ne paroît que dans le grand pathétique.' Dinouart, *L'eloquence du corps, ou l'action du prédicateur*, seconde édition (Paris, 1761), 166–7. For a modern discussion of Richesource and Dinouart see Chaouche, *Sept traités*, 172.

<sup>31</sup> 'Toutes les syllables doivent estre prononcées d'un ton ferme & mâle & d'une même teneur ou consistance de voix, comme sur l'*Vt* qui est le premier ton; & les dernieres syllables qui sont *Monde* & *Croix* doivent estre prononcées d'un ton de *re*, c'est à dire d'un ton plus haut que les syllables precedentes dans le même vers.' Richesource, *L'eloquence de la chaire*, 352.

Richesource's proposed performance of the line, with *ut* rising to *re* at the end of each hemistich, is meant to prevent the oratorical fault of sinking into unintelligibility at the end of a phrase, the so-called 'swallowing the syllables' ('manger les voyeles, ou les syllabes').<sup>32</sup> This is more a technical than an expressive device, and therefore when the orator moves up from *ut* to the more emotional pitch of *mi* the same kind of variety in inflection will occur: *fa* will now function in relationship to *mi* just as *re* had functioned in relation to *ut*. Richesource uses the following alexandrine to demonstrate this, 'Ah Chrétiens, si ce Christ a sceu porter sa Croix!' (Ah, Christians, if this Christ knew how to carry his cross!). However, though the two examples look very similar when put into musical notation (see Exx. 5 and 6), their performance would have been very different: Richesource is explicit in stating that *mi* is for passions associated with desire and aversion, the so-called concupiscible passions of the Scholastic tradition (love and hate, desire and aversion, joy and sorrow).<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Richesource, *L'eloquence de la chaire*, 352.

<sup>33</sup> See Richesource, 352. See also Richesource, 71. The division of the eleven basic passions into six concupiscible and five irascible passions goes back to Thomas Aquinas, who introduced the theory of the eleven basic affects into church doctrine in the thirteenth century. Concupiscible passions spurred the subject to desire that which was beneficial and to shun that which was harmful; the irascible passions encouraged the subject either to attack or to flee any present danger. The seventeenth-century writer Nicolas Coeffeteau noted the difference between these two affective categories in his *Tableau des passions humaines*: 'il a fallu pour le bien de l'homme qu'il eust deux sortes d'inclinations; l'une pour poursuivre les choses qui sont agréables à ses Sens, & pour éviter celles qui luy pourroient donner de l'ennuy: & celle-là nous la nommons la Concupiscible; Et l'autre par le moyen de laquelle il peust combattre & renverser tout ce qui s'oppose, & qui traaverse ses inclinations, ou qui va à la destruction de son estre, ou à la diminution de son contentement, qui est celle que nous appellons l'Irascible. Celle cy differe d'auec la Concupiscible, parce que la Concupiscible se porte au bien sensible, considéré absolument & sans aucune espines; au lieu que l'Irascible regarde tousiours le bien reuestu [revêtu] de quelque difficulté qu'elle s'efforce de vaincre, afin d'oster à la Concupiscible tous les obstacles qui retardent son contentement, & qui l'empeschent de pouuoir jouïr du bien qu'elle desire de posseder. De sorte que l'Irascible est comme l'espée, & le bouclier de la Concupiscible, d'autant qu'elle combat pour son contentement, & qu'elle resiste à tout ce qui peut le traaverser.' Nicolas Coeffeteau, *Tableau des passions humaines, de leurs causes, et de leurs effects*, dernière édition, réuë & augmentée (Lyon, 1642) 3–5. It is important to remember that various combinations of these eleven basic passions were thought to produce 'vn Exain [essaim] d'autres' (a swarm of others). Coeffeteau, *Tableau des passions*, 25. The knowledge that the categories of passion were based either on desire (concupiscible) or anger (irascible) can influence our understanding of the sources, and can eventually inform our performances: Dubos states that Champmeslé lowered her pitch 'encore plus que le sens ne semble le demander', at the words 'Nous nous aimons'. These, being desire-based, would normally have been taken, according to Richesource, on *mi*. Champmeslé probably took them on her lowest tone, *ut*, so that she could rise the full range of her voice, an octave, at the words '*Seigneur, vous changez de visage*'. These words are spoken just at the moment that her character, Monime, is seized suddenly by a terrible fear. Mersenne writes quite specifically (in his *Seconde partie de l'harmonie universelle*) that anger can make the orator's voice jump up an octave. Fear is, of course, one of the irascible, or anger-based, passions.



Et le Sau-veur du mon-de ai-ant char-gé sa Croix

Ex. 5: Reconstruction of Richesource's use of 'ut' and 're' as described in *L'eloquence de la chaire*. As in example 4, oratorical *tons* are indicated here using standard musical notation. The rhythms have been supplied by the author to aid legibility.



Ah! Chré-tiens, si ce Christ a sceu por-ter sa Croix!

Ex. 6: Richesource's use of 'mi' and 'fa' to express one of the concupiscible passions, presumably sorrow.

The contrast between the rising intonation and warmth associated with the concupiscible passions (the 'little pathos', pronounced on *mi*) and the lower tones of rational discourse (associated with *ut*) is further underscored in Richesource's example by the punctuation, for the higher oratorical pitch he prescribes for the line 'Ah Chrétiens, si ce Christ a sceu porter sa Croix!' neatly corresponds to its exclamation mark. The raised pitch (*mi*) of the orator's voice was, first and foremost, an indication of heightened emotional intensity in his performance.

Increasing affective elevation resulted in the orator's voice rising even further up the gamut: *fa* was used for the group of passions associated with anger, the irascible passions (hope, fear, courage, despair, anger).<sup>34</sup> Here again, the adjacent higher pitch (*sol*) was used in combination with *fa* for the sake of both vocal variety and emphasis. In order to illustrate this, Richesource gives an example of what he describes as an animated reproach, full of pathos, boldly interrogative and containing two rhetorical figures (apostrophe and anadiplosis): 'Et toy lâche Chrétien as-tu porté la Croix? La Croix de ce Iesus qui t'invite à le suivre?' (And you, cowardly Christian, have you carried the cross? The cross of this Jesus that invites you to follow him?). Richesource remarks that 'Those whose voice and declamation are unconstrained can, and even must, elevate the repetition of *Croix*' (see Ex. 7).<sup>35</sup> By elevating the word 'croix', the orator can bring out more forcefully the word repetition at the end of the first and beginning of the second line (anadiplosis).

Finally, having reached the *sol*, Richesource mentions that it is possible for the orator's voice to rise to *la* for the sake of variety and emphasis. He has here reached the emotional and musical highpoint of his text (see Ex. 8):

<sup>34</sup> See Richesource, *L'eloquence de la chaire*, 353.

<sup>35</sup> 'le reproche suivant apostrophé, pathétisé, ou animé, anadiplosé ou redoublé, hardy ou interrogé... Ceux qui ont la liberté de la voix et de la Declamation peuvent & doivent même élever la reprise de *Croix*'. Richesource, *L'eloquence de la chaire*, 353.



Et toy lâ-che Chrétien as-tu por-té la Croix?



La Croix de ce Je-sus qui t'in-vi-te à le sui-vre

Ex. 7: Two lines showing Richesource's use of 'fa' and 'sol' to express one of the irascible passions, presumably anger.

one can go to *la*, surpassing the *sol* in order to stave off monotony; but one must be confident of the force and the reach of one's voice; and especially when the subject can be repeated or, even more beautifully, when the fecundity of the voice permits its doubling, tripling and even quadrupling and quintupling [i.e. repeating the subject of the sentence up to five times], each time pushing the voice but without elevating it, or at least just a bit; as in *La croix de ton Sauveur qui t'invite à la penitence*; *la Croix de ton Sauveur qui demande tes larmes*; *la Croix de ton Sauveur*, &c.. (The cross of your Saviour that invites you to penitence; the Cross of your Saviour that demands your tears; the Cross of you Saviour, etc.)<sup>36</sup>



La [C]roix de ton Sau-veur qui t'in-vi-te à pe-ni-ten-ce;



la Croix de ton Sau-veur qui de-man-de tes lar-mes;



la Croix de ton Sau-veur

Ex. 8: Richesource suggests the orator go to 'sol' and even to 'la' in expressing the 'grand Pathétique'.

<sup>36</sup> 'on peut aller jusqu'au *la*, afin d'encherir sur le *sol* contre la Monotonie; mais il faut estre bien asseuré de la force & de la portée de sa voix; & sur tout quand le sujet peut estre repeté ou le plus beau est quand la voix permet de doubler de tripler & même quadrupler & quintupler, par sa fecondité, en poussant la voix à chaque reprise, mais sans l'élever ou du moins bien peu; comme. *La [C]roix de ton Sauveur qui t'invite à la penitance*; *la Croix de ton Sauveur qui demande des larmes*; *la Croix de ton Sauveur*, &c'. Richesource, *L'eloquence de la chaire*, 353–4.

Having reached this climax, the orator's voice begins to descend, first down one tone to *fa* (with *sol* used for emphasis) at the text 'Mais hélas, mal-heureux! au lieu de la porter tu cherches tes plaisirs' (But, alas, sinner! instead of carrying it/You seek your pleasures) (see Ex. 9) and then, in order to express the orator's contempt ('*mépris*'), the voice suddenly drops sharply to *re* (or, according to Richesource, possibly even down to *ut*, if the orator's voice is reliable) at the words 'Tu cherches tes plaisirs disons mieux' (see Ex. 10). This drop from *fa* to *re* or *ut* (and thus out of the vocal range of the irascible passions into the cooler regions of discourse) is justified by the affective theory of the day: contempt was thought to be unmixed with anger.<sup>37</sup>



Mais he - las, mal-heu-reux! au lieu de la por - ter



Tu cher - ches tes plai - sirs

Ex. 9: Richesource suggests 'sol' as appropriate here 'à cause de l'exclamation passionnée'.



tu cher - ches tes plai-sirs di - sons mieux



Tu cha-ar-ges tes plai-sirs a - vec em-pres-se-ment

Ex. 10: Two lines cited by Richesource where, for the sake of expression, a sudden drop in the orator's voice and microtonal slide are required. Either 'ut' or 're' may be used as the fundamental pitch; in this realization they are used in succession, for variety's sake.

This sudden drop in range also prepares the orator's voice for the coming line, for by lowering his tone the orator gives himself sufficient vocal compass to make an ornamental, microtonal slide. This slide was used to highlight the presence of the rhetorical figure paranomase, a kind of wordplay based on the similarity of

<sup>37</sup> For instance, Cureau de la Chambre, in his *Les caracteres des passions* noted that 'le Mespris n'est rien que l'opinion que nous auons qu'une chose est indigne de nostre estime & de nos soins, ne la iugeant pas capable de faire ny bien ny mal'. Cureau de la Chambre, *Les charateres des passions*, volume II, second édition (Paris, 1660), 421.

sound between two words of different meaning. Thus, 'Tu cherches tes plaisirs disons mieux' (You seek your pleasures, or better said) is followed by 'Tu charges tes plaisirs avec empressement' (You take up your pleasures with ardour); 'charges' ironically echoes 'cherches', and is, therefore, a paronomase (see Ex. 10). In order to point up the relationship between 'cherches' and 'charges' for the listener, Richesource prescribes lengthening the latter word and pronouncing it with a sliding intonation:

And if the preacher wishes to vary the expression and performance of the correction and the paronomase (or allusion and changing of certain letters in the words), he can say, always in the same low, firm voice:

Tu cherches tes plaisirs dison mieux  
 Tu charges tes plaisirs avec empressement

But the 'tu' must be on the pitch *re* and the 'a' in 'Charges' must be doubled, as if one were saying 'Chaarges', so that the first 'a', joined to the 'ch' in 'char' is on the pitch *fa*, the second 'a' on the pitch *mi* and the 'ge' on the pitch *re*, like two notes slurred together.<sup>38</sup>

Here the orator underscores the irony of his rebuke (that the sinful auditors not only seek their pleasures, but take them up as readily as Christ took up his cross) with an ornamental slide. The fact that the slide is given such prominent treatment here implies that similar microtonal ornaments are lacking elsewhere in the sermon. If this is the case, then Richesource's performance would indeed have come very close to chanting or singing: it is the microtonal character of speech that differentiates it most sensibly from song.

Such use of oratorical pitches was not, as noted above, universally admired. A piece published in the *Nouvelles de la republique des lettres* in August of 1708 makes this very clear. It contains a list of common oratorical faults so obvious that they could be recognised even by children; and prominent among them is the use of oratorical tones:

There are some who base their vocal pitch on the eight musical tones, and after having gone from the lowest *ut* to the highest, they descend again to the lowest and re-ascend to the highest and so forth, successively, from the beginning to the end of their discourse. Some don't take the full octave; all is reduced to the incessant repetition of *ut, re, mi, fa, sol; ut, re, mi, fa, sol*. It's easy to make children sensible of these faults, by imitating them in their presence and slightly exaggerating them, so that they distance themselves from them.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>38</sup> 'Et si le Predicateur veut varier l'expression & l'action par la correction & par la paronomase, allusion ou jeu du changement de quelques lettres [sic] dans les paroles, toujours du même ton de voix basse & ferme, il peut dire.

Tu cherches tes plaisirs dison mieux  
 Tu charges tes plaisirs avec empressement

Mais il faut que le *tu* soit sur le ton du *re* & que l'*â* de *Châ*rgé, soit comme doublé, comme qui disoit *Chaa*rgé, que le premier *a* joint au *ch* *char* soit sur le ton de *fa*, le second *a* sur le ton du *mi* & le *ge* sur le ton du *re*: comme deux notes liées ensemble.' Richesource, 353 [recte 355].

<sup>39</sup> 'Qu'il y en a qui réglent le ton de leur voix sur les huit tons de Musique, & qui après être venus depuis l'*ut* le plus bas, jusques au plus haut, descendent au plus bas & remontent au plus haut, &

This commentary clearly shows that in the early eighteenth century there were still two schools of thought as to an orator's vocal compass, with some speakers limiting themselves to the interval of a fifth, while others used the full octave.<sup>40</sup> Of the two, this critic seems to find the smaller range the more unbearable, due to the greater monotony of its repeated rise and fall.

### The *tons* in the *livret* of *Roland*

There is evidence for the use of oratorical pitches or *tons* in the *livret* annotations to Roland's Act IV scene 2 monologue. Before discussing them, however, it will be useful to establish whether any other stylistic similarities exist between Richesource's declamatory style and that of either the score of *Roland* or the *livret*. To begin with the score of *Roland*, a comparison between the notated examples from Richesource's *L'eloquence* and Lully's recitative shows greatly differing approaches to declamation: the preacher's uniform intonations, in which the majority of the syllables of a given line are spoken on one pitch, with only the upper adjacent tone used to avoid monotony or to add emphasis, are very far removed from the richly varied *mélopée* of Lully's setting. Because the annotations to the *livret* generally seem to follow Lully's intervals, the same discrepancy can be seen between Richesource (who, for instance, only once specifies the use of a descending slide) and the many rising and descending dashes of the *livret*. These differing styles should not be surprising: Lully, after all, was supposed to have based his recitative on Champmeslé's performance of Racine, not on the delivery of a sermon.

However, the use of pitches, or the *tons*, to express the nature and intensity of the passions (concupiscible or irascible) seems to be the same in the annotations to the *livret* and in Richesource's detailed prescriptions, though the operatic text was delivered with far greater variety of inflection. For instance, lines 8 and 9 of Act IV scene 2 are part of a larger apostrophe addressed to Night (starting in line 5). The two lines in question are: '[J]e ne troubleray plus par mes cris douloureux/Vostre tranquillité profonde' (I will no longer trouble, with my dolorous cries/Your profound tranquility). These verses are not marked with dashes of any kind in the *livret*. However, there are two significant annotations, one at the end of line 8 and one to the beginning of line 9 (see Fig. 5). The former is illegible; its possible

ainsi successivement, depuis le commencement de leur discours, jusques à la fin. Quelques-uns n'observent pas l'octave toute entière; tout se réduit à repeter incessamment *ut, re, mi, fa, sol; ut, re, mi, fa, sol*. Il est facile de faire sentir ces défauts aux Enfants, en les imitant devant eux & en les outrant même un peu, pour leur en faire concevoir plus d'éloignement.' *Nouvelles de la republique des lettres*, mois d'Août (Amsterdam, 1708).

<sup>40</sup> To enter into the different preaching styles of various Christian sects, between Protestants and Catholics or amongst the Catholic orders themselves, is beyond the scope of this article. However, such an undertaking might throw new light on commentaries like those cited here. It is also important to bear in mind that a well-delivered sermon was seen almost as a form of entertainment in this period; it was certainly admired both as a performance and as a piece of rhetoric.

significance will be discussed in due course. The latter is clearly the solmisation syllable *ut*. The obvious explanation for the placement of this syllable – that a singer added it in order to find his pitch while singing – is untenable for a number of reasons. First, whether the system used here was that of hexachords or the so-called *méthode du si*, *ut* would not be the proper syllable to use.<sup>41</sup> Second, even if some explanation for using *ut* could be found, for instance some obscure or perhaps entirely personal system of solmisation, there is no reason for this interval, of all the intervals of this monologue, to be singled out for annotation: it simply is not difficult for the singer to find his pitch at this place in the score (see Ex. 11).

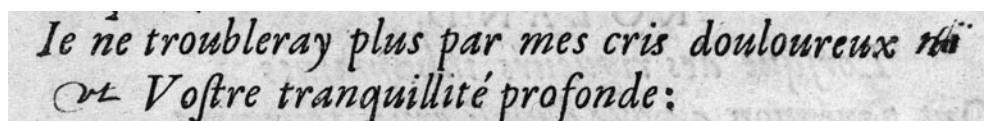
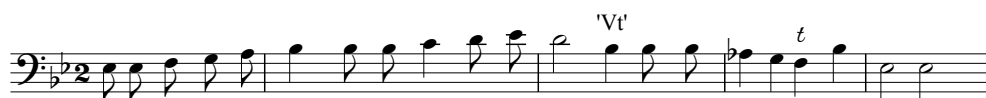


Fig. 5: ‘Vt’ added to Act IV scene 2 of *Roland*.



Je ne trou-ble-ray pl[us] par mes cris dou-lou-reux Vos-tre tra[n]-qui-li-té pro - fon - de.

Ex. 11: A line from the score of *Roland*, with ‘Vt’ indicated at the same point as in the *livret*.

However, if it makes no sense as a musical solmisation syllable, the ‘ut’ does make sense as an indication of oratorical tone. It would be only logical for the orator to sink to his lowest vocal pitch for the words ‘Vostre tranquillité profonde’, in order to express the deep tranquility of the text. This might seem obvious and therefore unworthy of annotation, but in fact the passage is a tricky one for an orator trying to choose the proper pitch for his declamation, because the preceding line refers to one of the irascible passions, and therefore theoretically demands a heightened vocal pitch-level. Roland’s ‘cris douloureux’ are those of an impatient, frustrated lover; according to affective theory, the existence of an obstacle between the desirer and the desired generated the anger characteristic of the irascible passions, and therefore Roland’s frustration belongs to this heightened affective category. This would, according to Richesource, push the voice up at least to *fa*. However, the dolorous cries here have a poetic function, and are not the immediate expression of actual physical pangs; at this point in the monologue Roland is more amorous than distressed. Lully understood this. He set the words

<sup>41</sup> For a thorough exploration, see Nicolas Meeùs, et al., ‘La “gamme double Française” et la méthode du si’, *Musurgia*, vol. VI, no. 3/4, dossier d’analyse (1999), 29–44.



to a smooth rising line quite unlike the jagged intervallic setting of the beginning of the Act IV scene 2 monologue ‘Je suis trahi’, where Roland’s emotions begin to overpower his reason, heralding his imminent mental breakdown. Therefore, though Quinault’s verse here speaks of ‘cries’, neither Lully nor the orator would have wanted Roland to cry out like someone in pain.

So, what oratorical pitch should the annotator have chosen, irascible *fa* (emphasising the lover’s frustration) or concupiscible *mi* (emphasising his amorous yearning)? The illegible marking at the end of the line seems to indicate something of a struggle on the annotator’s part, as several layers of writing appear on top of each other. Frustratingly, this mark can probably never be deciphered with certainty: at first glance it resembles the letters ‘nd’, an annotation without any obvious significance (see Fig. 6).



Fig. 6: A remarkable annotation to Act IV scene 2 of *Roland*.

After thorough examination, however, one possible, logical interpretation presents itself: the conglomerate letters might consist of a delicately penned ‘*fa*’ almost fully obscured by a heavy-handed correction to ‘*mi*’.<sup>42</sup> This hypothesis could be further supported by the presence of two obliquely descending dots marked in above the letters. If these dots are seen as representing the oratorical pitches, they might indicate a descent of two tones: from *mi* to *re*, and from *re* to *ut*. Thus, this complex combination of dots, illegible letters and the solimisation symbol *ut* could indicate that the annotator changed his mind about the pitch level of line 8, but not about the obvious use of *ut* for line 9; the two dots descending therefore would simply clarify his intentions, indicating that the voice was about to descend two tones.

The association of dots with pitch levels on which the above hypothesis is based is not as fanciful as it at first may seem, for the annotator made ample use of dots in the *livret*. These markings cannot be explained in musical terms, but do seem to make sense when compared to the emotional intensity of the text that they gloss. This relationship can most clearly be seen in Act IV scene 7. This scene is entirely taken up by Roland’s descent into madness, the text punctuated by acts of physical violence and ending in an insane vision of a demon from Hell. The various stage business causes the text of the monologue to fall into neat sections.

The first section comprises the first nine lines of the scene. In them Roland expresses his surprise at being betrayed by Angélique and his sorrow at the destruction of his own reputation (*gloire*) for the sake of a treacherous love. He is flooded

<sup>42</sup> The author wishes to thank Lois Rosow for casting her experienced eye over an admittedly ambiguous annotation.

with an emotion that finally breaks out into violence: he begins to dismantle the set around him. Three dots, in a rising line, have been added to the margin after the final line of this section (see Fig. 7).

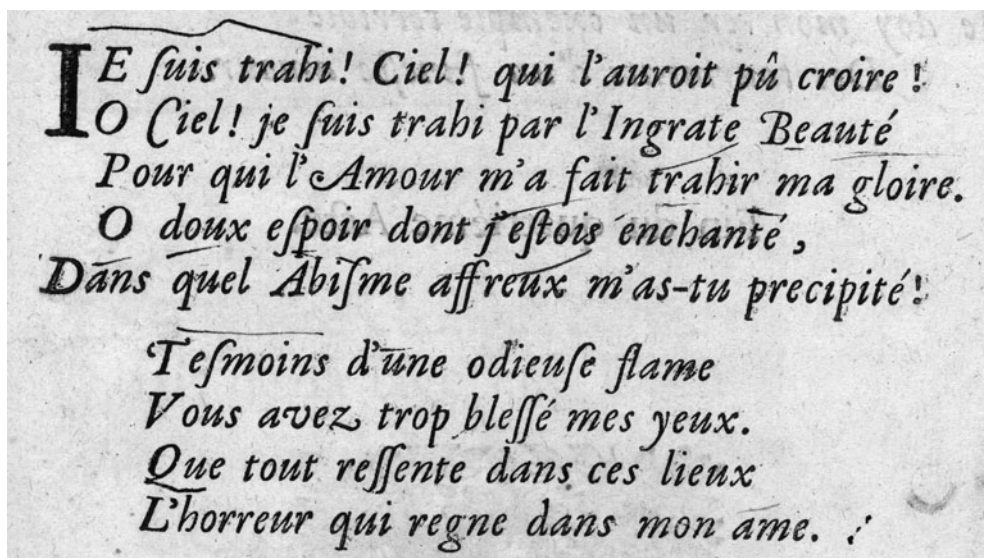


Fig. 7: Annotations to Act IV scene 7 of *Roland*. Note the three rising dots at the end of the last line.

This could indicate that Roland's voice, having risen through the expression of the concupiscible passions of love, hate and sorrow associated with *mi*, had arrived at an irascible anger, associated with *fa*.<sup>43</sup> Then, in a rage, he proceeds to tear up trees and throw rocks on stage.

The following section of the monologue is short, only four lines long, and in it Roland expresses his (irascible) despair (see Fig. 8). The annotator seems to indicate a lower pitch than *fa* for most of the words 'dans la Nuit du Tombeau!' by drawing dashes through the words themselves, with the exception of 'la' and 'Tombeau'. The use of dashes, rather than dots, could indicate that while the basic intonation and intensity associated with *fa* was maintained, the orator's *mélodie* dipped down briefly to 'paint' the metaphorical image of a gloomy tomb. It should further be noted that the marking above 'la' is particularly remarkable because it does not correspond to Lully's setting (see Ex. 12). The end of this quatrain is annotated with four rising dots, indicating that *fa* has been fully reached and that the orator is on his way to *sol*, which was, according to Dinouart,

<sup>43</sup> Cureau de la Chambre believed *horreur* was a kind of fear, and therefore an irascible passion. See [Cureau] de la Chambre, *Les caracteres des passions*, vol. III (Paris, 1659), 75–6.



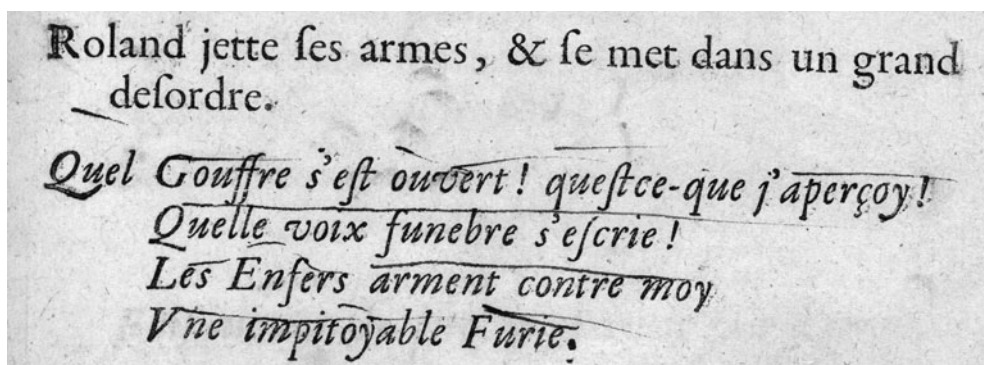


Fig. 9: Annotations to Act IV scene 7 of *Roland*. Note the single dot above 's'est' as well as the thick, downward-sloping line above 'Furie', which could indicate a forceful pronunciation and doubling of the initial consonant.



Quel-le voix fu - ne - bre s'é - cri- e?

Ex. 13: Lully's setting of a line from Act IV scene 7 of *Roland*.

In the final quatrain, Roland interrogates the Fury,<sup>44</sup> from which he learns his fate: '[J]e doy montrer un exemple terrible/Des tourments d'un funeste amour.' (I must provide a terrifying example/Of the torments of a fatal love.) (see Fig. 10). The penultimate line is marked at the end with five rising dots, indicating that the final line be declaimed above *sol*, on the extraordinary pitches reserved for the display of great emotion. The dot above the word '[J]e' indicates that the orator's voice sank to *ut* in order to rise at least to *la*, if not higher, on the word 'terrible'. This would have been close to the terrifying effect of Champmeslé's 'Seigneur, vous changez de visage'. It seems, therefore, that the annotator used dots, as well as the solmisation syllable *ut*, to indicate oratorical pitch in the *livret*.<sup>45</sup> This further supports the idea that the annotations form some kind of 'school of declamation', or orator's workbook, inspired by Lully's score.

<sup>44</sup> The appearance of the arabic numeral 6 before the line 'Que pretend-tu? parle . . . ô suplice horrible!' (What do you propose? Speak . . . oh Horrible torture!) is unique in the *livret*. It cannot refer to the musical setting, for Lully here goes into *triple simple* metre. It rather seems to refer to counting syllables, and probably is related to the unusually long pause at the caesura.

<sup>45</sup> It should be mentioned that there are other places in the *livret* – in Act I scene 2 and on the verso of the frontispiece – where similar dots are in evidence, and their interpretation as indicators of *tons* can be similarly justified.

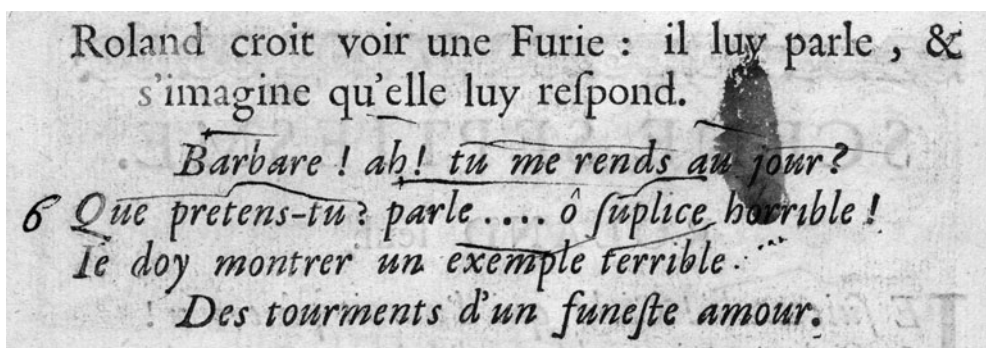


Fig. 10: Annotations to Act IV scene 7 of *Roland*. Note the five rising dots at the end of the penultimate line.

It must be stressed that, although the annotations to the *livret* of *Roland* are highly suggestive, much of what has been proposed here must remain hypothetical until a corroborative source comes to light. However, if the above interpretation of the dashes and dots of the *livret* is correct, then a *ton* functioned as a basic pitch or ‘tonal centre’, chosen to express the emotional level of a line. The orator’s voice rises and falls in a rich and varied *mélopée* around this basic pitch in a way that makes the sermon of Richesource look like simplistic singsong. Was this greater vocal flexibility, combined with the widest possible compass of oratorical pitches, the hallmark of the theatrical declamatory style during the *ancien régime*? Having examined the *tons* in their seventeenth-century context, and theorised about their possible application to the *livret*, we may now look at the document in an eighteenth-century, theatrical light.

### The eighteenth-century theatrical context

Numerous musicologists have pointed out the surprising continuity of aesthetic goals at the Paris opera from Lully to Rameau.<sup>46</sup> The longevity of this conservative bias justifies an examination of the seventeenth-century *livret* in the context of the eighteenth-century discourse surrounding declamation and opera. Furthermore, it will be proposed that a reconstruction of the annotations to the *livret* made in light of eighteenth-century sources could stimulate renewal in our current performance practice for *ancien régime* opera and spoken theatre. Therefore, in the interest of placing the annotations in a broader historical context, and of facilitating their practical application, an exploration of a few select eighteenth-century sources will follow here.

When L’Abbé Dubos, in his *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture*, related the anecdote about Champmeslé’s use of the octave in Racine’s *Mithridate*, he did so as part of a larger exposition on the singing nature of the declamation of the

<sup>46</sup> See, for instance, the following article by Charles Dill, who refers to work by Lois Rosow and Antonia Banducci, among others: Charles Dill, ‘Eighteenth-Century Models of French Recitative’, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 120/2 (1995), 232–50.

ancients. He favourably compared the recitation of his countrymen to that of the Greeks and Romans, describing the vocal style of French tragic actors as follows:

The French do not rely on costumes to give a fitting nobility and dignity to the actors of tragedy. We also desire that these actors speak with a more elevated, more serious and more sustained voice than that used in everyday conversation.<sup>47</sup>

Dubos praised his countrymen's superiority over their neighbours as creators and performers of tragic drama. According to him, only the French, with their elevated declamation, could suitably express the dignity of tragic verse:

As I have already said, it is well accepted in Europe that the French, who for a hundred years have composed the best dramas that appear today, also recite tragedies best, and know how to put them on with the greatest decorum [*déceance*]. In Italy the actors recite tragedy in the same tone and with the same gestures that they use for comedy. There the buskin is hardly different from the sock. When the Italian actors wish to animate themselves in passages of pathos, they immediately exaggerate. The hero becomes a *Capitano*.<sup>48</sup>

Dubos admitted that the French style, 'more elevated, graver, and more sustained' than that of conversation, came close to singing, and he claimed that even the Italians believed it to resemble the 'singing' recitation of the ancients:

The Italians, who treat us justly without too much repugnance when discussing those arts and talents at which they do not pride themselves in excelling, say that our tragic declamation gives them an idea of the lost melody, or theatrical declamation, of the ancients.<sup>49</sup>

Dubos had already argued elsewhere in his *Réflexions* that the ancients had notated their recitations; it was therefore only natural for him, having established a link between French and Antique theatrical practices, to address the idea of notating French declamations. The ancients, Dubos believed, notated their 'song' by means of their accent marks.<sup>50</sup> This, indeed, seems to be the system used in the *livret* of *Roland*, where the *accent aigu* and *accent grave* became rising and falling dashes that broadly mapped out Lully's intervals above Quinault's words.<sup>51</sup> Dubos,

<sup>47</sup> 'Les François ne s'en tiennent pas aux habits pour donner aux Acteurs de la Tragedie la noblesse & la dignité qui leur conviennent. Nous voulons encore que ces Acteurs parlent d'un ton de voix plus élevé, plus grave & plus soutenu que celui sur lequel on parle dans les conversations ordinaires.' Dubos, *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie*, première partie, 439–40.

<sup>48</sup> 'Il est assez établi en Europe, comme je l'ai déjà dit, que les François, qui depuis cent ans composent les meilleures pieces Dramatiques qui paroissent aujourd'hui, sont aussi ceux qui récitent le mieux les Tragedies, & qui savent les représenter avec le plus de déceance. En Italie les Acteurs récitent la Tragedie du même ton & avec les mêmes gestes qu'ils récitent la Comedie. Le *Cothurne* n'y est presque pas différent du *Socque*. Dès que les Acteurs Italiens veulent s'animer dans les endroits pathétiques, ils sont outrez aussitôt. Le Héros devient un *Capitan*.' Dubos, *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie*, première partie, 442.

<sup>49</sup> 'Les Italiens qui nous rendent justice sans trop de répugnance quand il s'agit des Arts & des talens, où ils ne se piquent pas d'exceller, disent que notre déclamation tragique leur donne une idée du chant ou de la déclamation théâtrale des anciens que nous avons perduë.' Dubos, *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie*, première partie, 441.

<sup>50</sup> For a complete discussion see Dubos, *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie*, troisième partie, section IV, 58–90.

<sup>51</sup> For a discussion of the rising and falling pitch levels associated with these accents see [Jean-Léonor Le Gallois, sieur de Grimaire], *Traité du recitatif* (Paris, 1707), 6–7.

however, felt that this method would be inadequate to the task of properly recording the orator's declamation. Instead, he recommended a notational system based on existing musical symbols:

I asked several musicians if it would be difficult to invent some symbols with which one could notate the declamation in use on our stage, for we don't have enough accent marks to be able to notate it as did the ancients. These musicians replied that the thing was possible, and even that one could notate declamation using our musical scale, as long as one gave to the notes but half of their normal intonation. For example, notes that have a semi-tone's intonation in music would only have a quarter-tone in declamation. Thus one could notate the smallest descent and the smallest elevation of the voice that is perceptible, at least to our ears.<sup>52</sup>

Voltaire and Condillac, who both knew Dubos' work well, could easily have taken the idea of declaiming Lully's recitative with 'softened' intervals from this passage. What neither Voltaire nor Condillac specifically addressed, however, was how to handle Lully's notated rhythms. Spoken recitation had to take syllable length into account, but what to do when the rhythms were already notated by the composer?<sup>53</sup> Here Dubos' remarks can be of service:

I was also told that it would be possible, in declamation, to give the notes only half their ordinary value. One would only give a minim the value of a crotchet, to the crotchet the value of a quaver; and one would value the other notes according to this proportion, just as one would do with the intonation.<sup>54</sup>

Dubos' instructions would effectively double the speed at which the verses would be spoken, in comparison to how they would be sung. This suggestion, along with the remarks on speed of delivery in Mersenne's *Seconde partie de l'harmonie*

<sup>52</sup> 'J'ai demandé à plusieurs Musiciens, s'il seroit bien difficile d'inventer des caractères avec lesquels on pût écrire en notes la déclamation en usage sur notre théâtre. Nous n'avons point assez d'accens pour l'écrire en notes avec les accens, ainsi que les Anciens l'écrivoient. Ces Musiciens m'ont répondu que la chose étoit possible, & même qu'on pouvoit écrire la déclamation en notes, en se servant de la gamme de notre musique, pourvu qu'on ne donnât aux notes que la moitié de l'intonation ordinaire. Par exemple, les notes qui ont un semiton d'intonation en musique, n'auroient qu'un quart de ton d'intonation dans la déclamation. Ainsi on noteroit les moindres abaissemens & les moindres élévations de voix qui soient bien sensibles, du moins à nos oreilles.' Dubos, *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie*, troisième partie, 163–4.

<sup>53</sup> For an account of syllable lengths see [Grimarest], *Traité du recitatif*, 25–43. The fact that Grimarest mentions the relationship between text and music in Lully's operas makes his treatise particularly interesting in the context of the *livret*. Grimarest divides French syllables into four different categories according to their length. It is, however, important to keep in mind that he notes: 'Ce n'est pas une chose aisée que de ranger nos silabes sous ces quatre intervalles; non seulement parce qu'ils sont un peu arbitraires; mais encore parce que sur ces sortes de matières personne ne veut jamais convenir.' (p. 27).

<sup>54</sup> 'Mais on m'a dit aussi qu'on pourroit, dans la déclamation, ne donner aux notes que la moitié de leur valeur ordinaire. On n'y donneroit à une blanche que la valeur d'une noire; à une noire, la valeur d'une croche, & on évalueroit les autres notes suivant cette proportion-là, ainsi qu'on le feroit dans l'intonation.' Dubos, *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie*, troisième partie, 164.

*universelle*, offers concrete evidence that an exaggeratedly slow and stately style of delivery was unfashionable among *ancien régime* orators and actors.<sup>55</sup>

It seems likely that *déclamateurs* using musical notation as a guide would not only have diminished the note values, however, but would have adjusted them as well: if Condillac and Voltaire performed microtones where Lully wrote diatonic notes, then perhaps their rhythms too would have been subtly adapted in order more closely to approach those of spoken language. Grimarest, in his *Traité du recitatif* (1707), had already warned singers that they had to be mindful of the need to treat notated rhythms flexibly when performing Lully:

As I have already remarked, because the composer has often been constrained by the rules of his art to disturb the quantity of the syllables, it is up to the clever actor to redress the fault by making those syllables long that ought to be, and making the short syllables short, without paying attention to the length or shortness of the notes to which they have been set. For example, in Zangaride's [*sic*] scene in *Atys*, if one were to sing the first two syllables of *Et vous me laissez mourir* according to the notation, the *Et* would be much longer than *vous*, which would break the most common rules of quantity. [see Ex. 14] Therefore the singer takes from the first note and gives to the second, in order to make his manner of expression more correct.<sup>56</sup>



Et vous me lais - se - rez mou - rir.

Ex. 14: Grimarest cites this line from Act I scene 6 of *Atys* as an example of a mistake in Lully's notation that must be corrected in performance.

Surely then, if singers were advised to take rhythmic liberties with the score in order to properly represent the syllable lengths, orators would have been as free to do so when extracting the underlying *mélopée* from Lully's recitatives?<sup>57</sup>

<sup>55</sup> This would make sense, for even in daily conversation Grimarest found a pretentious and self-conscious *lenteur* unbearable: 'la prononciation posée est plus noble, plus propre à la langue françoise, que celle qui est précipitée. Ce n'est pas pour cela que j'approuve cette lenteur affectée de quelques Courtisans, qui pour vouloir donner autant de hauteur à leur ton, qu'à leurs manieres, croient pouvoir exprimer la supériorité de leur naissance par la longueur de leurs paroles, qu'ils traînent à un tel excès, qu'ils ennuiant, & bien souvent révoltent ceux qui les écoutent'. [Grimarest], *Traité du recitatif*, 42–3. For more information on tempo in speech, see footnote 20 of this article.

<sup>56</sup> 'Le Compositeur, comme je l'ai déjà remarqué, étant souvent contraint par les regles de son art, de déranger la quantité des silabes, c'est à un habile Acteur à suppléer à ce défaut, en faisant longues les silabes qui doivent l'être, & breves, celles qui sont breves, sans faire attention à la longueur, ou à la brieveté de la note, à laquelle elles sont assujetties. Par exemple, dans la scène de Zangaride dans *Atys*, si l'on chantoit *Et vous me laissez mourir*, suivant la note des deux premieres silabes, *Et* seroit beaucoup plus long que *vous*; ce qui seroit contre les regles les plus communes de la quantité. Ainsi celui qui chante prend de la note de la premiere silabe pour mettre sur la seconde, afin de donner plus de justesse à son expression'. [Grimarest], *Traité du recitatif*, 218–19.

<sup>57</sup> Dubos, however, might not have agreed. At any rate, he remarked in the *Réflexions* that audience members complained that the operas of Lully now lasted much longer than they had under the *batôn* of the composer himself, even though many repeats were omitted. According to Dubos,

*footnote continued on next page*



Dubos' remarks on the notation of declamation are admittedly hypothetical; however, throughout the eighteenth century various writers on theatre and opera insisted that it should be possible to preserve an orator's pitches on paper. It therefore will be of use briefly to examine the discourse around notation and the 'singing' declamation of three actresses who worked at the Comédie française during the long eighteenth century.

### From Académie royale de musique to École royal de chant et déclamation

Two leading ladies at the Comédie française in the eighteenth century had links to the Académie royale de musique; both Mlle. Duclos and Mlle. Clairon started their careers at the Opéra and it was believed of both actresses that their recitations could have been notated. It is very tempting to see their 'singing' style as the result of their early experiences in performing *tragédies en musique*; however, contemporaries seem rather to have discerned a tradition of recitation leading back, through Champmeslé, to Jean Racine himself.

Mlle. Duclos became Champmeslé's understudy at the Comédie française in the late seventeenth century, after an unsuccessful stint at the Opéra. Her career at the Opéra is poorly documented, but she seems to have made little impression as an interpreter of the *tragédie en musique*. On the other hand, her career at the Comédie française was highly successful, though her declamation gained a reputation for being unnatural and 'singing'. As late as the 1760s, Claude-Joseph Dorat, in his *La déclamation théâtrale* (1761), castigated Duclos for her melodious delivery: 'Mlle. Duclos, for her part, introduced a kind of music and singing into declamation that made it into a separate language and destroyed all of its charms. She declaimed by the octave and one could have notated her inflections.'<sup>58</sup> Such criticism seems unfair. Given that Racine had instructed Duclos' teacher Champmeslé to use the octave in *Mithridate*, it seems likely that Duclos, rather than introducing this 'singing' style to the stage, simply took over an existing method of declamation. Indeed, Racine's son Louis, claimed that it was Champmeslé who introduced, out of ignorance, a false declamatory taste to the French stage, after her liaison with Racine ended. According to Louis Racine, his father chose the exact 'tons' for his mistress as she was preparing her rôles: 'He first made her understand the verses she had to say, showed her the gestures and dictated the tones to her, which he even notated.'<sup>59</sup> Thus, according to Louis Racine, the playwright

some attributed this change in the length of the performance to the liberties that singers took with 'le rythme de Lulli'. See Dubos, *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie*, troisième partie, 343. It seems probable that this liberty was, in reality, a result of tempo choices, rather than the subtle rhythmic alterations proposed by Grimarest.

<sup>58</sup> 'Mlle. Duclos, de sa côté, introduisoit dans la Déclamation une espece de Musique & de Chant, qui en faisoit un langage à part, & en détruisoit tout le charme. Elle déclamoit par octave, & l'on auroit pu noter ses inflexions.' See Dorat, *La déclamation théâtrale*, quatrième édition (Paris, 1761), 18–19. Also see M. Nagler, *A source book in theatrical history* (New York, 1959), 293–6.

<sup>59</sup> 'Il lui faisoit d'abord comprendre les vers qu'elle avoit à dire, lui montrait les gestes, & lui dictoit les tons, que même il notoît.' Louis Racine, cited in Jacques George de Chauffepié, *Nouveau dictionnaire historique et critique* (Amsterdam, 1756), 50.

appears not only to have dictated the meaning of his verses to the actress, but also to have prescribed and notated the appropriate oratorical pitches. However, Racine's son insisted that Champmeslé's style became corrupted and ossified after his father's demise: an ageing Champmeslé, incapable of finding the 'tons' without his father's guidance, passed her defective and inflated vocal style on to Duclos. Of course, by blaming the actresses, he absolved his father of all responsibility for the style:

Those who imagine that he [Jean Racine] introduced an inflated and singing declamatory style to the stage are, I believe, in error. They base their judgements on Duclos, who was a pupil of Champmeslé, and they don't take into account that Champmeslé was no longer the same once she was deprived of her master, and that, growing older, she forced her voice with great cries [*grands éclats de voix*], giving actors a false taste.<sup>60</sup>

If Duclos took over a singing style from Champmeslé, she seems to have passed it on to Mlle. Clairon, of whom Collé wrote in 1750, 'her declamation – swollen, singing and filled with sighs – is that of old Duclos, and seems unbearable to me'.<sup>61</sup> Clairon began the successful phase of her Paris career as understudy to Mlle. Lemaure at the Opéra. Clairon insisted that her success there said more about the incompetence of her colleagues than her own vocal talents. Although a number of factors contributed to her leaving that stage for the Comédie française in 1743, the most interesting for the current discussion is her frustration at not being allowed to create her own *mélopée*: 'I found so little merit in only following the modulations of the composer'.<sup>62</sup>

Once established at the Comédie française, Clairon's own *mélopée* retained the 'singing' style associated with Duclos until sometime around 1752, when, according to Marmontel, her recitation became more natural.<sup>63</sup> Yet even this new, natural technique invited notation. None other than Chabanon, who corresponded with Voltaire about reciting Lully, promised, in his *Éloge de Rameau* (1764), to publish an operatic monologue based on Clairon's declamation.<sup>64</sup> Unfortunately, he seems never to have done so, but Grétry did notate her inflections. According to his *Mémoires* [1797], Grétry went to see Mlle. Clairon, together with Marmontel, while working on his opera *Silvain*. During their visit, the actress

<sup>60</sup> 'Ceux qui s'imaginent que la déclamation qu'il avoit introduit sur le Théâtre, étoit enflée & chantante, sont je crois dans l'erreur. Ils en jugent par la Duclos, élève de la Chammélay, & ne font pas attention que la Chammélay, quand elle eut perdu son maître, ne fut plus la même, & que venue sur l'âge, elle pousoit de grands éclats de voix, qui donnèrent un faux goût aux Comédiens'. Louis Racine, cited in Chauffepié, *Nouveau Dictionnaire*, 50. For the relationship between Champmeslé's declamation and punctuation see Sabine Chaouche, *L'art du comédien, déclamation et jeu scénique en France à l'âge classique (1629–1680)* (Paris, 2001), 315–18.

<sup>61</sup> 'sa déclamation ampoulée, chantée, et remplie de gémissements, est celle de la vieille Duclos, et me paroît insoutenable'. See Charles Collé, *Journal et mémoires de Charles Collé*, ed. Honoré Bonhomme, tome premier (Paris, 1868), 142.

<sup>62</sup> 'je trouvai si peu de mérite à ne suivre que les modulations du musicien'. See [Claire-Josèphe Lérès], *Mémoires d'Hypolitte Clairon et réflexions sur la déclamation théâtrale*, seconde édition (Paris, An VII [1799]), 50.

<sup>63</sup> See [Jean-François] Marmontel, *Mémoires d'un père* (Paris, 1805) tome second, 39–44.

<sup>64</sup> See [Michel-Paul-Guy de] Chabanon, *Éloge de Rameau* (Paris, 1764), 34.

declaimed some lines from Marmontel's libretto. Grétry notated the resulting *mélopée*, incorporating 'her intonations, her intervals, her accents' into his score.<sup>65</sup>

What is of greatest interest here is not that an overly song-like declamation was considered 'unnatural' by critics ('unnatural' being too imprecise a pejorative to be of use to scholars working at a distance of hundreds of years), but that all three of these famous actresses from the Comédie française were associated with notation: Racine notated the pitches for Champmeslé's declamations, and Lully in his turn notated them in his recitative; Duclos' use of the octave was so obvious that it could have been notated; and Grétry actually did notate fragments Clairon's declamation and incorporated them into his music. In fact, it seems almost as if the close relationship between a musical spoken declamation and declamatory operatic singing had become something of a cliché in eighteenth-century France; and indeed there is concrete evidence from late in the century of strong links between spoken and sung theatrical performances.

The École royal de chant et déclamation was founded in 1784, nearly one hundred years after the première of *Roland*.<sup>66</sup> The intention was to create an establishment 'in the style of the Italian conservatories, where one would train performers not only for the Opéra, but for the musique de Versailles'.<sup>67</sup> Although every attempt was made to keep the project as inexpensive as possible, it was considered highly important, being 'the only means of preserving an entertainment so essential to Paris, and so useful to the arts, to commerce, and even to the finances of His Majesty due to the custom of foreigners attracted to and kept in Paris for a longer period by the opera'.<sup>68</sup>

Amongst the faculty teaching at the school (mainly musicians, but there was also a dancing master and a fencing master) were two literary figures: one to teach grammar and literature ('*un Maître de Grammaire et de Fable*'), the other a '*maître de Déclamation*'. The former position was held by a certain Rossel, 'who for several years has taught humanities and rhetoric, a knowledgeable and honest man'; the latter by none other than François-René Molé, star actor of the Comédie française.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>65</sup> See [André-Ernest-Modeste] Grétry, *Mémoires ou essais sur la musique*, tome premier (Paris, An V [1797]), 201.

<sup>66</sup> For a history of the foundation of the school see Solveig Serre, *L'opéra de Paris 1749–1790* (CNRS Éditions, 2011), 118–21.

<sup>67</sup> 'dans le gout des conservatoires d'Italie, où l'on élève des sujets, non seulement pour l'Opéra, mais même pour la musique de Versailles'. See 'Projet de lettre à M. le Contrôleur Général', Archives Nationales de France, O<sup>1</sup> 618, no. 43.

<sup>68</sup> 'l'unique moyen de conserver un spectacle si essentiel dans Paris, et si utile aux arts, au commerce, et même aux Finances de Sa Majesté, par les consommations des étrangers que l'Opéra attire et fixe plus longtemps dans la capitale'. 'Projet de lettre', Archives Nationales de France, O<sup>1</sup> 618, no. 43.

<sup>69</sup> 'qui a professé plusieurs années les humanités et la rhétorique, homme sçavan et honnête'; the document notes of Molé's appointment: 'choix qui sera probablement applaudi'. See 'Projet pour l'Etablissement des différentes personnes attachées à l'Ecole dont les fonctions seront plus détaillées dans le Reglement', Art. 9. Archives Nationales de France, O<sup>1</sup> 618, no. 63. Indeed, the choice *was* applauded. See [Michel-Paul-Guy de] Chabanon, *De la musique considérée en elle-même et dans ses rapports avec la parole, les langues, la poésie et le théâtre* (Paris, 1785), 338. For a modern transcription of the archival document see Constant Pierre, *Le conservatoire national de musique et de déclamation* (1900; rpt. Paris, 2002), 8.

Their shared duties were to be carried out from three o'clock to eight, on every day that an opera was performed; this was because the singing teachers, who also taught in the afternoons, were required to be at the Académie royale de musique on performance days. Rossel and Molé were expected to teach the students:

to read verses, to pronounce exactly, to articulate, to properly understand and conceive what they read or pronounce, to declaim, to make proper and graceful gestures &c. They will make them learn operas by heart, which they will make them declaim either entirely, or by rôle, separately and as an ensemble, in order thereafter to rehearse them on the school's stage in the presence of people who want to come and hear them in order to accustom them to appearing in public.<sup>70</sup>

Thus, the students had to learn the vocal techniques associated with reading aloud and theatrical declamation.<sup>71</sup> Although the passage is ambiguous, it seems they had to declaim not only their own parts, but entire operas. This is significant, given that various rôles were marked up by the same hand in the *livret* of *Roland*: perhaps it was considered worthwhile, at least at the end of the eighteenth century, for singers to be able to recite all of the rôles in a given work? The students at the École de chant et déclamation also formed ensembles and declaimed entire operas on a stage, before an audience. All of this points towards an extremely close connection between spoken and sung theatrical traditions in the performance of French opera at this period.

Molé's instruction was not confined to the students at the school, but extended to some of the performers at the Académie royale de musique:

The declamation master will go in the morning to the actors and actresses understudying the operas being performed or prepared, in order to teach, to those who wish, the spirit and nuances of their rôles and to make them declaim them without music; and in addition he can attend the general rehearsals in order to fix, in accord with the author and the leading singers, the entrances and exits of the actors, as well as their positions on stage ['les positions Théâtrales'] and to give advice about particular scenes.<sup>72</sup>

Molé seems to have enjoyed a sliding scale of authority depending on the status of the actor: students had no choice but to recite; understudies could, if they

<sup>70</sup> 'd'apprendre aux élèves à lire les vers, à prononcer exactement, à bien articuler à entendre et bien concevoir ce qu'ils liront où prononceront, à déclamer, à faire des gestes justes et arrondis &c.; ils leurs feront apprendre par coeur des opéra qu'on leur fera Déclamer soit en entier, soit par rôles diférens séparément et ensemble, ensuite on les leur fera répéter sur le Théâtre de l'école en présence des personnes qui voudront venir les entendre afin de les accoutumer à paroître en public.' 'Projet de dépense annuelle, pour l'école de musique', Devoirs et fonctions du directeur général et des maîtres, Art. 5. Archives Nationales de France, 01 618, no. 48. See also Pierre, *Le conservatoire national de musique*, 2–4.

<sup>71</sup> These were different techniques. See Grimerest, *Traité du recitatif*, chapters 4 and 7.

<sup>72</sup> Le Maître de déclamation ira le matin chez les acteurs et actrices chargés des rôles en double où en triple dans les opéra [sic] qu'on jouera où qui seront à l'étude pour bien faire connoître, a ceux qui le desireront, l'esprit et les nuances leurs Rôles et les d'eux faire déclamer sans musique; il pourra en outre se trouver aux grandes répétitions général pour fixer d'accord avec les Auteurs et les premiers Sujets, les entrées et les sorties des acteurs, ainsi que les positions Théâtrales, et donner l'intelligence des Scènes particulieres.' 'Projet de dépense annuelle, pour l'école de musique', Devoirs et fonctions du directeur général et des maîtres, Art. 5. Archives Nationales de France, 01 618, no. 48. See also Pierre, *Le conservatoire national de musique*, 2–4.

wished, refuse; the stars at the Opéra, however, did not have declamation lessons with Molé at all, but merely discussed matters of staging with him. Yet, questions of status aside, it was clearly felt that repeatedly declaiming operatic rôles was extremely important to the finished sung performance. Thus, long after the demise of Lully's *tragédie en musique* at the Opéra, spoken declamation was still considered a basic technique for singers learning their parts. Could the *livret* of *Roland* have served a similar purpose, one hundred years earlier?

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The *livret* has been examined here in both seventeenth-century religious and eighteenth-century theatrical contexts; the document has, it is hoped, served as a locus of profitable, if highly speculative, study. In concluding, however, it remains to touch upon its relevance to the performance practice of today.

Taken on its own, the annotated *livret* of *Roland* is a fascinating curiosity, suggesting much while proving little. It can only be transformed into a catalyst for renewal in today's performance practice through acts of conscious and conscientious reconstruction. In this respect, the annotations to Roland's Act IV scene 7 monologue are particularly significant, for here not just a few isolated lines but an entire mad scene can be reconstructed using historical evidence. By drawing on a variety of sources, from the *livret*'s annotations to Lully's score, from rhetorical treatises to anecdotes about performers and performance, a reconstruction of the pacing and emotional power of an *ancien régime* actor can be mapped out over the course of an entire scene. The results, though hypothetical, may then serve as a touchstone for the declamatory style of historically informed spoken theatre in vogue today, and thus open up discourse about the current use of pitches and *ports de voix*, and the speed and emotional intensity of delivery. Finally, the insights thus gained could influence musical performances of French recitative, airs and even *airs de cour*. By respecting the underlying declamatory structures of a piece, and by vivifying the passions of the notated pitches in accordance with the concupiscible and irascible affects indicated by the text, new forms of expression can be sought for the emotional content of the verses. The music, thus performed, would not only function differently in dramatic context, it would sound different as well. Herein, ultimately, lies the greatest significance of the *livret*; for there is nothing that the Early Music movement – drowsy on the incense of its own commercial triumph – more urgently needs than to rethink some of its most cherished performance traditions in the light of historical evidence.