

CHOREOLOGICA

Apollon: disheartened hero or afflicted god?

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the theoretical implications of the choice of ballet subjects

Loie Fuller, the American Dream made in France

Countess Maria Aurora von Königsmarck
as Poet and Dancer at the Court of Dresden

Reviews

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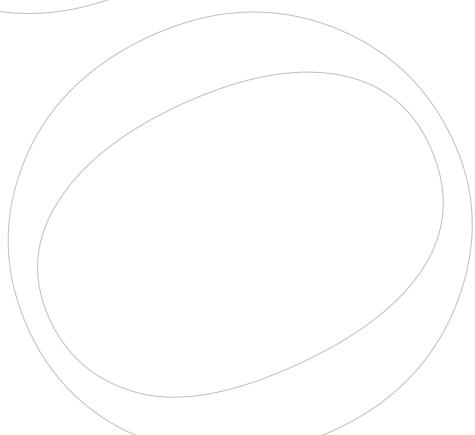
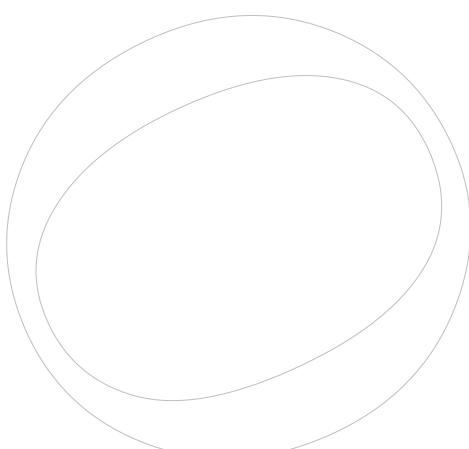
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Apollon: disheartened hero or afflicted god?

Ricardo Barros

Throughout the course of the modern period of revivals of Baroque dance repertoire – mainly the second half of the 20th century and, to some degree, in these first two decades of the 21st century – some choreographies stand out as icons, be it for their beauty, their complexity, or their socio-political and historical associations. Amongst these, the choreography for the ‘*Entrée d’Apollon*’ (LMC 2720)¹ by Raoul-Augier Feuillet, published in the pioneering 1700 *Recueil des Dances*² and set to the homonymous musical passage in the *quinzième* entrée of Lully’s *Le Triomphe de l’Amour*,³ certainly occupies a prominent position in the list of most cherished dances, having been revived by numerous dance historians and practitioners.

Having revived, performed and researched this dance, its musical source and the literally source in the form of the *livrets* by Philippe Quinault and Isaac de Bensérade (with later additions by Antoine Danchet for the 1705 revival, also containing added musical passages by André Campra), I have noticed some discrepancies between the generically ‘accepted’ standardised interpretation of the choreography and the overall image proposed by the above primary sources. In a quest to achieve a sympathetic choreographic interpretation of the dance, at first I proposed a historically informed interpretation of them, mainly through the comparative choreo-musical analyses of the choreographic, musical and literary sources in Feuillet’s choreography and its equivalent by Guillaume Pécour (published in 1704),⁴ while observing their oratorical structure and rhetorical devises employed. The initial research served as basis for my PhD thesis *Dance as a Discourse*.⁵ The present paper delves further in this repertoire, observing the depiction of Apollo in 17th-century French operas and ballets. It proposes a cross-examination of musical sources and *livrets* ranging from 1653

1 LMC – Little and Marsh Catalogue: Meredith E. Little and Carol Marsh, *La Danse Noble*, Broude Brothers, New York, 1992.

2 Raoul-Augier Feuillet, *Recueil de Dances composées par Mr Feuillet, Maître de Dance*, Paris, 1700, pp.60-66. <<https://www.loc.gov/item/14002126/>> (all web addresses last accessed June 2019).

3 Jean-Baptiste Lully, *Le Triomphe de l’Amour*, Paris, 1681, pp.87r-88r, <<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10523324f/f181.image.r=Lully%20triomphe%20de%20l%27amour>>.

4 Feuillet, *Recueil de Dances contenant un tres grand nombres, des meilleures Entrées de Ballet de Mr Pecour*, Paris, 1704, pp.195-201, <<https://www.loc.gov/item/11027715/>>.

5 Ricardo Barros, *Dance as a Discourse – The rhetorical expression of the passions in French Baroque dance*, Lambert Academic Publishing, Saarbrücken, 2010.

to 1686, together with a close examination of the extant choreographies.

Wherever one looks, in the present time there seems to be a consensus in choreographically portraying Apollo as an heroic, powerful, chivalrous and seductive figure. In consideration, there are three strong factors that support this assumption:

1. First and foremost, the forceful association of the royal image with the mythological god sets a strong case in favour of the quasi-arrogant imprinting of the above qualities to the dance. Louis XIV was undoubtedly one of the most powerful men in the modern era, and his explicit favouring of Apollo is evident throughout architecture, literature, music, fine arts and dance. Indeed, Louis took pride in assuming the role of Apollo on stage many times, but particularly as a statement in the *Ballet de la Nuit* (1653) in which through this *début* – having officially reached adulthood two years before – he sent signals that he no longer wished to be a follower (conversely heretofore he was often cast as a muse or nymph in the court ballet), but a leader. Here he employed the associated image of the ‘Rising Sun’ for the first time (in Greek mythology, Apollo is seen as a ‘Sun god’, an identification established in the fifth century BC and made common ever since,⁶ and indeed asserted by Louis XIV, as it can be seen in the Salon d’Apollon in the Chateau de Versailles).
2. The musical properties of the score often promote an interpretation in which grandeur and pride are common place. The dotted rhythms and defined harmonic pulse, corroborated by a driving duple time notation, can easily lead one to associate such *entrées* to the majestic pomp of *ouvertures*: despite the lack of running ascending *tirades*, commonly found in the score of an *entrée*, the epic ascending jumps of a 5th, 6th, octave or even wider intervals in this danced movement make the association to the *ouverture* a nearly unavoidable fate.
3. Lastly, the choreographic elements found in the extant choreographies of the *Entrée d’Apollon* can lead to the portrayal of a quasi-pedantic character, particularly if supported by a similar musical interpretation of the score: the profusion of *cabrioles*, *entrechats* and *pirouëtes* with multiple turns demand mastery of advanced technical skills. As such, it is easy to see such choreographies as pure display of virtuosic impulse, of supernatural powers which transcend the royal embodiment and acquire mythical qualities.

⁶ Michael Grant and John Hazel, *Who’s who – Classical Mythology*, J M Dent, London, 1973, p.38.

Together, these three factors promote a strong case towards an heroic depiction of Apollo, with dance practitioners being somewhat excused (if not too willingly) for being led to such conclusions. However, the *livrets* – and indeed the passage in mythological writings that serves as basis for most of the plots employed in the body of works analysed as we shall see – seem to diverge from this assumption. Moreover, literary works prompt a more careful analysis and interpretation of both musical score and choreographic material, thus shattering pre-conceived ideas that have lasted for decades in modern day systematic practices of ‘historically informed’ music and dance interpretation.

In view of these discrepancies, a thorough analysis of the material is proposed. The parameters of the research are the French ballets and operas between 1653 and 1686 which feature *Entrées d'Apollon* and those of the *Soleil levant*, namely:

- *Ballet de la Nuit* (1653), music by Jean de Cambefort, Jean-Baptiste Boësset and Michel Lambert, *livret* by Isaac de Benserade.
- *Les Noces de Pélée et de Thétis* (1654), music by Carlo Caproli (with interludes by Lully), *livret* by Benserade.
- *Ballet de la Naissance de Vénus* (1665), music by Lully, *livret* by Benserade.
- *Ballet Royal de Flore* (1669), music by Lully, *livret* by Benserade
- *Les Amants Magnifiques* (1670), music by Lully, *livret* by Molière.
- *Alceste* (1674), music by Lully, *livret* by Philippe Quinault.
- *Psyché* (1671/78), music by Lully, *livret* by Quinault and Thomas Corneille.
- *Le Triomphe de l'Amour* (1681), music by Lully, *livret* by Benserade and Quinault (with later additions by André Campra and Antoine Danchet).
- *Acis et Galatée* (1686), music by Lully, *livret* by Jean Galbert de Campistron.



Figure 1 – Designs for theatrical costumes (from left to right): a. & b. Apollon, by Henry de Gissey, for *Les Noces de Pélée et de Thétis* (1654); c. Soleil, by Jean Bérain, for an unidentified ballet performed in Aix-en-Provence (1660); d. Soleil, by Henry de Gissey, for *Ballet de la Nuit* (1653).

Are the sources cohesive in portraying Apollo? What traits are depicted, and what image is painted of him? An overview of the *livrets* show that authors explore various facets of the mythological figure, as we shall see.

1. THE LIVRETS

In the *Ballet de la Nuit* Benserade explicitly links Louis XIV with the image of Apollo (the sun); Aurore (Dawn) singing the verses ‘The sun that follows me is the young Louis’, irrefutably placing the king in an unchallengeable position noting that ‘the weak lights of the night that triumphed in his absence dare not stand up to his presence’.⁷ The following *récit* for the rising Sun makes a clear political statement in which the king asserts his position. The opening verses set the tone of superiority, stating he shines ‘over the summit of mountains’, making himself ‘adored’ by all. He admonishes potential rebels likening them to the careless *Phaëton*, also committing to clear the ‘darkness over France’. After briefly mentioning his attraction for Daphne (a topic that was further explored by Benserade in later works, as we shall see), Apollo delivers a statement only surpassed as the paragon of absolutism by Louis XIV’s emblematic ‘*l’etat, c’est moi*’:

⁷ Isaac de Benserade, *Ballet Royal de la Nuit*, Paris, 1653, p.65, <<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k724705/f1.image.r=ballet%20de%20la%20nuit>>.

Without doubt I belong to the world I serve,
 I am not for myself, but for the universe,
 I offer the rays that crown my head,
 It is up to me to rule my time and my seasons.⁸

Apollo's opening verses in *Les Noces de Pelée et de Thétis*, performed in the following year, boasts a great deal of vanity and confidence claiming: 'Shinier and better formed than all other gods together, Earth and heavens possess nothing like me'. Here, for the first time, Benserade mentions the tale that originated the Pythian games in Ancient Greece in order to underline Apollo's heroic traits, while delivering a political message making a direct reference to the rebels of the Fronde:

I defeated the Python that devastated the world,
 This terrible serpent whose venom was seasoned by Hell and the Fronde.
 In a word, rebellions would no longer cause me harm,
 So I preferred to destroy it.⁹

The author also briefly tells of Apollo's relationship with Daphne but, rather than clearly painting a vulnerable god tormented by unrequited love, Benserade in this instance twists the tale and show a rather volatile Apollo bragging about being 'condemned' to suffer his amorous urges, suggesting that there is no 'muse, queen or goddess' who would not wish to be in Daphne's place (i.e. the object of his amorous impulses). Could this have been a message to the king's lovers, reminding them of the ephemeral and rather fragile nature of their relationships?

In *Le Ballet de la Naissance de Vénus*,¹⁰ however, Benserade describes the full passage in which Cupid, in revenge for being chased by Apollo, aims a gold-tipped arrow at him and a lead-tipped one at Daphne, thus making Apollo fall in love with the nymph, and the latter to reject the amorous advances of the god. In despair for being chased by Apollo, Daphne turns herself into a laurel bush – thus prompting him to fashion a crown of its leaves as a memento of Daphne [figure 2].¹¹

8 Ibid., pp.66-67.

9 Benserade, *Les Noces de Pelée et de Thétis*, Paris, 1654, p.6, <<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k717953/f7.image>>.

10 Benserade, *Ballet Royal de la Naissance de Vénus*, Paris, 1665, p.37, <<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k719511/f1.image.r=naissance+de+v%C3%A9nus+ballet.langFR>>.

11 The well-known tale has served as inspiration to Baroque painters such as Giacinto Gimignani, Francesco Trevisani, Sebastiano Ricci, Michele Rocca, Francesco Albani, Jean-François de Troy, Noel-Nicolas Coypel, Jan Van Cleve, Cornelis de Vos, Luca

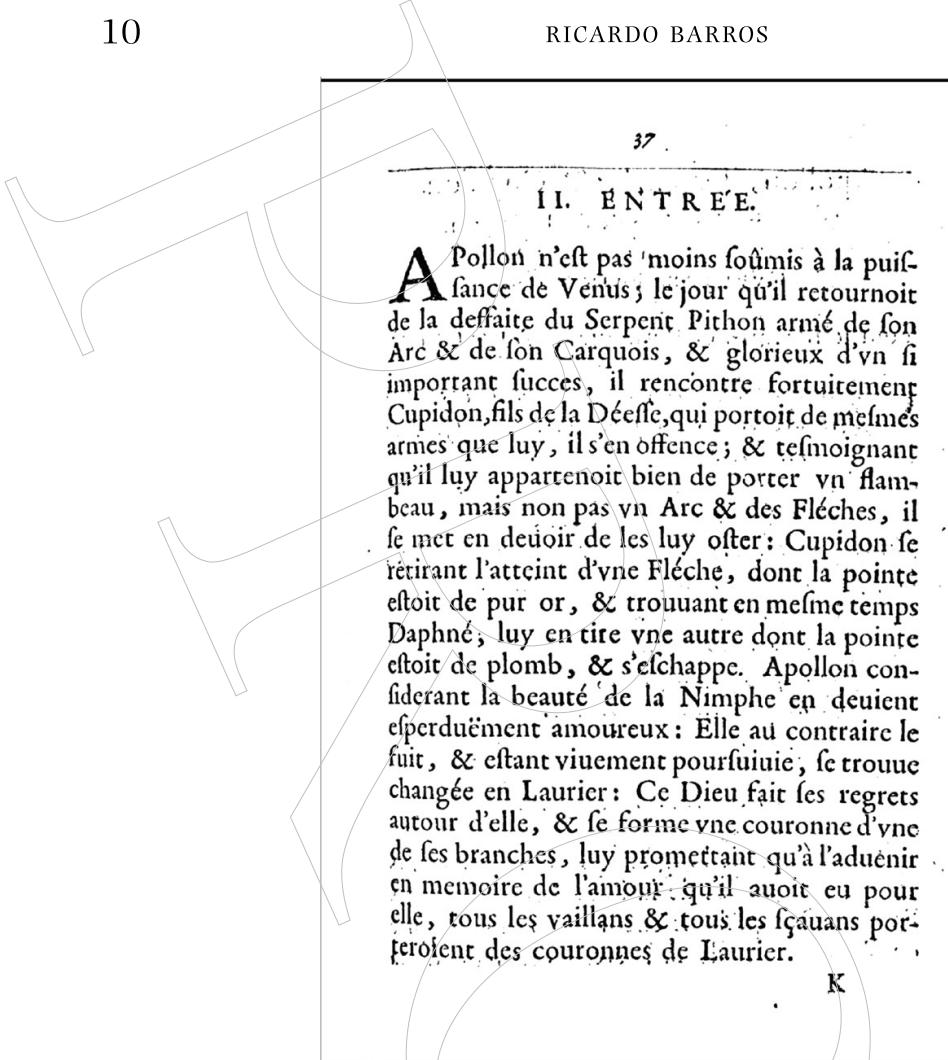


Figure 2 – Benserade, *Ballet de la Naissance de Vénus*, livret, Paris, 1665, p.37.

It is arguable if the author might have chosen to portray a susceptible Apollo even if the role was to be played by the king, considering that in this instance the role was taken by the Marquis de Beringuen instead.

Rather than a susceptible unrequited lover, Apollo (in his astral embodiment) defeats the winter, bringing fertility and warmth in an continuous spring season in the *Ballet Royal de Flore*. Egocentrism is taken to a curious level, as the king praises himself in the third person. Vanity aside, some spitefulness is used to apparently conceal some bitterness when, at the end of the spoken verse, Apollo questions himself if he would be accompanied by the likes of Daphne and Phaëton, referring to her as an ‘inhumane’ woman who simply ‘runs away’ from him.¹²

While *Alceste* and *Psyché* – and later on *Acis et Galatée* – present Apollo as an

Giordano, Carlo Maratta, to name a few. It has also been used by Bernini in his celebrated sculpture *Apollo e Dafne* (1625).

12 Benserade, *Ballet Royal de Flore*, Paris, 1669, pp.10-11, <[https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k722562/f11.image.r=Ballet royal de flore>](https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k722562/f11.image.r=Ballet%20royal%20de%20flore).

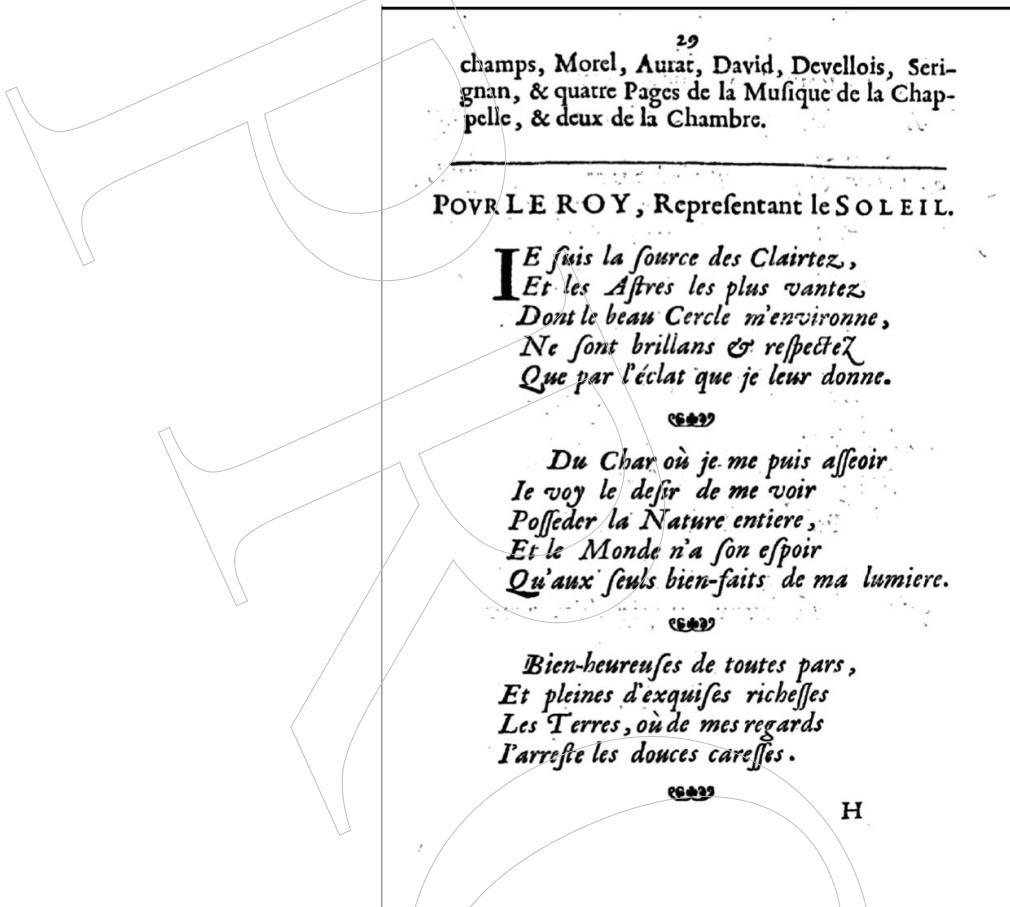


Figure 3 – Molière, *Les Amants Magnifiques*, livret, Paris, 1670, p.29.

encouraging, capacitating, positive character, with relatively weaker dramatic impact, it is in *Les Amants Magnifiques* that we see an unsurpassed praising of the king: written originally by Molière for Louis XIV, the *récit* for *Le soleil* (Apollo) is an unashamed self glorifying monologue [figure 3].

However, sometime between the printing of the *livret* and the actual *première* the king retired from dancing, and the role of Apollo was performed by the Marquis de Villeroy instead (as reported by *La Gazette* shortly after the opening).¹³

Nevertheless, the ornamented original text remained, displaying an egocentric tirade which could only be described in modern days as of 'Trumpian' proportions:

I am the source of light / And all other glorified stars /
Which surround me in a beautiful circle / Can only shine and be respected /
Through the light I shed onto them.

From the chariot I am seated / I witness the desire of seeing me /

13 *Recueil des Gazettes Nouvelles*, Paris, 1671, pp.168 and 179, <<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6450279m/f173.item.r=villeroi>>.

Possess the whole Nature, / And so the world is helpless /
Other than by the generosity of my light.

Quite fortunate throughout / And full of treasures /
Are the realms where, with my looks /
I attract gentle caresses.¹⁴

Crucially, the same plot that had been fully described by Benserade in the *Ballet de la Naissance de Vénus* was used again sixteen years later in *Le Triomphe de l'Amour* (the work that served as basis for the favoured choreographies by Feuillet and Pécour). Here too, after having slaughtered the Python, Apollo has that eventful meeting with Cupid and Daphne in the woods, as described before. Later in 1705, in a revival of *Le Triomphe de l'Amour* featuring added musical passages composed by Campra – set to added verses by Danchet – the plot is further clarified, providing a fuller insight of Apollo's state of mind in that scene, through the verses:

Enough of celebrating my power,
At last Cupid is my conqueror;
I have up to now defied his vengeance,
But he has pierced my heart with a flaming arrow.

It's for Daphne that I sight,
Her presence embellishes this sojourn every single day;
Go forth! May all leave now;
For I wish, without any witnesses, to declare my love to her.¹⁵

Undoubtedly Danchet highlights and stresses the sense of weakness and susceptibility already conveyed by Benserade in the original *livret*, where Apollo succumbs to the powers of *Amour* in a ballet whose main plot was to demonstrate, through various separate scenes, Cupid's 'Triumph' over mortals and other deities alike.

In *Acis et Galatée* both *livret*¹⁶ [figure 4] and score offer a sung aria by an *haute-contre Apollon*, followed by a choir rejoicing on Apollo's approval on their efforts,

14 Jean-Baptiste Poquelin (Molière), *Les Amants Magnifiques*, Paris, 1670, p.29, <<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k114435p/f29.image>>.

15 Antoine Danchet, *Le Triomphe de l'Amour*, Paris, 1705, p.54, <<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k721365/f44.image.r=dqnchett20le%20triomphe%20de%20l'amour>>.

16 Jean Galbert de Campistron, *Acis et Galatée*, Paris, 1686, <<https://www.loc.gov/resource/musschatz.21466.0/?sp=1&r=-0.932,0,2.865,1.538,0>>.

184 ACIS & GALATÉE;

APOLLON paraît en l'air sur un nuage.

A P O L L O N.

Apollon en ce jour approuve votre zèle,
Pour un Prince charmant,
Et vient joindre aux plaisirs d'une fête si belle,
D'un Spectacle nouveau le doux amusement.

Au plus grand des Heros j'ay toujours soin
de plaire ;
Eh ! que puis-je mieux faire
Que de vous seconder, par des chants destinez,
A divertir un Fils qu'il aime ?
Puissent ces mêmes chants, un jour, plus fortuniez
Le divertir encor luy-même !

Digne Fils de ce Conquerant,
Que ne quittent jamais Minerve & la Victoire,
Tu vois, par les respects que l'Univers luy rend,
Le prix de ses travaux, & l'éclat de sa gloire ;
Tu vois ses Ennemis à ses pieds abatuz,
Tu joisis des exploits de la main triomphante,
Tâche de l'imiter ; sans cesse il te présente
Un exemple parfait de toutes les vertus.

Vous, habitants de ce séjour aimable,
Redoublez votre empressement,
Gardez-vous de perdre un moment
D'un temps si favorable.

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C O M U S.

Apollon flatte nos vœux,
D'un succès heureux ;
Nous connoissions sa puissance ;
Il remplira notre esperance.

L E C H O E U R.

Apollon flatte nos vœux,
D'un succès heureux ;
Nous connoissions sa puissance,
Il remplira notre esperance.

Fin du Prologue.



Figure 4 – Campistron, *Acis et Galatée*, livret, Paris, 1653, pp.184-185.

but the lack of acknowledgement of the performing cast in the *livret* – coupled with the vague titling in both score and choreography – pose questions whether the ensuing ‘air’ was danced or not in its operatic context. However, the nature of composition and choreography indicate that, if not danced on the actual pastorale, the choreography created by L’Abbé for the dancer Desnoyer at least evoked the role of Apollo, as shall be discussed.

It is clear, through the overview of *livrets*, that certain particular traits emerge: heroism, vanity and volatility are displayed whenever the king embodied Apollo onstage (or was originally intended to), namely in the *Ballet de la Nuit*, *Les Noces de Pelée et de Thétis* and *Les Amants Magnifiques*; however, we also see the more mundane, realistic traits of weakness, susceptibility and servitude that would more aptly be associated with mortals rather than gods.

2. THE SCORES

At first look, the musical scores for the *Entrées d’Apollon* covered in the scope of this research offer a mixed image: some elements, such as the duple metre, presence of dotted rhythms and sudden jumps of intervals of 5th, 6th and octave

permeate all scores. With the exception of the *Ballet de la Nuit* (for which only the treble line survives) and *Les Noces de Pélee et de Thétis* (for which only the treble and bass line survive, with inner *parties de remplissage* left blank), all other scores are complete, following the traditional 5-part structure (*dessus, haute-contre, taille, quinte, basse*), typical of the 17th-century orchestral scoring adopted by Lully.

At closer inspection, however, the scores reveal a gradual adoption of different compositional techniques over the decades. The techniques adopted are not radically based on new compositional material, but derive from the earlier models. As we shall see, Lully alters the use of large intervals, preferring to use them more scarcely and in important points along the musical score. Sometimes a large interval is ‘abridged’ by consecutive notes, and there are instances (particularly in later works) where this abridging technique is exacerbated by the use of chromaticism. Another evident mutation is the rate at which the harmonic rhythm progresses. As we shall see, these are not random decisions, but carefully constructed devices to incite specific passions (in the 17th-century Cartesian sense), a mood or state of mind. These changes are often intrinsically linked with the oratorical structure of the pieces, and crucially in agreement with the depiction of the scene proposed by the *livret* and specific characteristic traits displayed by Apollo, as discussed above.



Figure 5 – Opening bars, Cambefort, Boësset, and Lambert, ‘10e Entrée – Le Roy representant de Soleil Levant’, *Ballet de la Nuit*, Paris, 1653, p.87.

In the *Ballet de la Nuit*¹⁷ the image of the ‘*Soleil Levant*’ (rising Sun) is suggested by the composer with a bold interval of ascending 5th as the opening statement [for illustrative purposes, indicated in the score with a tilted box], conveying determination and confidence of a young Louis XIV emboldened to claim his right to rule [figure 5]. The same ascending motif is used by Lully in the *ritournelle* for the *Récit de l’Aurore* (Dawn) in the *Les Plaisirs de l’Île Enchantée*

¹⁷ Jean de Cambefort, Jean-Baptiste Boësset and Michel Lambert, *Ballet Royal de la Nuit*, Paris, 1653, copied by Philidor Laisnée in 1690, pp.87-88, <<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k107422s/f87.image.r=Ballet de la nuit>>.

in 1664, which pre-dates by one year the composer's first *Entrée d'Apollon* (in the *Ballet de la Naissance de Vénus*, as we shall analyse). Two other important characteristics that set the benchmarks for development in later *Entrées d'Apollon* are the use of syncopations (in bars 3, and 7-8), and the trilled notes finalised by semiquavers (on bars 2 and 7). The neat trilled notes might be interpreted in this instance as 'brilliance' and 'boldness', as the sun cast its rays after having raised 'over the summit of the mountain' with the opening ascending 5th. Likewise, the syncopations could be seen as a reassurance of the 'determination' and 'firmness' necessary to go against established institutions (cardinal Mazarin's ruling as chief minister). However, the most striking compositional feature is the sudden shift from minor key (Gm) to its relative major (BbM) which occurs quite early in the music, placed on bar 4 and marking the end of the first semi-phrase [marked in the score with vertical boxes]. The shift between relative minor and major keys symbolises a drastic change, be it of passion, attitude, disposition, or circumstances. Namely when the change occurs from a minor to a major key (as is the case here and in subsequent examples), the neuropsychological response to the sensory stimulus is that of establishing a relation to the transition from dark to light, sombre to bright, sad to happy, or introspective to extrovert. In this instance, the association with the shift from 'dark and light' is a difficult one to avoid, due to the character presented and the political message being conveyed of bringing a new era of enlightenment as Louis banishes 'the darkness over France'.

In the following year, Caproli adopted most of the features above in *Les Noces de Pelée et de Thétis*,¹⁸ but instead of employing the long trilled notes finalised by semiquavers (which in the previous work culminated the opening ascending figure by intervals of 5th and octave), he adopts a much simpler trilled minim on bar 6; the result is a less brilliant, a less ornamented writing, which in its simplicity conveys stoical, factual qualities, also emphasised by the long and poised opening note [figure 6]. When observed with the *livret*, these compositional devices seem to focus more on the rather sombre 'killing of the Python' rather than self-adulation by Apollo.

In his musical representation of Apollo in the *Ballet de la Naissance de Vénus*,¹⁹ Lully incorporated the elements presented above, but chose to assign the raising 5th (previously seen in the treble part in the previous two examples) to the bass line [figure 7]. In the treble he opted for a poignant embellished figure on the 1st bar, which makes use of double dotting, and the trilled note finalised by semi-

18 Carlo Caproli, *Les Noces de Pelée et de Thétis*, Paris, 1654, p.3, <<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k107421d?rk=42918;4>>.

19 Lully, *Ballet de la Naissance de Vénus*, Paris, 1665, copied by Philidor in 1690, pp.49-50, <[http://imslp.org/wiki/La_naissance_de_Vénus%2C_LWV_27_\(Lully%2C_Jean-Baptiste\)](http://imslp.org/wiki/La_naissance_de_Vénus%2C_LWV_27_(Lully%2C_Jean-Baptiste))>.



Figure 6 – Opening bars, Caproli, ‘1e Entrée – Appolon (sic) et les 9 Muses’, *Les Noces de Pélee et de Thétis*, Paris, 1654, p.3.

quavers as featured in the *Ballet de la Nuit*. One might argue that this figure is a direct quotation from the latter, but here it assumes a different trait: rather than being the bright resolution of an ascending figure, it is used as an ‘abrupt exordium’ [marked in the score with an oval shape] – an oratorical device in which an exclamatory uttering is employed in exceptional circumstances.

According to Michel Le Faucheur:

The Exordium ought to be spoken with a low and modest Voice; for to begin with Modesty, is not only agreeable to the listeners, as it is a Virtue which shows how great an esteem we have of them, and demonstrates the Respect we pay to their Presence. [...] But this Rule yet will admit of an Exception; for there are some Exordiums [that] do not fall under it, which we may call unexpected or abrupt. Whenever we have occasion to make use of them, 'tis manifest that they are to be spoken with an elevated voice, according to the passion, either of Anger that transports, or of grief that afflicts, and obliges us to set out so abruptly in our discourse.²⁰

Thus, rather than denoting brilliance or pride, herewith the passage depicts the grief – as described by Le Faucheur – as result of the momentary pain caused

²⁰ Michel Le Faucheur, *The Art of Speaking in Publick*, 1727, anon. translation of *Traité de l'action de l'orateur ou de la prononciation et du geste*, Paris, 1656, pp. 121, 124, <<https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=JXRaAAAACAAJ&printsec=frontcover>>.



Figure 7 – Opening bars, Lully, ‘2e Entrée – Apollon’, *Ballet de la Naissance de Vénus*, Paris 1665, p.4.

by the piercing dart, therefore in agreement with the *livret*. As we shall see, the abrupt exordium is recalled in later works too.

In the B section (starting on the upbeat to bar 7, in the second system) Lully employs a curious figure [marked in the score with an undulating line]: the fast ascending semiquavers evoke the fleeing speed with which Apollo chases Cupid; the chase being represented by the repetitive ensuing *fugato* passage in quavers between treble and bass, in bars 8-9. This same musical representation of the chase in the *livret* is recalled later in *Acis et Galatée*.

In the later period of the pieces in the scope of this research – starting with the *Ballet Royal de Flore* in 1669 – Lully expands on the compositional techniques previously employed, making use of:

- Abridging of the initial leaping interval of an ascending 5th with all notes in the diatonic scale within that interval;
- Extrapolation of the diatonic scale with ascending chromaticism;
- Use of harmonic suspensions;
- Increased use of dotted rhythm.

The *Ballet Royal de Flore*²¹ provides further examples of literal musical representation. Here the ascending interval of 4th is abridged on the treble line, thus conveying the image of the rising sun (marked with inclined box) [figure 8].



Figure 8 – Opening bars, Lully, 'Prem.r Entrée – Le Roy representant Le Soleil', *Ballet Royal de Flore*, Paris, 1669, p.13.

21 Lully, *Ballet Royal de Flore*, Paris, 1669, pp.13-14, < [https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k103667k.r=Ballet royal de flore?rk=42918;4>](https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k103667k.r=Ballet%20royal%20de%20flore?rk=42918;4>).



Figure 9 – Extract, Lully, 'Prem.r Entrée – Le Roy representant Le Soleil', *Ballet Royal de Flore*, Paris, 1669, p.14.

Surprisingly, Lully breaks with the trend established in the previous examples and does not present a sudden change from tonic minor key to relative major key. This, instead, only happens in the B section (bar 19). Another compositional feature that appears for the first time (within the scope of this investigation) is the ascending chromatic line, here found on bars 20-23 in the bass (marked with ascending arrow) [figure 9]. The chromatic ascent is accompanied by a rather disrupted melodic line in the other parts, perhaps conveying the use of caution and prudence when encountering amorous interests, agreeing with the disdaining sarcasm conveyed by the *livret*.

An overview of the ensuing three works *Les Amants Magnifiques*²² [figure 10], *Alceste*²³ [figure 11] and *Psyché*²⁴ [figure 12] shows an increasingly faster harmonic speed, with the modulations between tonic minor key and relative major happening within a few bars, in stark contrast to the example in *Ballet Royal de Flore*. In the case of *Psyché*, the modulation occurs as sudden as between bars 1 and 2. All three pieces employ 'abrupt exordia', but these are less eloquent than in the *Ballet de la Naissance de Vénus*. Instead of grief, they evoke a poised sense of grandeur, seen in *Les Amants Magnifiques* and *Psyché* with the descending arpeggio of Dm chord, prompt followed by a surging leap of minor 6th, followed by a steady ascending bass line: whereas the leaping 5th is kept in the bass line in *Alceste*, in these two pieces Lully abridges that gap with the diatonic scale.

22 Lully, *Les Amants Magnifiques, ou Ballet des Jeux Pithiens*, Paris, 1670, p.88, <[http://imslp.org/wiki/Les_jeux_pithiens%2C_LWV_42_\(Lully%2C_Jean-Baptiste\)](http://imslp.org/wiki/Les_jeux_pithiens%2C_LWV_42_(Lully%2C_Jean-Baptiste))>.

23 Lully, *Alceste*, Paris, 1674, copied by Philidor in 1703, pp.284-85, <[http://imslp.org/wiki/Alceste%2C_LWV_50_\(Lully%2C_Jean-Baptiste\)](http://imslp.org/wiki/Alceste%2C_LWV_50_(Lully%2C_Jean-Baptiste))>.

24 Lully, *Psyché*, Paris, 1671/8, copied by Philidor in 1702, p.163, <[http://imslp.org/wiki/Psyché%2C_LWV_56_\(Lully%2C_Jean-Baptiste\)](http://imslp.org/wiki/Psyché%2C_LWV_56_(Lully%2C_Jean-Baptiste))>.



Figure 10 – Opening bars, Lully, 'Entrée d'Appollon' (sic), *Les Amants Magnifiques*, Paris, 1670, p.88.



Figure 11 – Opening bars, ‘Prélude’, Scene 5e, *Alceste*, Paris, 1674, p.284.



Figure 12 – Opening bars, ‘Ritournelle’, Scene Dernière, *Psyché*, Paris, 1671/8, copied by Philidor, 1702, p.163.

The two most remarkable features are the use of the ascending chromaticism both in the treble and bass lines [marked on the score with an ascending arrow], and the harmonic '7 – 6' suspensions [marked on the score with dashed line boxes]; whereas the ascending chromaticism often represents the quest for the unattainable, a series of suspensions suggest a series of hurdles: as soon as one is resolved, the listener is presented with another one. The suspensions are formed as the bass distances itself in a descending line from the treble, forming a dissonant and 'tense' chord of a 7th; this is somewhat lightened (but not entirely resolved) as the treble line tardily descends to follow the bass, thus forming the interval of a 6th (hence the name '7 – 6 suspension'), but the hurdles can progress with subsequent suspensions, until the composer finally resolves them with a cadence. The fatidic nature of such suspension may be linked to the 'helplessness' to which the world is doomed without the sun (as proposed in the *livret* for *Les Amants Magnifiques*) or, in contrast, to the encouraging and enabling positive traits displayed in the *livrets* for *Alceste* and *Psyché*, showing that one can overcome hurdles when guided by Apollo.

As this comparative analysis has shown so far (as in the case of passages of trilled notes and harmonic suspension), it is crucial to note at this point that the interpretation of compositional and choreographic features are to a certain extent subject to a wholesome understanding of the dramatic work and the context of the *livret*. Just as a musical figure might assume various facets, depending on so many variables (i.e. harmony, rhythm, key, articulation, etc), a choreographic step-unit or phrase might also present different meanings depending on the context, and indeed is subject to the musical source and – whenever present – the literary work to which it is attached, story, or scene depicted.

In *Le Triomphe de l'Amour*²⁵ Lully reverts to the model used in the *Ballet Royal de Flore*, abandoning the fast-ensuing modulation from tonic minor to relative major keys. The opening statement offers an ominous background by means of an harmonic progression from tonic Gm to a passing subdominant Cm, and back to tonic. The unusual 'distortion', emphasised with a pedal note of G throughout this musical passage, would most commonly suggest solemn grandeur.²⁶ However, this image is dissipated by a rather subtle and very effective chromatic alteration to the treble part, found exclusively in the second bar of Feuillet's choreography (1700). Namely, the B flat is momentarily altered

25 Lully, *Le Triomphe de l'Amour*, Paris, 1681, pp.188-190, <<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9062398b.r=Triomphe de l%27amour lully?rk=42918;4>>.

26 The same harmonic progression with pedal note (but with different melodic material) is also found in the opening bars in the *récit* for a singing Apollo on page 198 of Lully's *Phaëton*, premièred only two years later in 1683, <<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9062397x/f269.image.r=Lully phaeton>>.

to B natural, a change that offers a fleeting feeling of ‘easing’ brought by a major tonic (GM, instead of the original Gm). Such an important alteration – which, as we shall discuss, makes crucial changes to the nature of the piece and consequently to its dramatic delivery – is only present in the choreographic notation by Feuillet, denoting perhaps a choice made after the composition was completed [figure 13], and unfortunately has not been acknowledged (either by choice or overlooking) in present day reconstructions.²⁷

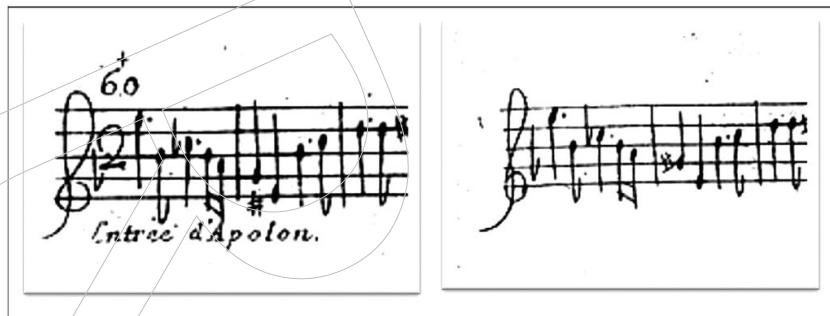


Figure 13 – Excerpts from pages 60 & 61 in Feuillet’s *Recueil de Dances*, 1700, showing pitch change on each second bars.

Curiously, a similar chromatic alteration is present in the bass line (bar 3), in the ensuing ‘Deuxième air pour les mesmes’, presumably danced by Apollo and the accompanying ‘quatre bergers heroyques’ [figure 14].²⁸ Could Feuillet have been inspired by this passage when choreographing the *Entrée d’Apolon* (sic)?

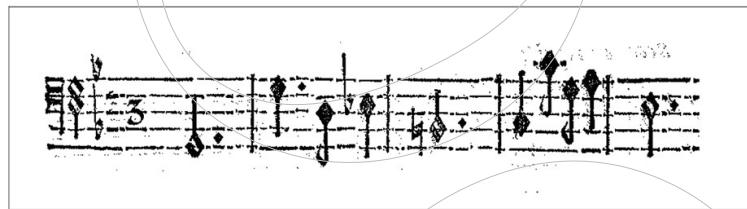


Figure 14 – Opening bars, bass line in ‘Deuxième air pour les mesmes’, *Le Triomphe de l’Amour*, 1681, p.190.

The other most notable traits in the score are the unashamed opening abrupt exordium in a high range [marked by a circle], the recurring dotted rhythmic figuration, the chromatic ascending lines [marked by arrows], and the ‘7-6’ suspensions [marked by dashed line boxes], as noted earlier [figures 15-16].

Quite interestingly, a closer inspection of the score shows Lully’s genius at work, and a testament that he was versed in oratory (or at least familiar enough to employ it musically): he structures the piece to conform to an

27 The *parties de remplissage* (i.e. inner parts in the score) clearly form a Gm chord, as the *taille* part reaffirms the B flat present in the treble on bar 2.

28 Lully, *Le Triomphe de l’Amour*, Paris, 1681, pp.190.

L E T R I O M P H E

ENTRÉE D'APOLLON ET DE QUATRE BERGERS HEROYQUES.

AIR.

Première reprise.

Première reprise.

Première reprise.

Première reprise.

Figure 15 – Opening bars, Lully, 'Entrée d'Apollon et de Quatre Bergers Heroyques', *Le Triomphe de l'Amour*, 1681, p.188.

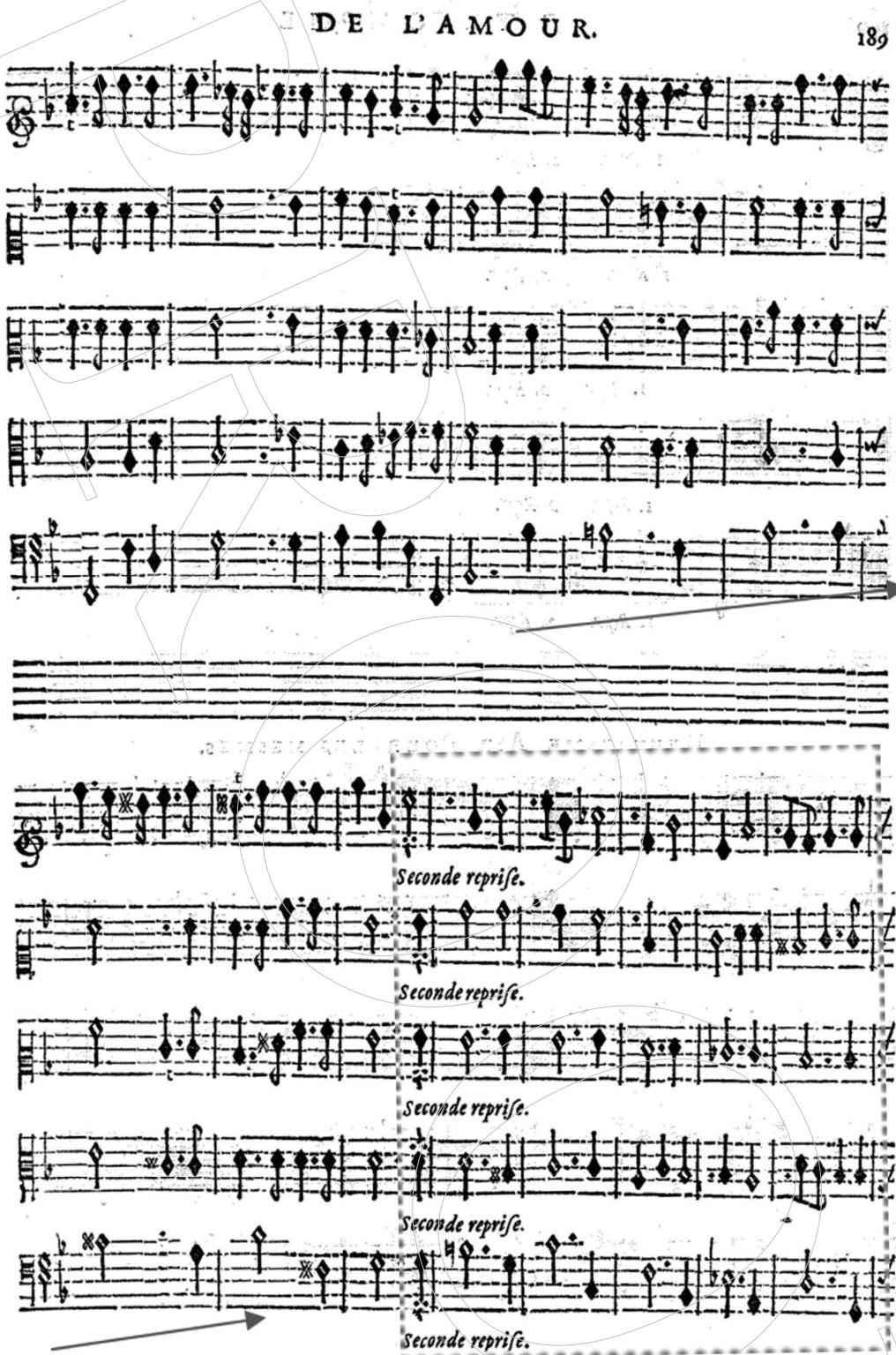


Figure 16 – Extract, Lully, 'Entrée d'Apollon et de Quatre Bergers Heroyques', *Le Triomphe de l'Amour*, 1681, p.189.

oratorical speech in 5 parts, where the A section corresponds to the *Propositio*, encapsulating *Exordium* (opening statement), *Narratio* (statement of matter to be addressed) and *Partitio* (enumeration of topics), while the B section expands the argumentation into *Confirmatio* (confirmation of proposed matter and presentation of proof), *Confutatio* (banishing of contrary argumentation) and *Conclutio* (reinstatement of initial idea in proposition) [figure 17].

Section	Bar numbers	Part of Oration
A	1 to 9.i	• Propositio
B	9.ii to 16.i	• Confirmatio
	16.ii to 20.i	• Confutatio
	20.ii to 28	• Conclutio

Figure 17 – Subdivisions of score applied to score of the Entrée d'Apollon in *Le Triomphe de l'Amour*.

Extraordinarily, the whole A section of the composition orderly presents the thematic elements to be further developed in the following three main sections, in the B part [figure 18].

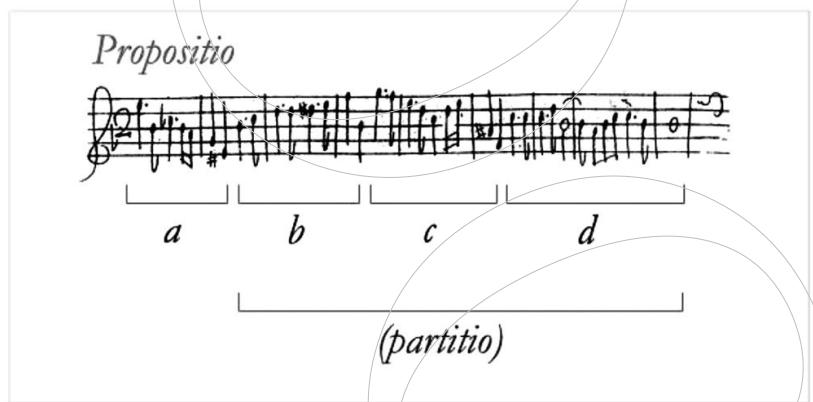


Figure 18 – Treble part in section A of the Entrée d'Apollon, *Le Triomphe de l'Amour*, subdivided in four semi-phrases.

The technique is akin to the oratorical device *Partitio*, where a speaker enumerates the ensuing topics of his speech, to make his argument clearer, and masterly inserts this *en passant* while delivering the *Propositio* [figure 19].²⁹

29 For a full choreo-musical-oratorical analysis of this work, please refer to Ricardo Barros, *Dance as a Discourse-The rhetorical expression of the passions in French Baroque dance*, Lambert Academic Publishing, Saarbrücken, 2010.

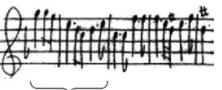
Semi-phrases in <i>Propositio A</i> section (<i>Partitio</i>)		Phrases corresponding to developed Oration parts <i>B</i> section	
<i>b</i>		<i>Confirmatio</i>	
<i>c</i>		<i>Confutatio</i>	
<i>d</i>		<i>Conclutio</i>	

Figure 19 – Relation between semi-phrases presented in section A of the *Entrée d'Apollon*, their further development in section B, and their corresponding oratory function.

The complexity of texture and interweaving in the composition offers a variety of affects that propose an equally complex persona, in agreement with the troubled figure painted by the *livret* and, as we shall see, with the extant choreographic material.

Although unmarked, the 'Air' in the Prologue of *Acis et Galatée*³⁰ – used by Anthony L'Abbé for his equally generically titled 'Entrée'³¹ – certainly has all the compositional characteristics to be defined as an *Entrée d'Apollon*, and for its placement in the narrative which, according to the *livret*, has Apollo as the main character in that point of the Prologue.

Comparatively simpler than its predecessors, the score [figure 20] disregards the '7-6' suspensions and quick harmonic modulations from minor to relative major observed in earlier works. But other features such as the abrupt exordium and chromatic ascending lines (both in treble and bass lines, at different times) are maintained. Certain elements seen in much earlier examples are reinstated: the *fugato* figuration (marked with stars, on bars 7-9) as previously seen in *Ballet de la Naissance de Vénus*, and some eloquent syncopations (on bars 13, 16, 20 and 22) as previously seen in the *Ballet de la Nuit*. As further evidence of the association of this *air* to an *Entrée d'Apollon*, we find on bars 2-4 a verbatim quotation of both treble and bass parts in a passage in the *Entrée d'Apollon* in *Le Triomphe de l'Amour*, (treble part, bars 3-5) [figure 21]. Not surprisingly, some choreographic passages in the choreographies by Feuillet and L'Abbé for the respective works bear striking resemblance, as shall be pointed out in the ensuing choreographic analyses.

30 Lully, *Acis et Galatée*, Paris, 1686, pp. xlviij-xlix,
<<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k4500453h.r=Lully%20acis%20et%20galatee?rk=21459;2>>.

31 Anthony L'Abbé, *A New Collection of Dances*, containing a great Number of the best Ball and Stage dances, London (n.d.).

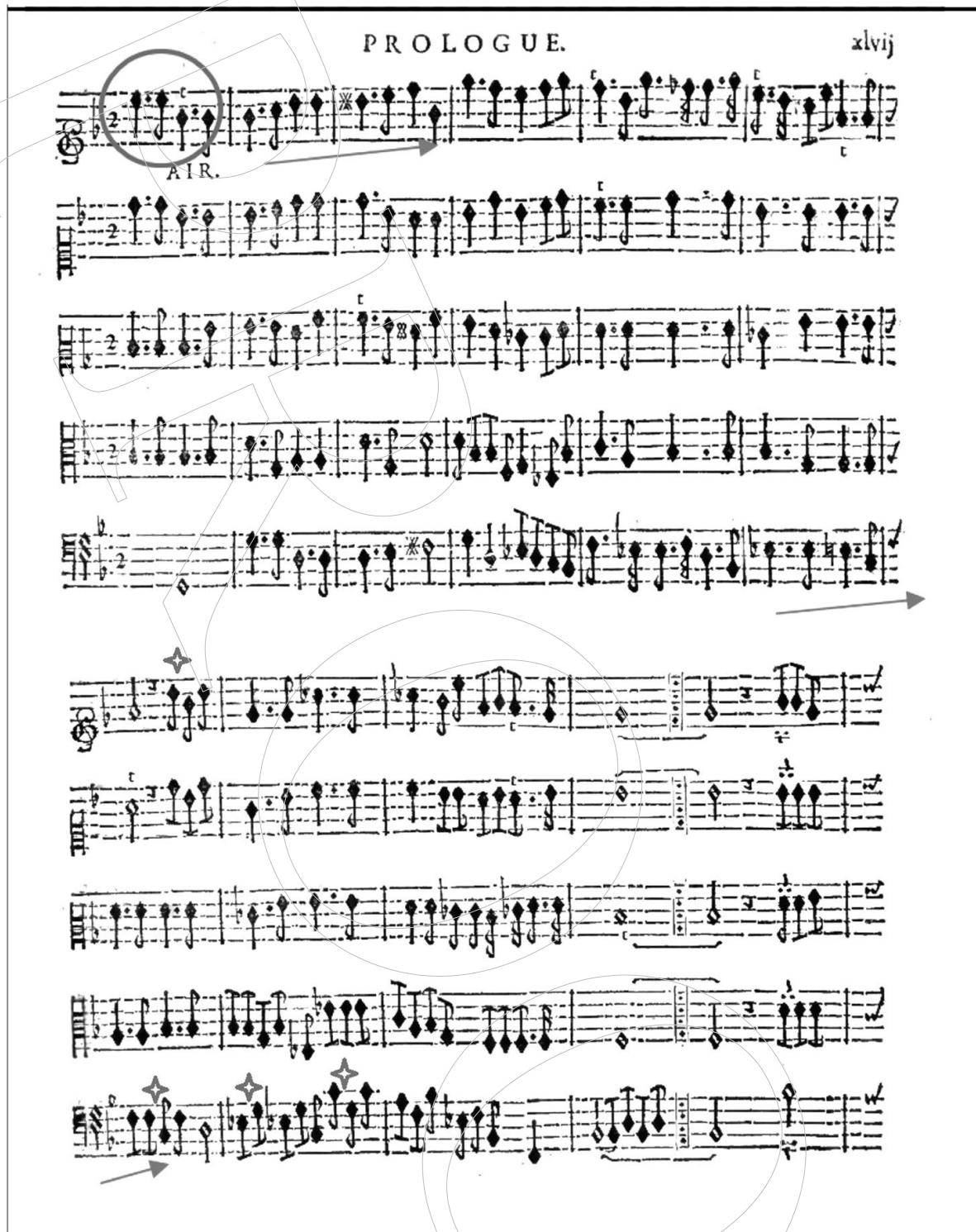


Figure 20 – Opening bars, Lully, Air, Prologue, *Acis et Galatée*, 1686, p.xlvii.

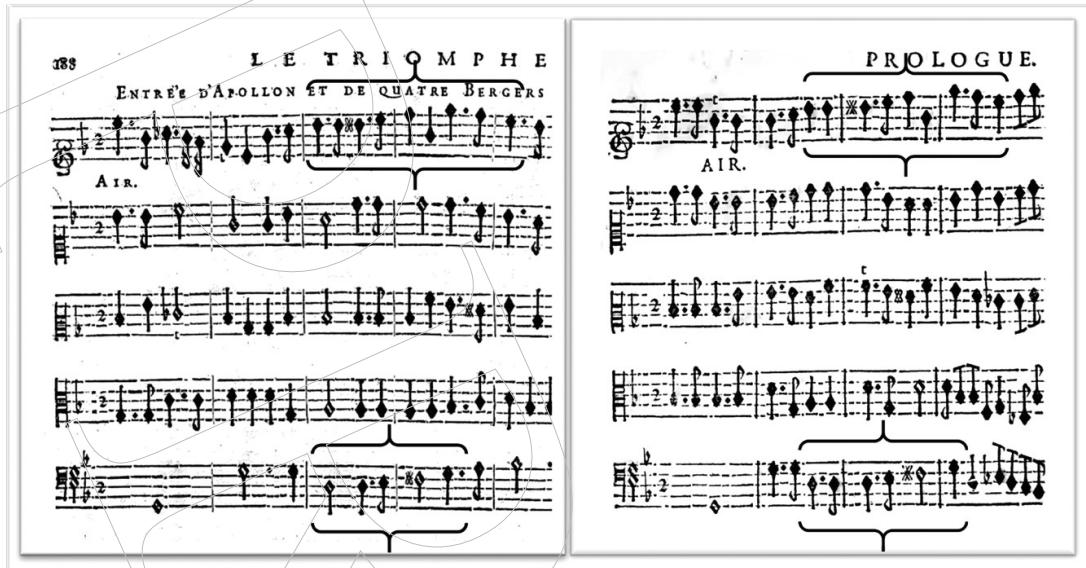


Figure 21 – Comparison between opening passages in Entrée d'Apollon, *Le Triomphe de l'Amour* (left), and Air, *Acis et Galatée* (right), with verbatim quotations shown within brackets.

3. THE CHOREOGRAPHIES

Despite the numerous appearances of Apollo in French ballets and operas in the *Grand Siècle* – be it in danced or sung roles – there is only a handful of surviving choreographies of the period for this character, albeit none of them bear indications of being performed on stage. Choreographed by Feuillet, Pécour and L'Abbé, these dances were published within the period c.1700-1725, and might have been created for the competent amateur in noble ranks, or perhaps for appearances by professional dancers in the many balls held at court, or in other events.

As we shall see in the following analyses, certain elements are recurring: at times whole passages are reused in different choreographies, either by the same author or as a citation by another one. The degree of difficulty varies, but overall all of the dances demand a high degree of skill, control and expressivity.

Due to constraints of size, I have focused on presenting the analyses of the opening pages of each choreography and, in the case of choreographies by Feuillet (originally published in 1700), I have adopted the revised edition of 1709, containing clear corrections, mostly regarding timing of steps and their placement within the musical bar lines.

3.1 'Autre entrée pour homme' – Feuillet (1700)³²

The short choreography for the *Entrée* in *Ballet Royal de Flore* is the least demanding of all [figures 22-23].

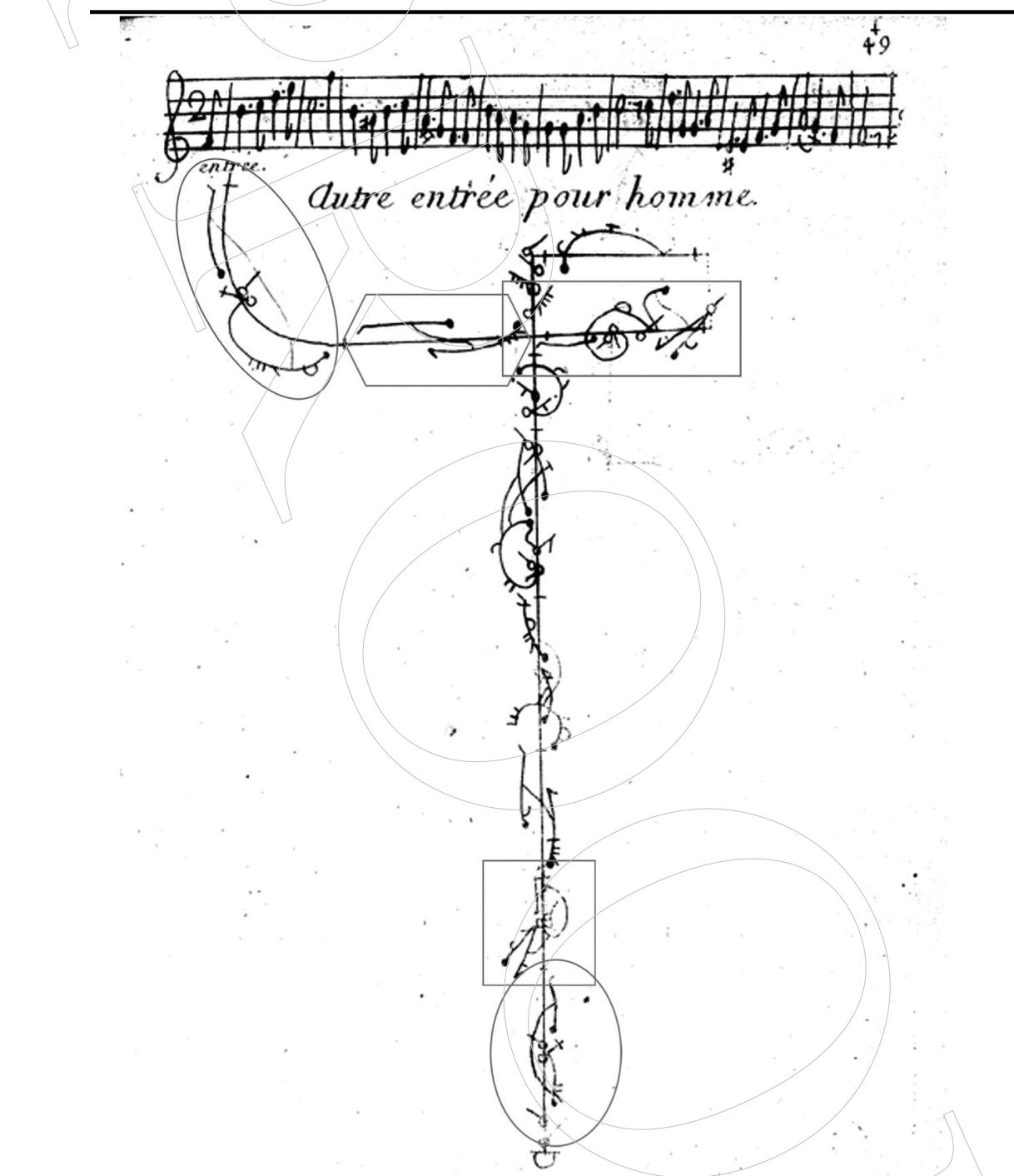


Figure 22 – Feuillet, 'Autre entrée pour homme', *Recueil de Dances*, 1700, p.49.

32 Feuillet, *Recueil de Dances composées par Mr Feuillet, Maître de Dance*, Paris, 1700, pp.49-52. <<https://www.loc.gov/item/14002126/>>.

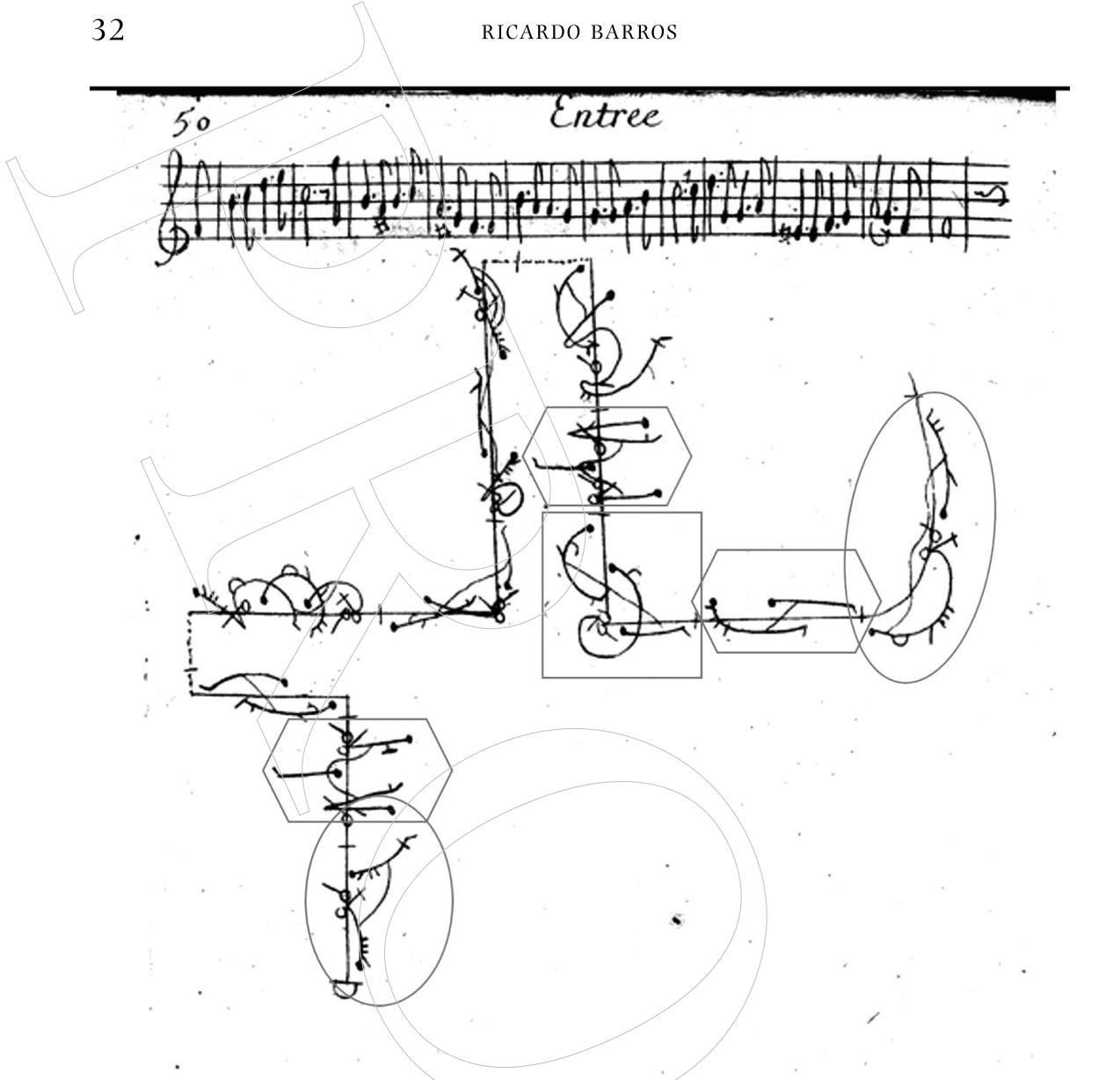


Figure 23 – Feuillet, 'Autre entrée pour homme', *Recueil de Dances*, 1700, p.50.

Unusually, for a virtuoso solo *Entrée*, it contains one step-unit per bar – which immediately demands a relatively faster tempo than those containing two step-units per bar (so to avoid stagnant phrasing and heavy landings on jumps).

Opening with a *cabriole*, the choreography establishes an iconic and strong image from the outset. Here it conveys the image of the hero who vanquished the Winter, bringing promises of good weather (or 'prosperity' under Louis XIV's reign). Used as a statement, this step is more of an allusion to the royal image rather than an accurate portrayal of the image and mood suggested by the *livret* and score: the musical score does not offer an abrupt exordium – to which the bold step would have been better suited – but instead a rather gentle and gradual ascent by degree in the treble part, while the *livret* puts forward a slow rising sun. The *cabriole* is also used consistently as a step of transition between phrases and oratorical parts [marked throughout with a circle/oval shape]. We also note some degree of hesitation or caution (also proposed elsewhere in the musical

score) as the dancer employs *emboëttes* [marked throughout with a square/rectangular shape], which in the first page makes him turn to face the sides. Additionally, one can argue that the steps in 2nd position – present in both *coupés* or *contretemps* sideways, or more concealed in *pas de bourée en présence* [marked throughout with a hexagonal shape] – can convey some vulnerability due to its defenceless and exposed stance, particularly when compared to steps in 3rd and 4th position where the body is rendered more alert and protected.

Curiously, the whole passage containing the four last bars in page 1, as well as the second half of page 2, are either exact or slightly shortened quotations of similar passages in Feuillet's 'Entrée d'Apolon' [sic], printed a mere 11 pages later in the same collection.³³

3.2 'Entrée d'Apolon' – Feuillet (1700)³⁴

Perhaps one of the most iconic choreographies in the solo repertoire notated in Feuillet-Beauchamps notation, the 'Entrée d'Apolon' (sic) is notable for its close relationship with the musical score, and for elegantly delivering a speech framed by a classic oratorical frame [figures 24-25]. More than that, it openly portrays a susceptible character, focusing the story-telling on his inner turmoil as he is torn between his apparent unscathed divine majesty and the acknowledgement of his love for Daphne (and therefore his surrender to Cupid's power).

In contrast to 'Autre entrée pour homme' above, Feuillet's use of the *cabriole* as an opening statement is consistent with the musical score and *livret*, expressing the 'grief that afflicts'³⁵ caused by a piercing dart.³⁶ This is immediately followed by a *battü*, *ronds-de-jambe* and *pied-en-l'air*, while balancing on the opposite leg *en demi-pointe* which – other than the obvious technical demand of control, strength and balance – requires great interpretative skills from the dancer if he is to portray the shivering and nearly orgasmic ecstasy suggested by this passage: as Descartes suggested, 'the passion that most commonly brings about this effect [listlessness] is love, combined with desire, for a thing whose

33 In the context of the *Recueil de dances composée par Mr Feuillet* (1700), the passage in bars 7-10 on page 49, and 20-22 on page 50 ('Autre entrée pour homme') paraphrase bars 7i-9 on page 60 ('Entrée d'Apolon'). Likewise, bars 6-7 on page 50 are literally quoted in bar 4 on page 60.

34 Feuillet, *Recueil de Dances composées par Mr Feuillet, Maître de Dance*, Paris, 1700, pp.60-66. <<https://www.loc.gov/item/14002126/>>

35 Le Faucheur, *The Art of Speaking in Publick*, 1727, anon. translation of *Traité de l'action de l'orateur ou de la prononciation et du geste*, Paris, 1656, pp. 124, <<https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=JXRaAAAAcAAJ&printsec=frontcover>>.

36 For a full analysis of this choreography, please refer to Ricardo Barros, *Dance as a Discourse – The rhetorical expression of the passions in French Baroque dance*, Lambert Academic Publishing, Saarbrücken, 2010, pp.103-129.

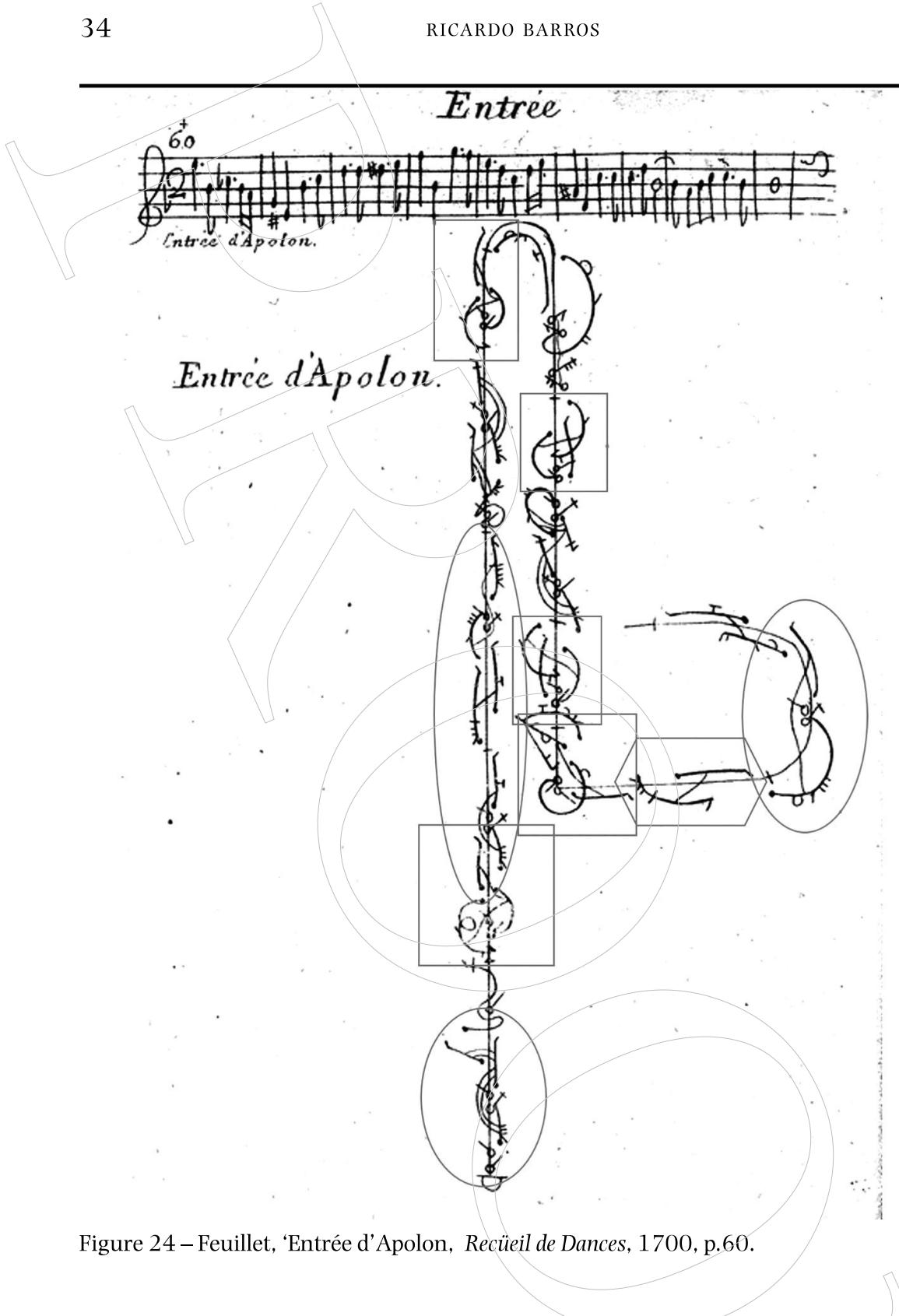


Figure 24 – Feuillet, ‘Entrée d’Apolon, *Recueil de Dances*, 1700, p.60.

acquisition is not imagined to be possible at the present time’.³⁷ This opening semi-phrase is concluded with the first of many *emboëttés* that permeate the choreography, here accompanied by the tonal temporary modulation to GM and

37 René Descartes, ‘*Les Passions de l’âme*’ (Paris, 1649), in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, trans. Robert Stoothoff, Cambridge, 1985, pp.325-404.

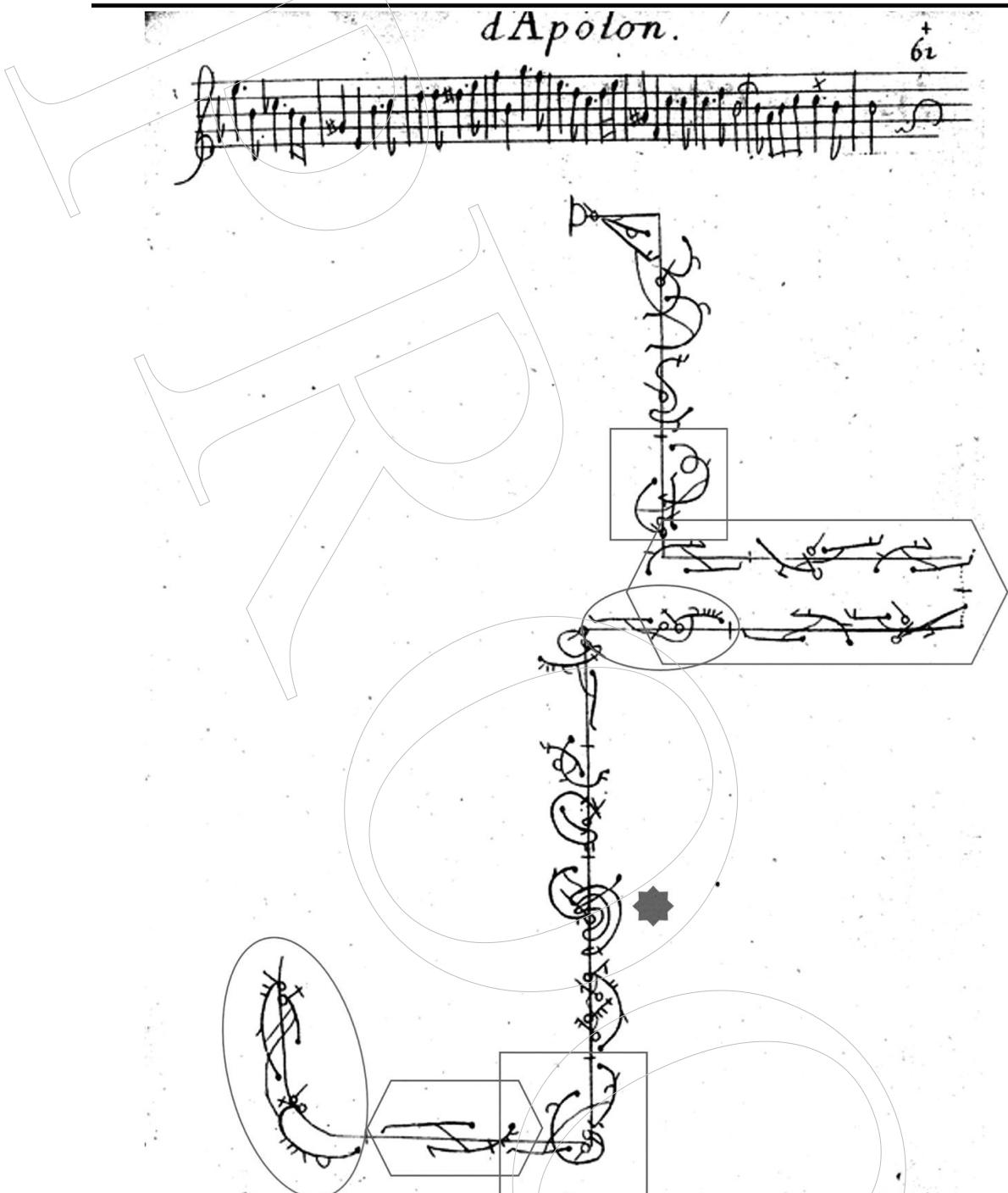


Figure 25 – Feuillet, Entrée d’Apolon, *Recueil de Dances*, 1700, p.61.

suggesting Apollo's surrendering to Cupid's capricious desire, denoting a drastic change of passion.

Applied with frequency, the *emboëttés* are used as a punctuation, denoting a 'change of heart' or a change of emotion – in contemporary terms it would be akin to a trigger to bi-polarity which, in the choreography, often flanks sections

where Apollo is clearly in conflict (displayed with beaten steps, turning *pas grave* or sudden *sissones*, insisting *jettés-chassés*, as seen on page 60), or instead revels in ecstasy of love. A clear example of Apollo's surrender to Cupid's power is proposed by the series of *pas-tombés* in bars 2ii-4 on page 61, in a sequence akin to that described by Père Pomey in 1671:

Sometimes, with the most beautiful timing in the world, he would remain suspended, immobile, and half leaning to the side with one foot in the air; and then, compensating for the rhythmic unit that had gone by, with another more precipitous unit he would almost fly, so rapid was his motion.³⁸

This sequence is followed by another brief attempt to deny love (with a *cabriole* and a turning, beaten *contretemps*), but ensued by a magnificent passage when Apollo first stands immobile, with one leg *en l'air*, and progressively speeds up his actions with two *battus* and faster four *battements* [marked with a star]. Applying Descartes's theory to the passage, the initial static figure would reflect the listlessness caused by the desire of an unattainable object of love. Apollo's gradual acceptance of this passion would make him realise the prospect of fulfilling his desire, therefore making him more agile for, according to Descartes, 'when the body is in this condition, the desires of the soul are rendered stronger and keener'.³⁹

When observed from this literary and musical perspective, this opening choreographic segment portrays a dramatic image, a far cry from the haughty image of an absolutist Apollo.

In consideration of the whole work as an homogenous amalgamation of literary, choreographic, musical and oratorical forces, some pre-conceived ideas are replaced with revealing, enlightening and refreshing new meaning: emphatic dotted rhythm, often employed to suggest a 'drive' or 'determination' when displaying epic courage, tragedy or heroism, here reflects the 'anguish' and 'turmoil' of a troubled character. This is reinforced by the ascending chromatic lines, portraying 'difficulty' exemplified by a long sinuous route to reach the climactic note, here painting the search for the unattainable (Daphne as the object of Apollo's amorous interests). Interestingly, the '7-6' suspensions often linked to 'unresolved issues' or 'ongoing plights', here suggest that a long conflict can lead to resolution and balance instead.

Consequently in the choreographic discourse, in order to illustrate the power and triumph of Cupid (*Le Triomphe de l'Amour* as the Ballet's title announces) Feuillet explores Apollo's astonishment and wonder with the prospect of being

38 François Pomey, 'Description d'une Sarabande dansée', *Le dictionnaire royal augmenté*, Lyon, 1671, appendix, pp.20-21, <<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k96365651/f1060.image>>.

39 Descartes, *ibid.*, pp.367, 370.

in love and expressing his desires. The subliminal message conveyed by the choreographer is that wonder and astonishment are the actual causes for the character's instability, and not love and desire. Apollo's struggle during the *Confutatio* is caused by such instability, which vanishes once the character learns that the new passions will not be detrimental to his imposing divinity. On the contrary, by uniting all choreographic elements in the final *Conclutio*, which also explores the surmounting ecstasy caused by suspended chords and dissonances in the harmonic cycle of fifths, Apollo is finally portrayed not in the disadvantaged position of a captive of Cupid, but rather as an enlightened, pleasant, inspiring and much more diverse character. Love is portrayed as an inevitable, positive passion even when unexpectedly imposed: any attempt to set this passion aside is clearly demonstrated as unfruitful and leading not only to frustration, but also to the defacing of one's previous persona.

3.3 ‘Entrée d’Appolon’(sic) – Pécour (1704)⁴⁰

Although not strictly complying with an oratorical frame, as its counterpart above – but instead abounding with Pécour’s characteristic shifting of choreographic phrases onto dissimilar musical passages, in paraphrases – the choreography presents the same trademark steps. The same eloquent *cabrioles* are used in the abrupt exordium and punctuation of phrases, the recurring *emboëttes*, the steps denoting susceptibility such as the *pas de bourée ouvert* and sideways *coupé*, highlighting the open 2nd position, the collapsing *pas tombé* with its Cartesian connotations and finally the same compelling battements conveying Apollo’s increasing excitement [figures 26-27]. Despite some incongruences in the choreo-musical relation – such as the use of *entrechats* on bar 2 where harmony reverts to Gm, instead of the relatively more strained Cm on bar 1ii – Pécour’s choreography also reinstates some ideas already used by Feuillet in the two choreographies above: here, the hurried steps to stage right on bar 5 (p.195) followed by the return to stage left with a *pas tombé* is a paraphrase of Feuillet’s *Apolon* (p.61, bars 2.ii-4), while the *coupé* to stage left and turning *contretemps* on bar 7 reminds us of Feuillet’s *Soleil* (p.50, bars 3-4). The overall impression is that in Pécour’s eyes, the re-gaining of control by Apollo is suggested by his ability in mastering increasingly difficult steps rather than matching choreographic elements to their musical counterparts, or harmoniously combining them all in a climactic final *Conclutio*, as proposed by Feuillet.

40 Feuillet, *Recueil de dances contenant un tres grand nombres des meilleures Entrées de Ballet de Mr. Pécour*, Paris, 1704, pp. 195-201, <<https://www.loc.gov/item/11027715/>>.

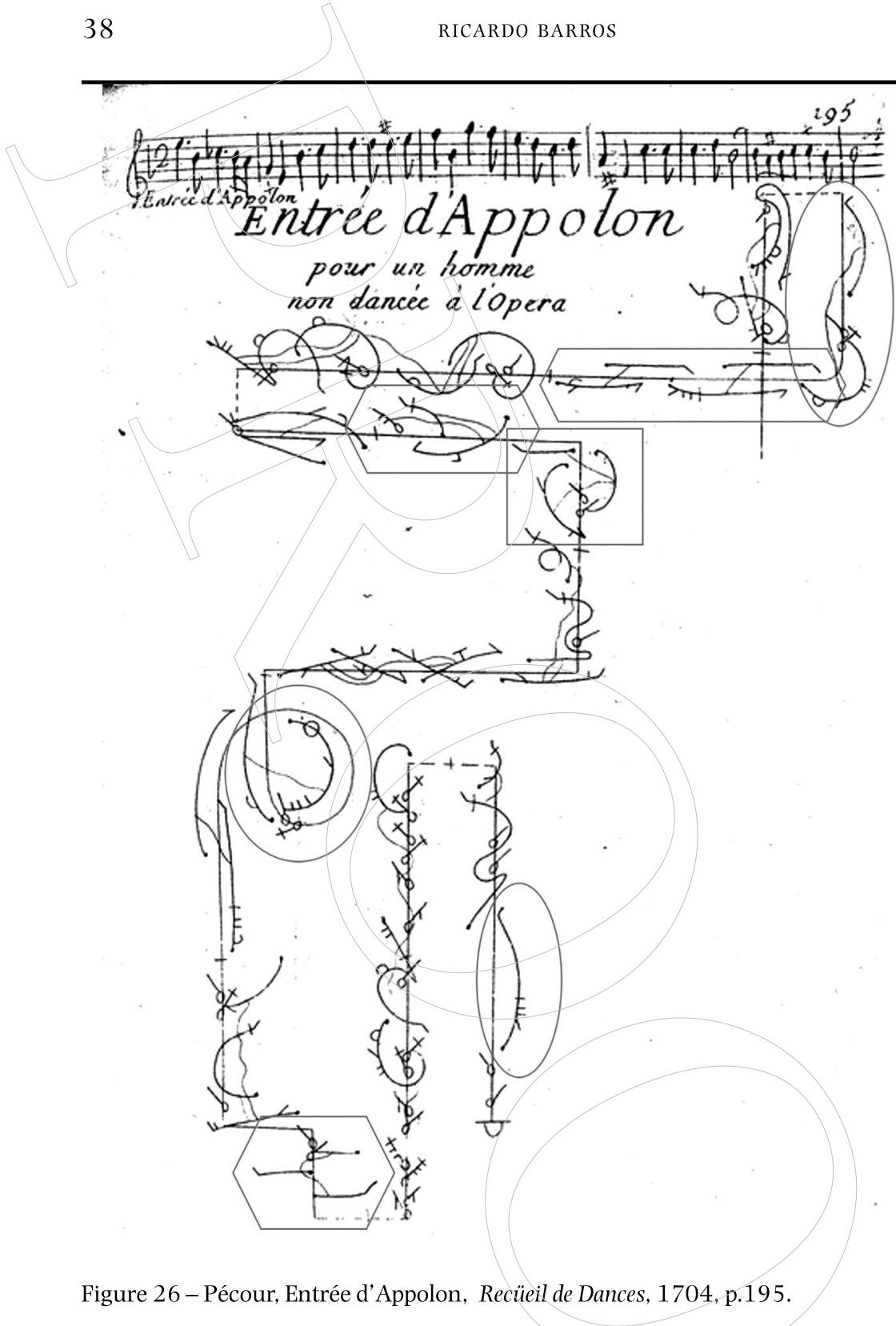


Figure 26 – Pécour, Entrée d'Appolon, *Recueil de Dances*, 1704, p.195.

3.4 ‘Entrée performd’ by Mr Desnoyer – L’Abbé (c.1725)⁴¹

Enigmatically billed as having been ‘performd’ by Mr Desnoyer’, the present choreography might have been the result of a partnership between L’Abbé and his compatriot George Desnoyer, who premiered in London’s Drury Lane Theatre

41 Anthony L’Abbé, *A New Collection of Dances*, London, n.d. (c.1725), pp. 76-83.

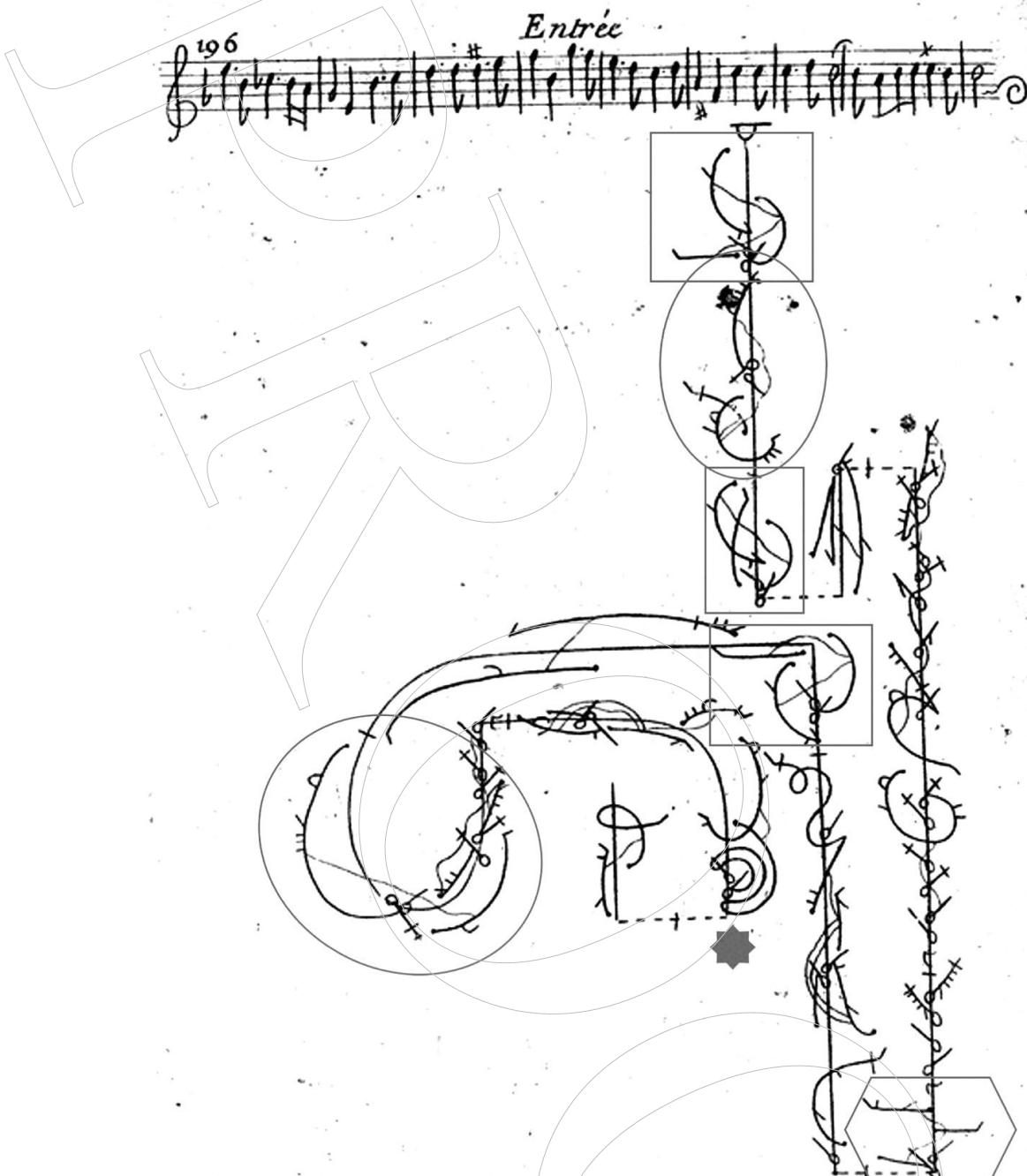


Figure 27 – Pécour, Entrée d'Appolon, *Recueil de Dances*, 1704, p.196.

in 1721. The choreography stands alongside two others naming Desnoyer as a performer: a *Spanish Entrée* (set to the *Sarabande Espagnole* in Lully's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*) and a *Turkish Dance* in which he performed with Mrs Younger (set to the March in *La Turquie*, an *entrée* in Campra's *L'Europe Galante*). These might have been showcase numbers, as all dances display strong characters (Apollo, a Spaniard and a Turk) in virtuoso choreographies. Would the absence of a clear labelling as an *Entrée d'Appolon* in the choreography be due to L'Abbé's judicious

caution as to avoid unintentionally giving the impression of corroborating a French propaganda (by exalting a French monarch, when perpetrating the established association between Louis XIV and Apollo), and thus safeguarding his position as dancing master to King George I's granddaughters Anne, Amelia and Caroline?

The choreographic elements in this dance [figures 28-31] – together with evidence provided by the *livret*, musical score and performance circumstances – corroborate its identification as an *Entrée d'Apollon*. It starts with a verbatim quotation of the opening exordium in Feuillet's *Entrée d'Apollon* (sic) (1700), with its *cabriole*, *pas pointé*, *battüs* and *ronds-de-jambe*, all squeezed in the first bar. Interestingly, in the opening page (p.76) the dancer persistently faces upstage while performing steps in 'wide' second position, and uses *cabrioles* to momentarily turn back to face the audience, only to turn its back to them immediately after with a *jetté*. This apparent turmoil is augmented with yet renewed attempts to settle, which are fruitless due to turning *sissones* that frustrate such attempts.

The choreography is quite demanding, particularly in terms of timing of steps. Rather than complying with the oratorical structure proposed by the musical score, the choreography develops its own discourse, albeit utilising some of the associations found in Feuillet's *Entrée d'Apollon* (sic) insofar as the *emboëttes* seem to indicate a change of attitude: for example, after the struggles on the opening page (as mentioned above), the dancer continues to proceed sideways towards upstage on page 77. An eloquent *cabriole* on bar 2 (perhaps depicting the exacerbation of his anguish) is promptly followed by an *emboëtte*, which now enables him to confidently face the audience and perform some *entrechats*. Such boldness persists through the beginning of page 78, culminating into yet another *cabriole* on bar 3, followed by *battements en tournant* [marked with a star]. From here on, his confidence vanishes, markedly on bar 4 with a variant of a *pas de bourée à deux mouvements*, concluding with a leg gesture (curiously a step often employed by Pécour and seen as one of his signature steps). This leads to scuttling steps, retreating backwards towards upstage. The contrast between confident and cautious steps as a reflection of the initial unsettlement portrayed on the opening page certainly paints the image of a troubled character who tries to reconcile opposing forces while attempting to make sense of them.

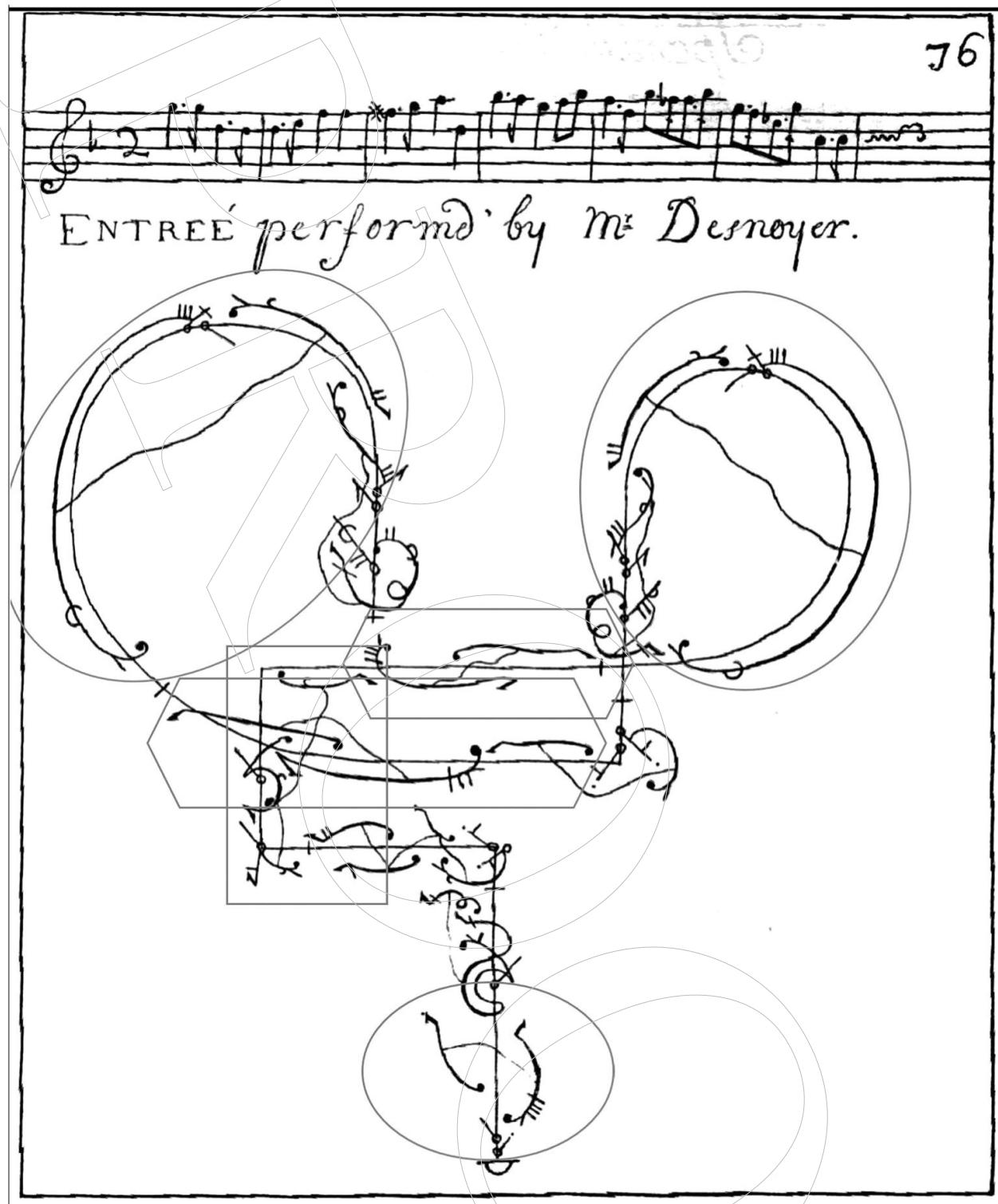


Figure 28 – L'Abbé, Entrée performd' by Mr Desnoyer, *A New Collection of Dances*, c1725, p.76.

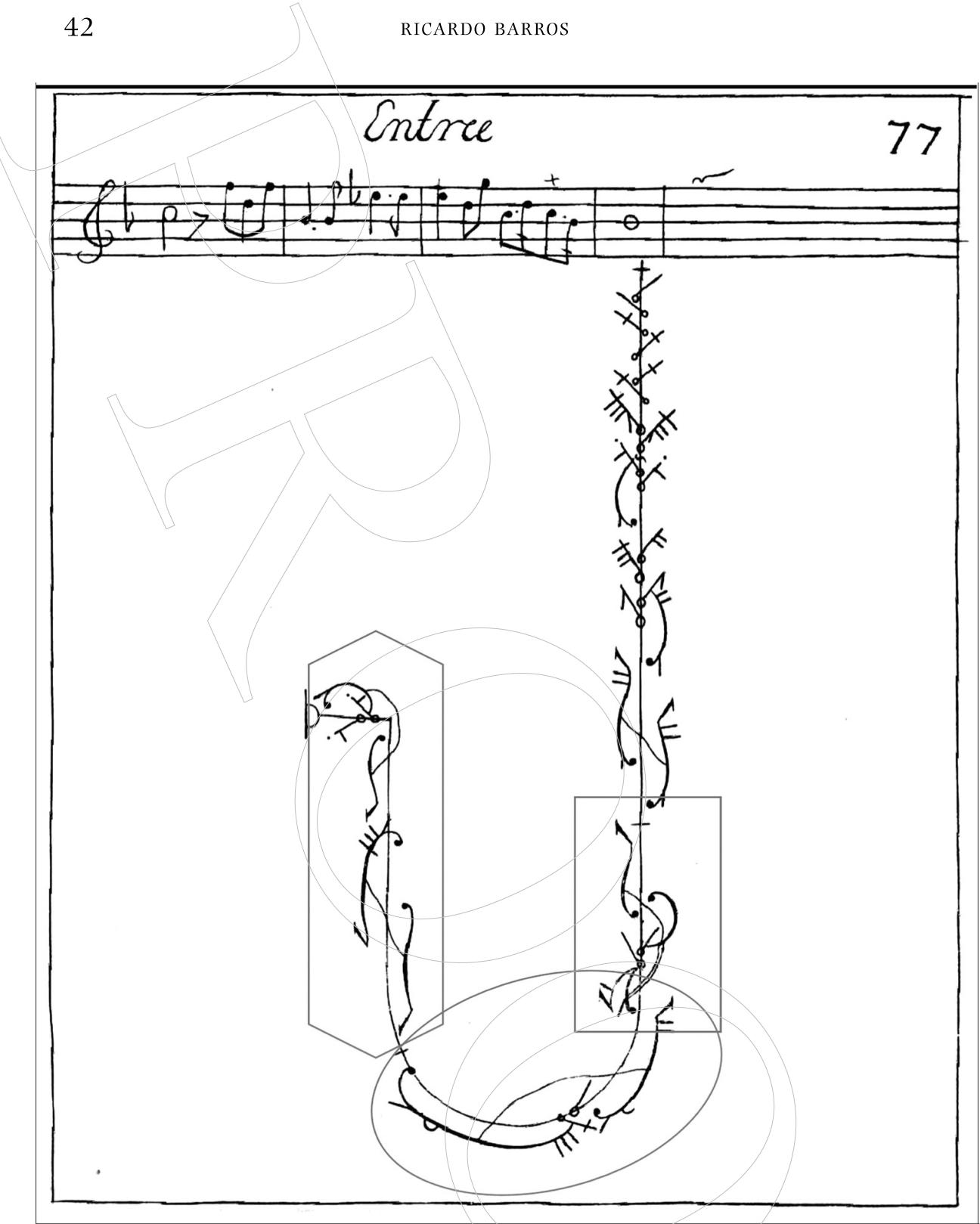


Figure 29 – L'Abbé, Entrée performed by Mr Desnoyer, *A New Collection of Dances*, c 1725, p.77.

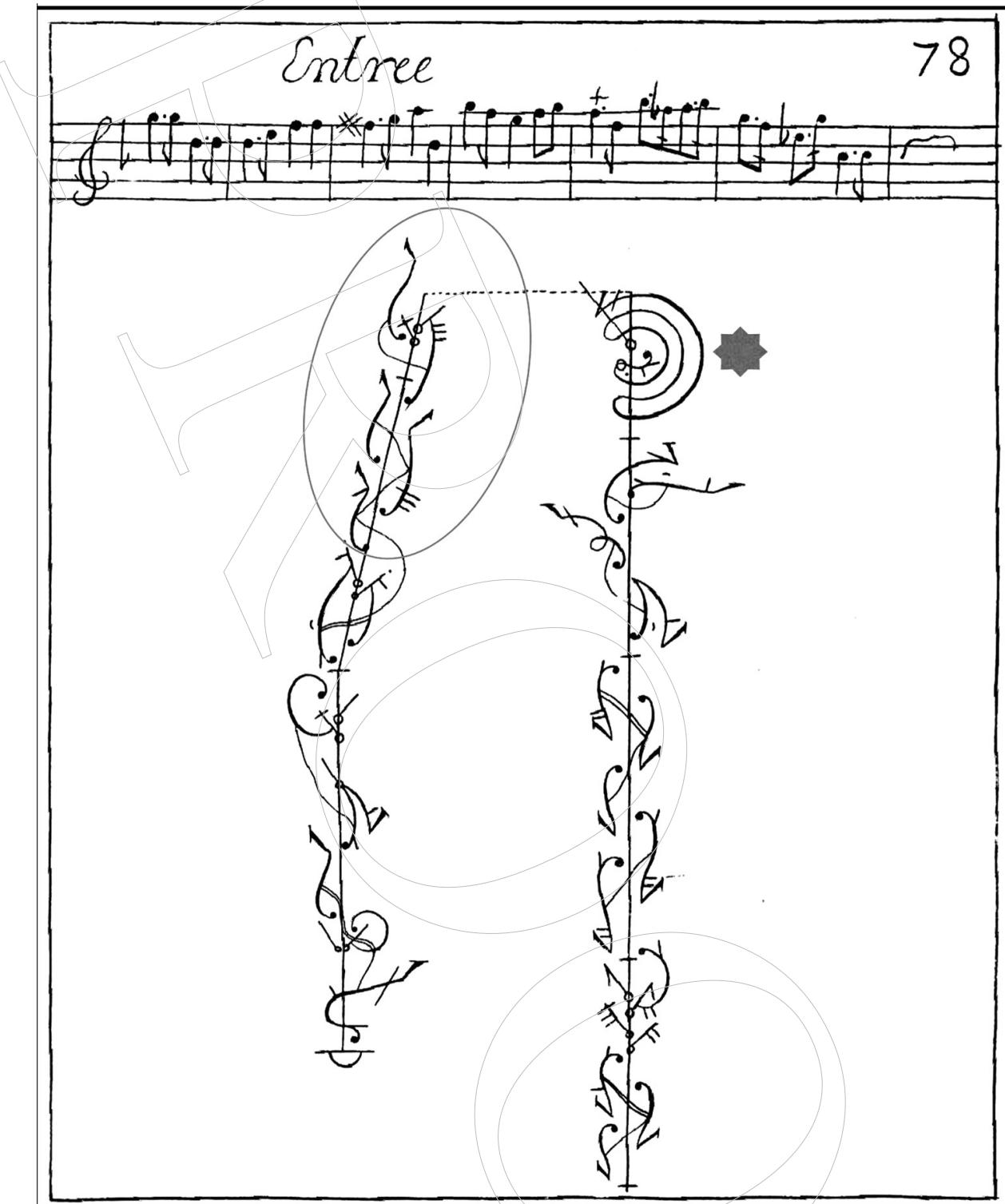


Figure 30 – L'Abbé, Entrée performd' by Mr Desnoyer, *A New Collection of Dances*, c 1725, p.78.

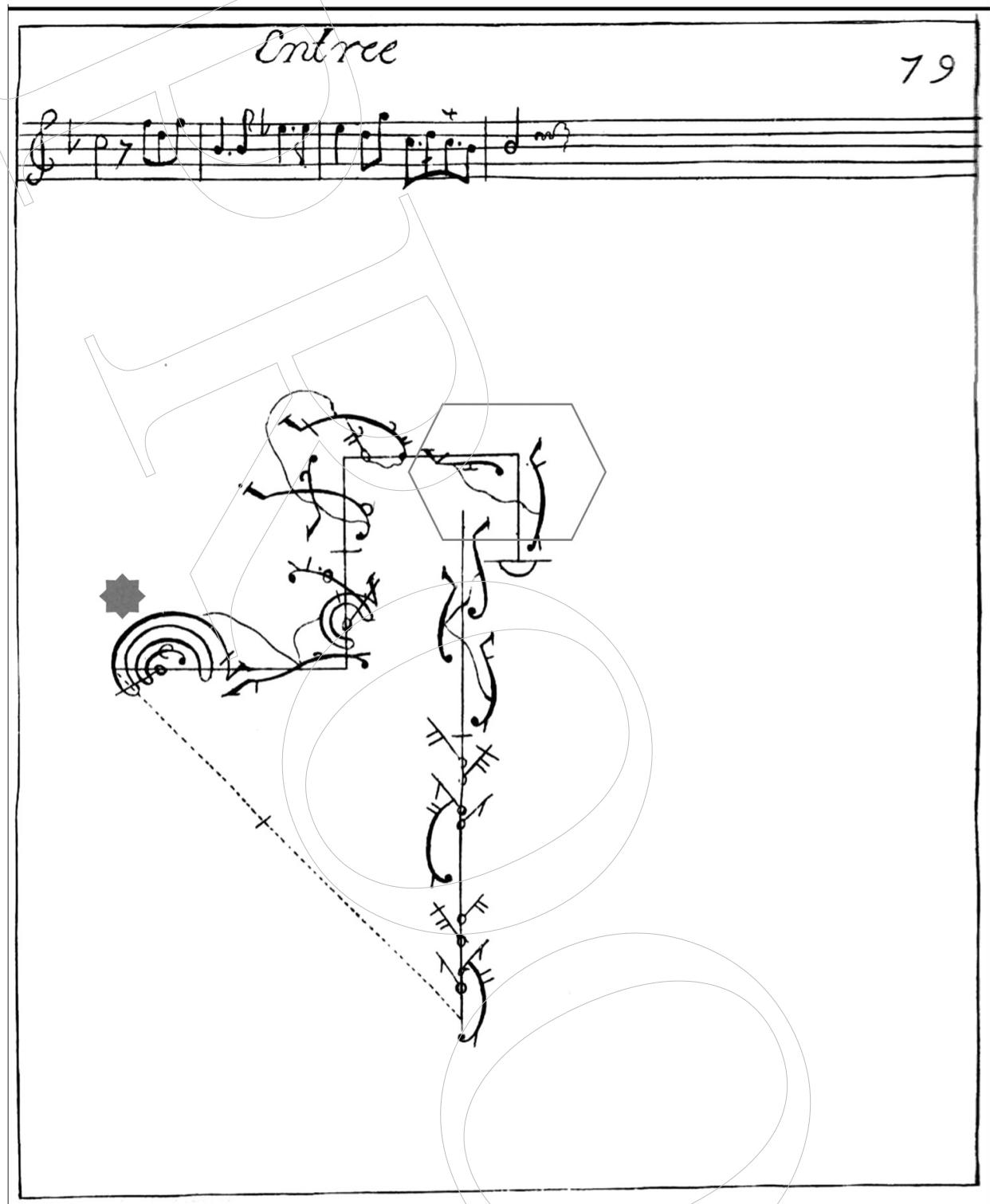


Figure 31 – L'Abbé, Entrée performd' by Mr Desnoyer, *A New Collection of Dances*, c 1725, p.79.

CONCLUSION

The evidence above shows at least two very distinct facets of Apollo's persona: the heroic, positive god who embodies the Sun and whose rays shine supreme over other gods (other nations or opponents to Louis) and mortals alike, banishing darkness and the forces of evil; but we also see the susceptible, amorous and agitated lover who has to deal with his unrequited love (a constant in Apollo's tales) and the admission he has been vanquished by another god (Cupid), thus having his supremacy diminished.

In itself, the choice of subject matter (amongst the many stories surrounding Apollo, in classic mythology) – and its inevitable royal association (with the king's consent, nonetheless) – of a suffering, tormented Apollo who chases his swain, raises a few questions: was this a deliberate or unintentional attempt to show a rather more mundane, 'carnal' side of the monarch? Or would this message have been meticulously devised by Louis himself, in memory of a possible certain 'Daphne' for which his amorous interests were frustrated and, as such, someone who remained as an idolised muse to him? If so, would this episode be known amongst his inner circle, or even by other courtiers? It is intriguing that a king so obsessed with, and so controlling of his own image would allow for such a transparent and direct connection to be drawn with a potentially weakening image, unless such parallel had been carefully devised in the first place – a commonplace operation amongst PRs nowadays, and perhaps equally so 350 years ago. The change of tone between the somewhat chauvinistic statement in *Les Noces de Pelée et de Thétis* (1654) and the complete opposite in *Ballet de la Naissance de Vénus* (1665) where Apollo laments having lost Daphne and gathers leaves from her transformed body (now a laurel bush) in order to keep her memory alive, are striking. Would this perhaps be a reflection of the king grieving the departure of Marie Mancini (Cardinal Mazarin's niece), with whom Louis briefly nurtured an idealistic, unconsummated love between June 1658 and June 1659 when she 'fled' away (and he found himself betrothed to Marie-Thérèse d'Autriche instead)? Their relationship, nurtured from a tender age of naivety, imprinted on Louis a zest for art and erudition but also lit his ardour for a rebellious, disparaging liaison with Marie?⁴²

Choreographically, we can observe a predominant positive character in the *Autre entrée pour homme* (Feuillet, 1700) in the *Ballet Royal de Flore*, and a prevalence of the dark, afflicted character in all other three choreographies (Feuillet, 1700; Pécour, 1704; L'Abbé, c.1725). These two different facets

42 For an account of Marie Mancini's brief relationship with Louis XIV, and the potentially lasting influence she had on him, refer to Christine Féret-Fleury, *J'ai aimé le Roi-Soleil, Journal de Marie Mancini, 1656-1659*, Paris, 2018, and Antonia Fraser, *Love and Louis XIV*, London, 2006.

demand particular characterisation in order to highlight one or other trait. As advised by Michel De Pure:

Herein lies the ability of the dancing master, to reconcile the dancer's movement both to his idea and to the rhythm of the music, and to do so in such a way that it does not contradict either: to observe in a furious [character] an abrupt step, fiery, and that by means of an affected timing, or through a broken [interrupted] cut one might perceive the disturbances and distractions of the character. In this way, in the case of a lover, a convalescent, a sad or a happy character, he must endeavour to convey well the many alterations that love, sickness, sadness or happiness may cause in the countenance, or in other [body] parts that may be most appropriate to portray the internal feelings [...]. Without those, the steps are mere convulsions of the dancing master and of the dancer, nothing but a bizarrie without spirit or design and, consequently, a flawed dance [...] that has no more sense than those who created and performed it.⁴³

When addressing the 'essence of the Ballet', De Pure enlightens his readers regarding the expressive qualities of dancing by stating that 'a ballet step does not simply consist of subtle feet movements or various agitations of the body. It consists of a combination of both and comprises everything that a well skilled and trained body could have in gestures or actions in order to express something without speaking [...]. However, the principal and most important rule is that in order to make the step expressive, the head, shoulders, arms and hands should make comprehensible what the dancer does not say.' His enlightening words, combined with those of his contemporary Claude-François Ménéstrier,⁴⁴ highlight a crucial element of dramatic expressivity which seems to have been forgotten in our attempts to evoke the impacting eloquence as described by Père François Pomey in his breath-taking *Description d'une Sarabande dansée*.⁴⁵

POST SCRIPTUM

The field known as 'early dances' has experienced a rapid growth since the 1990s, with historians and practitioners (particularly those specialised in Baroque style) reaching, to a certain extent, a somewhat unified style of performance, interpretation of steps and characterisation. However, if dance

43 Michel de Pure, *Idée des spectacles anciens et nouveaux*, Paris, 1668, reprint Geneva, 1972, pp.250-251.

44 Claude-François Ménéstrier, *Des ballets anciens et modernes selon les règles du théâtre*, Paris, 1682, reprint Geneva, 1972.

45 François Pomey, 'Description d'une Sarabande dansée', *Le dictionnaire royal augmenté*, Lyon, 1671, appendix, pp.20-21, <<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k96365651/f1060.image>>.

is to benefit from the same quantum leap experienced by their musician colleagues, it is crucial that we go far beyond these agreed conventions. Namely, we must discern and understand the multiplicity of facets a character might portray, be better equipped in taking into account vital information proposed by musical, literary, and visual sources and, finally employ dramatic devices such as a vocabulary of facial expressions (i.e. as those proposed by Charles Le Brun⁴⁶) and gestures (i.e. as those proposed by Jelgerhuis,⁴⁷ and Austin,⁴⁸ to name a few) in our reconstructions. Equally, musicians should boldly revisit and question pre-conceived ideas formed on assumptions, instinct-led ‘performance practices’ and generalisations for, as seen above, the most subtle change of approach (character, tempo, texture) or technique (bowing techniques, phrasing, articulation) can drastically change the overall result when jointly approached with dance and text. The task will become much more arduous for the dancers, directors and historians, but undoubtedly will transform the way artists and audiences likewise approach, enjoy and gain enrichment from these precious art works.

As an after thought, I present the wise words of Ménéstrier for reflection, in hope that a growing number of dancers and historians embark in the ‘difficult task’ of unifying technically skilled steps, expressiveness, drama, passion and grace into eloquent performances:

Ballet does not exclusively imitate actions; it imitates, according to Aristotle, the passions and manners, which is a rather more difficult task than to communicate the actions. Such imitations of the manners and affections of the soul are founded on the impressions that the soul naturally makes on the body, and on the judgement we pass on other people’s manners and inclinations [tendencies] through these exterior movements [...]. One must thus express, in ballet, the movements of the heart and the affections of the soul; this is the *chef-d’œuvre* of this art, for one should perfectly know their nature in order to express them well.⁴⁹

46 Charles Le Brun, *Méthode pour apprendre à dessiner les passiins proposée dans une conférence sur l’expression générale et particulière*, Paris, 1698, <<https://bibliothequenumerique.inha.fr/collection/item/19946-conference-de-monsieur-le-brun-sur-l-expression-generale-et-particuliere-des-passions?offset=3>>.

47 Johannes Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen over de gesticulatie en mimiek gegeven aan de kweekelingen van het fonds ter opleiding en onderrigting van tooneel-kunstenaars aan den Stads schouwburg te Amsterdam*, Amsterdam, 1827.

48 Gilbert Austin, *Chironomia; or a Treatise on Rhetorical Delivery: comprehending many precepts, both ancient and modern, for the proper regulation of the Voice, the Countenance, and Gesture. Together with an Investigation of Gesture, and a New Method for the Notation thereof*, London, 1806.

49 Ménéstrier, *Des ballets anciens et modernes*, Paris, 1682, reprint Geneva, 1972, pp.160-162.

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