

“Rien n’est si charmant”: Some thoughts on the function of dialogue airs in the tragédie en musique

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1995

Fermata

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Original citation:

Hardeman, A. (1995). “Rien n’est si charmant”: Some thoughts on the function of dialogue airs in the tragédie en musique. *Fermata*, 1, 36–57.

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"RIEN N'EST SI CHARMANT": SOME THOUGHTS ON THE FUNCTION OF DIALOGUE AIRS IN THE TRAGÉDIE EN MUSIQUE

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Two extremes of vocal declamation have long been recognized in the *tragédie en musique*. *Récitatif* (recitative) is characterized by fluctuating metres and vocal rhythms patterned after the natural stresses of the text. The harmonic rhythm of these passages is slow, and they are often modulatory in nature. The air, narrowly defined, is a passage in a strict metre which begins and ends in the same key and frequently employs repetition of text (with or without musical repetition) to generate a formal structure such as binary (AB) or *rondeau* (ABA).¹ To date, it is the *récitatif* which has been the object of most published research, especially in connection with the performance problem created by the use of time signatures which vary from one measure to the next.² The air has received somewhat less and a different sort of scholarly attention: it is the function of the air which has come under question. Musically, it often appears to be present to avoid the monotony of endless *récitatif*; indeed, Lois Rosow notes that in Jean-Baptiste Lully's *Armide*, the composer uses varieties of binary form in succession, with the result that one air acts as repose from the other.³ Further, the repetition of material within the air may also provide musical

¹These two categories represent only the extremes of declamation styles in the *tragédie en musique*. Many passages, especially those without text repetition, have traits similar to both recitative and air, making clear identification of them as one or the other extremely difficult.

²See, for example: Lois Rosow, "French Baroque Recitative as an expression of tragic declamation," *Early Music* 11 (1983): 468-479 and "The Metrical Notation of Lully's Recitative," in *Jean-Baptiste Lully: Actes du Colloque/Kongressbericht*, Herbert Schneider and Jerome de la Gorce, eds., (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 1990), 405-422; Margaret Seares, "Aspects of Performance Practice in the Recitative of Jean-Baptiste Lully," *Studies in Music* 8 (1974): 8-16; David Tunley, "Grimarest's *Traité du Récitatif*: Glimpses of Performance Practice in Lully's Operas," *Early Music* 15 (1987): 361-364; and R. Peter Wolf, "Metrical Relationships in French Recitative of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *Recherches sur la musique française classique*, 18 (1978): 29-49. The most frequent conclusion reached by modern scholars, supported by their examination of Etienne Loulié's *Elements or Principles of Music* (Albert Cohen, trans. and ed., New York: Brooklyn Institute of Medieval Music, 1965: 62), suggests that "beat equivalency" was the standard of practice.

³Rosow, "Lully's *Armide* at the Paris Opera: A Performance History (1686-1766)," (Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1981), 403. Her example in this instance concerns two successive airs in Act I, scene i of *Armide*: Sidonie's "Qu'importe qu'un captif" and Phenice's "Pourquoi voulez-vous songer." The first of these repeats only the second section of the binary form, while the second, "Pourquoi voulez-vous songer," repeats both sections of the form.

The Function of Dialogue Airs in the Tragédie en Musique

closure.⁴ The dramatic function of the air is less obvious, especially those airs located within a scene in which two or more characters are conversing. Consequently, it is important to ascertain what principles guided the composer when choosing a particular style, *récitatif* or air, at various points in a dialogue scene.

While musical contrast was an important motivating factor, the desire of the composer to emphasize certain aspects of the text also must be considered. Joyce Newman concludes that in Lully's operas:

The emphasis in a recitative-dialogue scene which is mostly through-composed is on conversation, the declamation of individual words, and rapidly changing action. In the case of recitative-dialogue with set songs, the emphasis is on the semistructured portions of the scene, each of which is individually organized.⁵

Newman presumes that action texts are set with unmeasured *récitatif* and that the measured air is used to create moments of rest or repose from that action. This distribution of material is not always as strict as Newman implies. Chains of airs may continue the action through a dialogue scene. But the dialogue air has another important function, hitherto unnoticed: it is often used to set texts in which one person attempts to persuade another of a particular point of view. Indeed, in this manner the use of the air may be linked to the arts of the orator, who could make use of different styles of discourse in order to sway the opinions of his or her audience.

This practice may be observed throughout the works of the founder of French opera, Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632-1687). With the production of *Cadmus et Hermione* in 1673, he was obliged to present to the public (and his King) a fully-formed musical and dramatic work. In retrospect, it is no wonder that the format of the *tragédie en musique* soon became formulaic, engendering much similarity between that first work, and his last, *Achille et Polixène* (1687).⁶ For the purposes of this study, the examples shall be more narrowly confined, drawn from *Atys* (1676) and *Roland* (1685). A further comparison, and evidence for the continuation of the persuasive use of the dialogue air, may be found in the work of Jean-Baptiste's eldest son, Louis de Lully. His *tragédie en musique, Orphée* (1690) uses many of the same techniques found in the works of his father. Thus, a comparison of dialogue airs from *Atys*,

⁴Rosow, "Lully's *Armide*," 403.

⁵Joyce Newman, *Jean-Baptiste Lully and his Tragédies Lyriques*, (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1979), 95.

⁶This work was completed after Lully's death by his secretary, Pascal Collasse.

Anita Hardeman

Roland, and *Orphée* should provide an overview of their use during Jean-Baptiste's lifetime and after.

The first dialogue scene in *Atys* is Act I, scene ii. Here a series of airs both propels the drama forward and demonstrates the use of the dialogue air in a persuasive manner. In this scene, Atys and his friend Idas are preparing to welcome the goddess Cybèle to Phrygia. After a joint acclamation of the goddess, Atys launches into a binary form air describing the beauties of sunrise ("Le Soleil peint nos champs"). While this passage might at first appear to be only a lyrical description of nature, such as can be found in *Amadis* (1684) or *Armide* (1686),⁷ Idas challenges this assumption when he sings this air:

Vous veillez lors que tout sommeille;	You are awake while all sleep;
Vous nous éveillez si matin,	You wake us up this morning,
Que vous serez croire à la fin	That you will believe eventually
Que c'est l'Amour qui vous éveille.	That it is Love who wakes you. ⁸

Atys pretends that it was solely nature's beauty which motivated him to view the sunrise, but Idas claims instead that it was love. Atys quickly denies these charges; in *récitatif* he sings "Non, tu dois mieux juger de party que je prens" ("No, you should better appreciate the departure which I take") (I,ii). He follows this with another air ("Mon coeur veut fuir toujours") in which he states "J'aime l'heureuse paix des coeurs indifferents" ("I like the happy peace of indifferent hearts") (I,ii). Knowing that the action of the opera turns on Atys's affections,⁹ we can speculate that Atys is attempting to persuade himself as well as Idas. But Idas replies with a maxim air:

Tôt ou tard l'Amour est vainqueur,	Sooner or later Love is victorious,
En vain les plus fiers s'en deffendent,	In vain the proudest defend themselves,
On ne peut refuser son coeur	One cannot refuse one's heart

⁷The airs in question are *Amadis*'s "Bois épais" (*Amadis*, II, iv) and Renaud's "Plus j'observe ces lieux" (*Armide*, II, iii).

⁸Philippe Quinault, *Atys*, I, ii; in *Recueil Général des Opéras*, (Paris: J.-B. Christophe Ballard, 1703-1746; reprint, Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1971), vol. 1, 109. All further references to the text of the *tragédies* discussed in this article will be to this volume by act and scene number in the text. All translations are by the author.

⁹Atys actually loves the nymph Sangaride, and she him, although neither is able to admit their love until Cybèle chooses Atys as her lover. The goddess gives Atys magical powers, which he uses to escape with Sangaride. As punishment, Cybèle enchants Atys to believe Sangaride is a horrible monster; he slays this monster, but, discovering that it is his love, kills himself. In mourning, Cybèle changes Atys into the pine tree.

The Function of Dialogue Airs in the *Tragédie en Musique*

A des beaux yeux qui le demandent. To the beautiful eyes which ask
for it. (I, ii)

Idas then commands Atys to pretend no longer, for his secret is known.

These four airs, while all in binary form, employ slightly different versions of that form, serving both musical and dramatic purposes. Musical variety and closure are achieved throughout this series of airs. Atys's first air ("Le Soleil peint nos champs") is in a binary form which repeats the second section of text and music exactly. Idas's first air ("Vous veillez"), which also repeats the second section, has new music for the repetition of text. As well, his air is accompanied by two unspecified instruments playing in the French violin clef, an addition to the continuo group which accompanied Atys. Atys's next air, "Mon coeur veut fuir toûjours," is in the same form as Idas's preceding air, but here the additional instruments have disappeared and only the continuo and Atys remain. Idas's final air ("Tôt ou tard") is in full binary form; both sections are repeated with exact duplication of text and music. The dramatic effect of this whole chain of airs is to give increased emphasis to Idas's statements. In the first pair of airs, his is the one which receives additional weight through the appearance of extra instruments, and his second air gains not only increased musical importance through its repetition, but also dramatic significance as Atys hears Idas's words twice over.

The final air in the scene is also sung by Idas: while it is present for persuasive purposes, it represents another function of the measured style, its conventional use in the solo scene.¹⁰ The air, "Amants qui vous plaingez," is Idas's recreation of a song which he heard Atys sing before the action of the opera began (see Example 1). Idas performs it at this point in order to convince Atys that his secret is indeed known, but since Atys believed himself alone when he first sang the air, it represents a monologue, transported into a dialogue context.

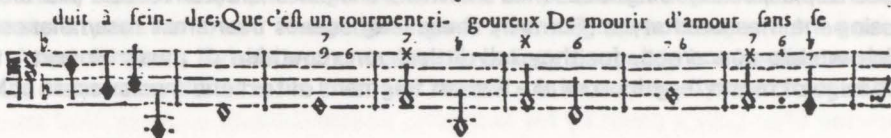
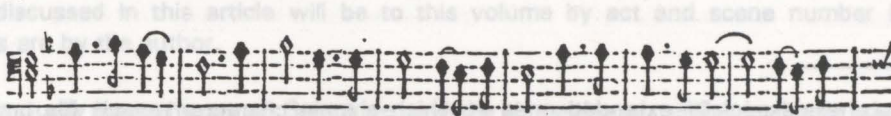
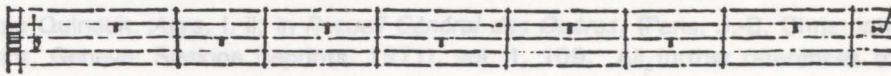
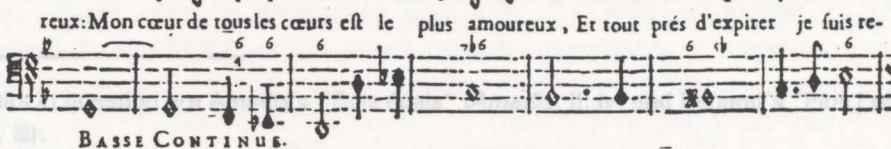
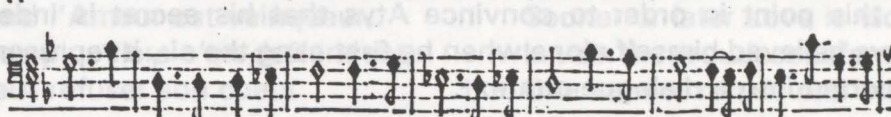
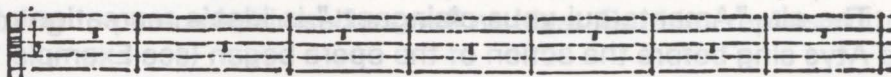
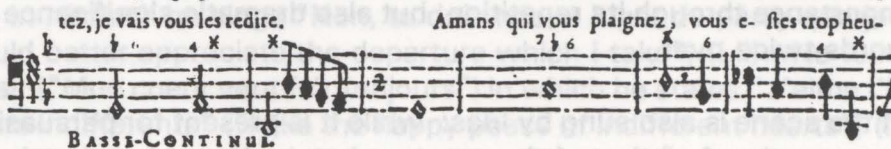
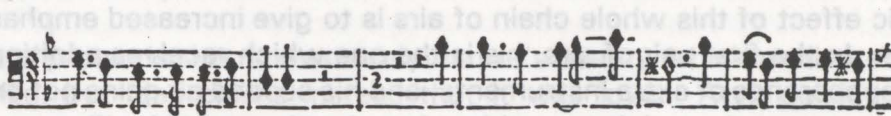
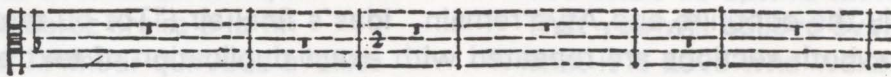
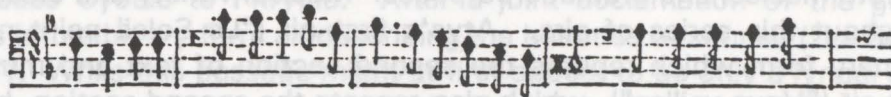
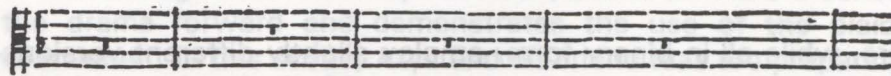
¹⁰Most monologue scenes, especially extended ones in which a main character reveals his or her emotional state, are set using the measured style. Formally these long scenes bear small resemblance to the shorter airs with which we are concerned, for they rely little upon repetition of music or text: the exception is the common device of motto repetition where a short fragment of text and music recurs at key points in the monologue.

Anita Hardeman

Example 1: Jean Baptiste Lully, *Atys* (Paris: Christophe Ballard, 1689), I, ii, pp. 51-52:
Idas, "Amants qui vous plaignez" (continued on next page)

ACTE PREMIER.


51



The Function of Dialogue Airs in the Tragédie en Musique

Example 1 continued.

ATYS; TRAGÉDIE.



Idas, il est trop plaindre! Amans qui vous plaignez, vous estes trop heureux.

BASSE-CONTINUÉ

vray, mon cœur n'est que trop tendre, L'Amour me fait sentir ses plus funestes coups. Qu'aucun autre que toy n'en puisse rien apprendre.

BASSE-CONTINUÉ

Empty musical staves are provided at the bottom of the page.

Lully sets this air with careful attention to the text. The first word, "amants (lovers)", is highlighted by the use of *syncope*, the suspension here on b-flat (see Ex. 1).¹¹ "Plaignez" ("complain") is set using the leap of a dissonant diminished fifth. Another large leap in the melodic line, a minor sixth, emphasizes "mon coeur" ("my heart") at the end of the fifth measure of the air. The level of harmonic dissonance increases dramatically as Idas sings "Que c'est un tourment rigoureux" ("It is such rigorous torment)" and continues with a series of suspensions in the next phrase, "De mourir d'amour sans se plaindre" ("To die of love without complaining"). The overall effect of "Amants qui vous plaignez" is enhanced even further by the melodic shape of the phrases, each of which ends on a pitch lower than the initial pitch of the phrase. This air, the last piece of evidence presented against Atys, is the most serious, and in *récitatif* he immediately admits to his friend that his heart "n'est que trop tendre" ("is only too tender"). Atys, who tried to persuade Idas that he was insensible to love, is compelled to admit that he was attempting to deceive his friend.

Another scene which features a confrontation between two friends occurs somewhat later in *Atys*. In Act III, scene vii, the goddess Cybèle, having chosen Atys as her lover, believes that he is already unfaithful to her. She presents her case in the first air of the scene, "L'ingrat Atys ne m'aime pas" (see Example 2). Cybèle argues that Atys's deferential manner is merely a mask for his indifference. The goddess, however, is very much involved in her feelings for Atys, and it is her heightened emotional state which Lully emphasizes in his setting of the text. She sings:

L'ingrat Atys ne m'aime pas;	The ungrateful Atys does not love me;
L'Amour veut de l'amour,	Love wants love,
tout autre prix l'offence;	any other prize offends it;
Et souvent le respect et la reconnoissance	And often respect and gratitude
Sont l'excuse des coeurs ingrats.	Are the result of
	ungrateful hearts. (III, vii)

¹¹ Sebastien de Brossard, in his 1703 *Dictionnaire de Musique*, defines the *syncope* as a syncopation within either the melody or the harmony; as Albion Gruber notes in his translation of the *Dictionnaire* "where the syncopated note is handled as a dissonance, the SYNCOPE more precisely corresponds to our suspension." See Sebastien de Brossard, *Dictionary of Music*, (Paris, 1703), Albion Gruber, trans. and ed., Henryville: Institute of Mediaeval Music, Ltd., 1982, 128-133. Brossard lists three types of *syncope*; this one corresponds to his third type, "which the ancients could not abide and which the moderns now use without scruple." (129) He comments that this type is used "for the application of the text." (129) Brossard also states that "syncopation is used in the melody or in the course of a song as a sad and languishing expression, sometimes to express sobs or sighs; sometimes, when the syncopated notes are lively and animated, they express joy." (130) It is probable that it is the sad and languishing effect which is meant to be expressed in this example.

The Function of Dialogue Airs in the Tragédie en Musique

Example 2: Jean-Baptiste Lully, *Atys*, III, vii, p. 207.

ACTE TROISIÈME.

207,

SCÈNE VII.

CYBELE, MELISSE.

CYBELE.

QU'Atys dans ses respects melle d'indifférence! L'ingrat A-

BASSE-CONTINUÉ.

tys ne m'aime pas; L'Amour veut de l'amour, tout autre prix l'offen- ce; Et souvent le ref-

BASSE-CONTINUÉ.

peft & la reconnoif- fance Sont l'excufe des cœurs ingrats. Et souvent le ref-

BASSE-CONTINUÉ.

peft & la reconnoif- fance Sont l'excufe des cœurs in- grats.

MELISSE.

Ce n'est

BASSE-CONTINUÉ.

The opening line of the air is enhanced by a descending chromatic tetrachord in the *basse-continüe*. This descent elides the first two phrases of text, as the harmonic progression of which it is a part does not reach a conclusion until the first beat of the fifth measure of the air, the last syllable of the second appearance of the word "l'amour." This cadence further disrupts the structure of the second line of text, as it occurs in the middle of this phrase. Cybèle's thoughts are in disarray; her text structure at this point does not match her musical structure. Lully makes further use of semitones on the first appearance of the text "et souvent le respect," as Cybèle's line moves chromatically through the minor third from f-sharp' to a'. In each case, the presence of notes outside the diatonic scale creates tonal tension which serves to reinforce the intensity of the goddess's emotions.¹²

This intensity is maintained through the repetition of text which concludes the air. By varying the music, the composer is able to change the manner in which he represents the text. The melodic motion of the first statement of "Et souvent le respect et la reconnaissance /Sont l'excuse des coeurs ingrats" is entirely conjunct; while the second statement begins with stepwise motion, the leap of a minor sixth from f-sharp' to d'' (Ex. 1, m. 17) is quite astonishing. From here, the melody continues conjunctly, ascending to its highest point, an f'', on the word "excuse". Immediately following, Lully inserts a rest into the vocal line (Ex. 1, m. 19) breaking the continuity of the phrase. The high register and the sudden stop in the vocal line draw the listener's attention to Cybèle's estimation of the value of Atys's actions. Thus, while Lully previously had emphasized the third line of the air, describing Atys's actions (respect and gratitude), in the repeat he focuses attention upon the last line, Cybèle's response to those actions (as the excuse of an ungrateful heart). At the same time, the intensity of the goddess's emotions is maintained without direct repetition of material.

After this outpouring, Cybèle's confidante, Mélisse, answers reassuringly in the measured style that:

Ce n'est pas un si grand crime	It is not such a great crime
De ne s'exprimer pas bien:	to express oneself poorly:
Un coeur que n'aima jamais rien	A heart which has never loved anything
Sçait peu comment l'amour s'exprime.	Hardly knows how to express
	love. (III, vii)

¹²Indeed, Brossard, in his definition of PATHETICO ("pathetic, touching, expressive, empassioned, capable of moving to pity, compassion, anger, and all the other emotions which agitate the heart of man") writes that "the chromatic genus, with its major and minor halfsteps, both descending and ascending, is very effective for this." Brossard, *Dictionnaire*, 77.

The Function of Dialogue Airs in the Tragédie en Musique

Cybèle responds in an unmeasured passage which describes her fears regarding Atys, whom she believes is in love with the nymph Sangaride. She ends her speech with foreboding: "Je pretends m'éclaircir, leur feinte sera vaine" ("I intend to explain myself, their pretense will be useless"). Mélisse soothes Cybèle's suspicions by pointing out, also in *récitatif*, that little can be hidden from the gods. In a second air she continues:

Deux coeurs à feindre préparez
Ont beau cacher leur chaîne;
On abuse avec peine
Les Dieux par l'Amour éclairez.

Two hearts preparing to dissemble
Had better hide their bonds;
People abuse with sorrow
Gods enlightened by Love. (III, vii)

The scene concludes with Cybèle asking Mélisse to order the Zephirs to help Atys however he may wish. Thus, in this confrontation it is Mélisse who has been successful, for she has calmed the angry Cybèle. Her airs have been the more persuasive, not because of any exceptional gestures on her part, but because of their evenness. Mélisse's first air ("Ce n'est pas") is in duple metre, and uses the steady quarter-note rhythm with a two-quarter-note upbeat common to the bourée. Her melody proceeds primarily by step; the largest leap within a phrase is a fourth. Similarly, the bass line for the air is also conjunct, creating, along with the steady quarter-note rhythm, a "walking bass" especially prominent in the first four measures. Her second air ("Deux coeurs à feindre préparez") is also in duple metre, has a predominantly conjunct melodic line, and has a steady rate of harmonic change of two chords per measure which is maintained throughout the air. The regularity and steadiness of these two airs provides quite a contrast to Cybèle's air. These qualities are able to return Cybèle from the passionate anger of "L'ingrat Atys" to a more reasonable state of mind.

Similar scenes that make use of the measured style to persuade appear throughout the *tragédies* of Jean-Baptiste Lully, often occurring between a main character and a confidant. A close parallel may be drawn between the second scene of Act I of *Atys* and the second scene of Act I in *Roland*. In this scene, Angélique, queen of Cathay, is counselled by her confidant Témire to accept the suit of Roland, that famous hero of chivalry. The queen is reluctant, having already fallen in love, quite unsuitably, with Médor, a servant. The scene begins with Témire extolling Roland's virtues; Angélique responds that she knows what he has done for her and what she owes him. Témire asks if the queen has forgotten the intensity of Roland's love and Angélique, in the first air of the scene, answers that she has not (see Example 3):

Anita Hardeman

Example 3: Jean-Baptiste Lully, *Roland*, (Paris: Christophe Ballard, 1684), I, ii, p. 7:
Angélique, "Je songe autant que je le puis".

TRAGÉDIE. 7

puis, A la rare valeur, à son amour extré- me: Mais malgré tous mes soins dans le

BASSE-CONTINUE.

trouble où je suis, Je crains, je crains de m'oublier moy mesme: Mais malgré to* mes soins dans le

BASSE-CONTINUE.

trouble où je suis, Je crains, je crains de m'oublier moy-mef- me. Je crains que ma fier-

BASSE-CONTINUE.

té ne succombe en ce jour.

BASSE-CONTINUE.

Aimez, aimez Roland à vostre tour, Il n'est point de Cli-

BASSE-CONTINUE.

The Function of Dialogue Airs in the Tragédie en Musique

Je songe, autant que je le puis, A sa rare valeur, à son amour extrême;	I dream, as often as I can, About his uncommon valour, about his extreme love;
Mais, malgré tous mes soins, dans le trouble où je suis,	But, in spite of all my cares, in the trouble I am in,
Je crains de m'oublier moy-même:	I fear to lose myself: (I,ii)

This air is in a binary form where only the second section is repeated yet it has quite a different effect from Cybèle's "L'ingrat Atys", which is also in the same form. In this case, the setting of the repeat of the second half of the text, especially the line "Je crains de m'oublier moy-même", is actually less emphatic than its initial appearance. The first time that Lully sets this line (Ex. 3, mm. 9 to 12), he tonicizes A minor, although the key of the air as a whole is G major. The shift in tonal centre is especially noticeable in the vocal line at m. 10, where the voice descends through a series of minor thirds from f' to g-sharp', the leading tone of A. As Angélique sings of her fear of losing herself, she is already harmonically lost.

With the repetition of this line (Ex. 3, mm. 16 to 19), Lully takes advantage of a textual-rhetorical device he had introduced in mm. 9 to 12 and matches it with a musical-rhetorical device. In both cases, the words "je crains" are repeated at the beginning of the phrase, a technique known as *epizeuxis*, "repetition of the same word or sound immediately."¹³ While no special attention is given to this figure on its first appearance, on its return Lully adds musical repetition to match the textual. In mm. 16 and 17, "je crains" is set to two descending minor thirds, first from d'' to b' and then a fourth higher, from g'' to e''. This device is known as *synonymia*, "the repetition of a melodic idea on different notes in the same part."¹⁴ The resulting effect is somewhat less emphatic than the loss of harmonic orientation associated with the first statement of "je crains", suggesting that Angélique has mastered the extremity of her emotion.

¹³Lee A. Sonnino, *A Handbook to Sixteenth Century Rhetoric*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), 194. Rhetoric, the art of speaking and writing persuasively, was part of the medieval trivium (which also included grammar and dialectics). It remained an important part of a learned person's education throughout the seventeenth century. The study of rhetoric incorporated not only the creation of an oration, or speech, but also how to declaim it effectively. Figures of speech such as *epizeuxis* were part of the ammunition of the rhetorician. Rhetoric's impact on music is not always clear; an introduction to the subject may be found in George F. Buelow, "Rhetoric and Music," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music*, (London: Macmillan, 1980), vol. 15, 793-802. A more recent study, concerned with rhetoric in France, is Lucinda Heck Sloan's *The Influence of Rhetoric on Jean-Philippe Rameau's Solo Vocal Canatas and Treatise of 1722*, (New York: Peter Lang, 1990).

¹⁴Buelow, 796.

She continues, in *récitatif*, "Je crains que ma fierté ne succombe en ce jour" ("I fear that my pride won't submit to it this day"). Témire responds to the queen's concerns with the air "Aimez Roland à votre tour" which concludes with the following two lines:

Du moins, la Fierté se console,	At least Pride consoles itself,
Quand la Gloire l'oblige à ceder	When Glory forces it to give way
à l'Amour.	to Love. (I,ii)

From this air, it appears that Angélique has convinced Témire that the queen's concerns are legitimate. Thus her attempt at persuasion has been the more effective, since Témire accepts Angélique's excuse of fear, but Angélique does not accept Roland. Unfortunately, Angélique's success is made pointless when she interrupts Témire, who continues to praise Roland, with the confession that it is Médor, and not Roland, to whom Angélique is attracted. It is this attraction which has kept the queen from accepting Roland's suit, and moreover, not her fear of losing herself which has kept her from choosing a husband, but, as she stated in *récitatif*, her pride, which will not yet allow her to choose a servant over a nobleman.

To this point, we have observed the use of the air in two works by Jean-Baptiste Lully. In these examples, his choice of the measured style coincides with one character's attempt to persuade another. In these differences of opinion, one character is often more persuasive than another; their greater ability to persuade can then be shown through formal or musical choices, such as were noted in Act I, scene ii of *Atys*. Lully also takes pains to convey the emotional state of his characters in these airs. Even the twenty-odd measures of Angélique's "Je songe autant que je le puis" contain several subtleties of text-setting. It seems unlikely that such a composer chose the measured style simply to avoid the overuse of *récitatif*: it is altogether more probable that there were indeed dramatic reasons behind his choices. The transmission of these ideals to the following generation of composers can be observed through an examination of one of their works.

Louis de Lully's *Orphée* (1690) was first performed only three years after the death of Jean-Baptiste Lully, Louis's father.¹⁵ In the intervening years, only three

¹⁵Louis (1664-1734) was the eldest son of J.-B. Lully and his wife Madeleine Lambert. Louis produced two other works at the Opéra, one, *Zéphire et Flore* (1688), in collaboration with his youngest brother, Jean-Louis (1667-1688), and the other, *Alcide* (1693), in collaboration with Marin Marais (1656-1728). All three of these works were poorly received: *Zéphire et Flore* was revived only once (1715) and while *Alcide* was revived in 1705, 1716, and 1744, it never received more than a few performances on each occasion. *Orphée* was a complete failure and was never revived. Consequently, comparing this work to

The Function of Dialogue Airs in the Tragédie en Musique

new *tragédies* had been performed at the Académie,¹⁶ and Baptiste's own operas continued to be revived. For Louis his father's model was overwhelmingly dominant; unlike his father, who had to develop a new genre, in *Orphée* Louis simply repeated the elements of the *tragédie en musique* as they were known to him.

The action of *Orphée* begins with a dialogue scene between Orasie, queen of Thrace, and her confidante, Ismène. Ismène's statement to Orasie that Orphée is not a proper hero is the first air of the opera (see Example 4):

D'Orphée Apollon est le Père;	Apollo is the father of Orphée;
Mais il languit dans le repos:	But he languishes in tranquility:
et les Arts qu'on voit	And the arts which can be seen to
luy plaire,	please him,
Ne sont pas ceux des Héros.	Are not those of heroes. (I,i)

In response, Orasie, also in the measured style, claims that Orphée has conquered her heart:

J'entends la Gloire qui murmure;	I hear the murmurs of Glory;
Mais, se choisit-on son vainqueur?	But, can one choose one's vanquisher?
Il charme toute la nature,	He charms all nature,
T'étonnes-tu qu'il ait charmé mon coeur?	Are you surprised he has charmed my heart? (I,i)

Each character attempts to persuade the other, Ismène in the belief that Orphée is an unsuitable choice for a princess's consort, and Orasie in the belief that she has no choice but to love Orphée. Yet, while the two characters have differing points of view, musically these two airs are not at all distinct—in fact, they are elided, for the last measure of Ismène's air contains three eighth-notes which serve as the upbeat to Orasie's air.

the successful works of Louis's father and Louis's competitors, such as Pascal Collasse, illuminates those aspects of the *tragédie en musique* which were considered important to the audience. Further information on Louis and *Orphée* may be found in Anita Hardeman, "Convention and Circumstance: Louis de Lully's *tragédie en musique, Orphée*," M.A. thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1993.

¹⁶These were: *Achille et Polixène*, begun by Jean-Baptiste Lully and finished by Pascal Collasse after the former's death, 1687; *Zéphire et Flore*, Louis and Jean-Louis Lully, 1688; and *Thétis et Pélée*, Collasse, 1689.

The Function of Dialogue Airs in the *Tragédie en Musique*

Example 4 continued.

ACTE PREMIER. 63

tu qu'il ait charmé mon cœur: Il charme toute la nature, Il charme toute la na-

ISMENE

ture, T'est-on: es-tu qu'il ait charmé mon cœur: è h: pourquoi donc souffrir un hymen si con-

Moreover, both airs make use of the tritone when describing Orphée's character. As Ismène states that Orphée "languit" ("languishes"), the bass line remains on the same note, d, for two measures, depicting aurally Orphée's lack of action. On the second syllable of "languit" Louis creates a tritone between the *basse-continüe* and the vocal line. This dissonance intensifies "languit" and so this word assumes a strong presence in the characterization of the absent Orphée. The harmonic tritone returns when Orasie describes Orphée as someone who charms all of nature. The phrase "Il charme toute la nature" is repeated as part of the B section of the air, and both times, in mm. 33 and 36, a tritone is created between the sustained note in the bass and the vocal line. Furthermore, while the first tritone (c-sharp to g') is preceded by conjunct motion, the second (g-sharp to d'') is reached by a leap in the bass from c' to the g-sharp. As in the earlier examples from *Atys* and *Roland*, this repetition of text is made stronger, not simply through the repetition of musical material, but through an intensification of the harmonic language. Orasie's characterization of Orphée assumes more importance through the repeat of this entire section of her air; strong musical momentum is built throughout Orasie's portion of the music, as her setting cadences repeatedly first on the dominant and then on the tonic, D major. The effect created is one of greater vehemence on the part of Orasie, and indeed Ismène gives up her opposition to Orphée, commenting in the following section of *récitatif* that surely he would not refuse a queen.

Exam In the unmeasured style, Orasie states that Ismène speaks of love without knowing it; she then changes to the measured style and cautions:

Les offres les plus éclatantes	The most brilliant offers
Sur un coeur prevenu sont	Have no power over a predisposed heart,
toûjours impuissantes,	
La raison vainement s'efforce de parler;	Reason tries vainly to speak;
Il brûle dans l'instant mesme	It [the heart] burns in the same instant
D'aller revoir ce qu'il aime,	That it sees again what it loves,
Et de luy tout immoler.	And everything is sacrificed to it. (I,i)

Ismène replies immediately in the measured style, taking up Orasie's imagery of the sacrifice, and remarking that, although one rarely sees people sacrificing fortune for love, they often give up love for fortune. She ends with a comment in *récitatif*, "C'est rarement qu'un Thrône est méprisé" ("It is rare that a throne is misjudged"). The effect of this change is one of a return to reality; instead of the abstract imagery of immolation and sacrifice, Ismène's comment applies directly to the situation at hand.

In contrast to the previous air exchange between Orasie and Ismène, these two airs are differentiated from one another through a change in metre from triple (Orasie) to 6/4 (Ismène). And whereas Orasie's earlier air began on the exact pitch on which Ismène's had ended, here there is a leap of a minor sixth between the last note of Orasie's air and the first note of Ismène's. The dramatic result of this setting is the increasing separation of the two characters. Their positions have become polarized. Orasie has taken herself into imagery of high emotional drama, while Ismène has remained practical in outlook. By the end of their discussion, neither character has convinced the other; Orasie is determined to love Orphée, at any cost, and Ismène, although not as vociferous, remains opposed.

An even more aggressive use of the measured style to persuade another character is found later in *Orphée*, in Act III, scene ii of the opera, when the title character is greeted upon his return from Hades by Orasie.¹⁷ She begins the scene with a measured, through-composed passage in triple metre ("Faut-il que l'amitié"; see Example 5) in which she enquires after the success of Orphée's endeavour, claiming she is motivated by friendship for Orphée. Having learned that her concern is false during his time in the Underworld, Orphée, in *récitatif*, accuses Orasie of murdering his wife Euridice. Orasie confesses to the crime in *récitatif*, but switches to the

¹⁷Nearly every *tragédie en musique* composed during the time from Lully to Rameau had five acts; there is only one exception, *Orphée*. This opera is in three acts, and so the second scene of Act III is actually very close to the end of the opera; this confrontation between Orasie and Orphée is therefore their last.

The Function of Dialogue Airs in the Tragédie en Musique

measured style over a descending tetrachord bass as she tries to convince Orphée that she was motivated by love (see also Example 5):

C'est pourtant cet amour	All the same it was love
qui me l'a fait commettre:	that made me do it:
Je croyois dans l'oubly le cacher	I thought in forgetting it to hide
pour jamais;	it forever;
Et le temps sembloit me promettre	And time appeared to promise me
D'adoucir enfin tes regrets.	To finally ease your sorrow.
Qu'un jour...	That one day... (III,ii)

The strongest impression in this air is generated by the extremely dissonant melodic leap in the vocal line on the word "cacher" ("to hide"). Prefaced by a semitonal ascent from c'' to d'', Orasie's vocal line suddenly drops from f'' to g-sharp', a minor seventh. This melodic leap is analagous to the leap in logic Orasie makes in assuming that ignoring her responsibility for Euridice's death would eliminate it.¹⁸ Orphée interrupts her and contradicts her, again in the unmeasured style, stating that Orasie's deeds were done only out of jealousy and despair. Confronted with Orphée's hatred, Orasie returns to the measured style to renounce her love for Orphée and threaten vengeance against him.

Orasie makes use of the measured style three times in this scene, and each time she takes a new emotional position and tries to convince Orphée of its validity. She begins by claiming friendship, then confesses her love for Orphée, and finishes with threats. As well, the extreme variety of these three settings are sharply indicative of the desperation and disorder which Orasie feels as Orphée rejects her. Meanwhile, Orphée, who no longer has any concern for Orasie, sings all his dialogue in the unmeasured style.

¹⁸In fact, in this setting of the myth, Orasie is directly responsible for Euridice's death, since Orasie crafted the spell which enchanted the serpent, provoking it to bite Orphée's beloved.

Example 5: Louis de Lully, *Orphée*, III, ii, pp. 197-98 (continued on next page).

SCENE II.
ORASIE, ORPHE'E.

First system of musical notation for Orasie and Bass-Continue. The vocal line (Orasie) is on a treble clef staff with a key signature of one flat and a 3/4 time signature. The lyrics are: "Et Auc- il que l'amitie qui pour vous m'inter-esse N'ose se reposer de vo-". The bass line (Basse-Continue) is on a bass clef staff. The system ends with a repeat sign.

Second system of musical notation for Orasie and Bass-Continue. The vocal line continues with the lyrics: "tre-heureux retour, Et ne montre que la tristesse De vous voir revenir sans ramener sa-". The bass line continues. The system ends with a repeat sign.

Third system of musical notation for Orasie and Bass-Continue. The vocal line continues with the lyrics: "jour L'objet seul de vostre tendresse. Disons mieux, les sombres Enfers aux mortels font inaccessible-". The bass line continues. The system ends with a repeat sign.

Fourth system of musical notation for Orphe'e and Bass-Continue. The vocal line (Orphe'e) is on a treble clef staff with a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are: "sibles. Reine, ces lieux terribles, N'en doutez pas rien tant de m'estre ou-". The bass line (Basse-Continue) is on a bass clef staff. The system ends with a repeat sign.

The Function of Dialogue Airs in the *Tragédie en Musique*

Example 5 continued.

198

ORPHEE

vers, Et c'est là que j'ay feu barbare, Que si mon Eurydice a finy son de- rin, Le coup he-

BASSE-CONTINUE

las : qui nous separe, Ne partot que de vostre main, Malgré vous je le voy, vostre trouble s'ex-

BASSE-CONTINUE

prime, Voulez-vous que je mette au jour... Hé bien je confesse mon erime; Mais toy, cru-

BASSE-CONTINUE

el, tu feins d'ignorer mon amour, C'est pourtant cet amour qui me l'a fait com-

BASSE-CONTINUE

mettre, Je croyois dans Pouiby le cacher pour jamais, Et le temps sembloit me promettre

BASSE-CONTINUE

Indeed, Orphée's lack of airs in this scene demonstrates quite effectively how little consideration he has left for Orasie. Orpheus was the greatest musician of classical antiquity; throughout the opera, Louis has built upon this role so that Orphée has more airs than any other character.¹⁹ That Orasie here has three airs while Orphée has none serves to emphasize his disregard of Orasie. He no longer feels the need to convince her of anything. The two characters are further contrasted by the unusual device of juxtaposition of different tonal areas for each character. All three of Orasie's statements are in A minor, and are given that key signature, while Orphée's replies are in A major, signified by three sharps. Neither character moves away from these key areas throughout their confrontation; no mediation is possible.

In these last two examples from *Orphée*, we have observed that Louis's principles of setting were adopted from his father, although some extension of Jean-Baptiste's techniques was made. By creating a musical link between the arguments of Orasie and Ismène in Act I, scene i, and then severing it later in the scene, Louis distinguished the two characters even as their opinions moved them farther apart from one another. Similarly, in Act III, scene ii, Louis illustrated the gap between Orphée and Orasie by having them sing in different keys. However, when Orasie wished to convince Orphée of her friendship and love, Louis turned to the dialogue air to accomplish these aims. He also retained Jean-Baptiste's use of form as a device to indicate the more persuasive character, as in Act I, scene i; and he continued the same careful attention to the emotional content of the text found in both *Atys* and *Roland*.

Through all three *tragédies*, the principle of persuasion has been a guiding factor behind the choice of various types of declamation. The stylistic boundaries of this music were quite fluid. While some settings might bear a resemblance to recitative, unlike the eighteenth-century operas for which the term recitative was created, the unmeasured style or *récitatif* has much more in common with the air than recitative does with aria. This underlying similarity is the reason for the ease with which composers of the *tragédie en musique* were able to move from one style to another within very short passages of music. It was, however, the use of more than one style of text declamation which allowed the composer to create contrast in his setting of the *livret*, using not only the contrast of air with *récitatif*, but also the more subtle distinctions of different forms in the measured style, placed in succession. In addition

¹⁹In the opera, Orphée has 16 airs, including two monologue scenes; Euridice is next with eight (including one monologue); and Orasie follows with seven (no monologues). Pluton, who appears only in Act II, has six airs; the priestess of Bacchus, onstage only in Act III, has five airs; and the two confidants Ismène and Eurimède (Orphée's confidant) have four and three airs respectively.

