CHOREOLOGICA

Who Said Elephants Can't Dance

Grete Wiesenthal

Social Dance in Georgian Bath

Quarrelling Brothers

La princesse de Darmstadt

Prague Conference 2016

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Who said elephants can't dance?

MARY COLLINS

In his memoir *Who Says Elephants Can't Dance?* Chief Executive Louis V. Gerstner Jr. described the historic 'turn around' he orchestrated at IBM in order to bring the calcified 'dinosaur' company back from near extinction to the forefront of the technology industry. He called it teaching 'the elephant to dance'.[1] When one looks at life in the UK during this first quarter of the 21st century, with its intrinsically technological social fabric – mobile phones, broadband and the social media network – it is hard to believe that the world of the renaissance courtier of the 18th century dancing master can have any relevance or serve any function. Nowadays there are so many demands upon our time and such a need to keep pace with ever-evolving technology skills, one wonders if there is any room or any purpose for the inclusion of dance history teaching in our current education system. Is dance history an 'elephant which cannot dance'?

The 21st century 'dancing master' is, in itself, a post-modernist concept. As dance history teachers and practitioners we should address the question of relevance before evaluating our aims in order to identify suitable contexts for our discipline. That done we must define clear strategies and a sound methodology in order to effect a meaningful transmission of what Sir John Davies terms 'the art all other arts do approve'.[2] After almost four decades of teaching, performing and researching Early Dance within a wide variety of education settings, I seek to demonstrate that dance history teaching not only has relevance in our modern-day world but is, as Thoinot Arbeau once said in his famous treatise on dance, *Orchesography*, still 'essential in a well-ordered society' [3] and a vital part of young people's experience.

The neo-platonic concept of order and harmony in the universe, intrinsic to dance from the 16th to the 19th centuries, can be used as a model to re-establish social frameworks largely missing in liberal western society today. There has been widespread concern in the media about the effect of social networking on personal relationships and the almost 'virtual' existence led by many young people who are growing up devoid of physical contact and shared kinesthetic

1 L J Gerstner, 'Who Says Elephants Can't Dance?' Harper Business, 2002.

2 Sir John Davies' *Orchestra*, Stanza 96.

3 T. Arbeau, *Orchesography*, 1568, Dover Publications Dover inc, 1967 edn.

experience. For this reason, a vocabulary of movements derived from the shared elements of traditional and historical dance models around the world, can offer a cultural and historical context as a crucial antidote to 'virtual living' That dance can have a therapeutic influence is well known. For empirical research on this topic I refer here to the work of the American Dance Therapy Association and the Association for Dance Movement Psychotherapy UK.

Despite the sophistication of modern living, science affirms that human beings are still fundamentally primitive organisms, a product of the centuries-old DNA encoding lying within each and every cell. Journalist and dance writer Joan Acocella postulates in her article, 'Imagining Dance' that we understand and recognise dance with a 'biochemical affinity' and that the truths of dance are messages which, as she puts it, 'our bones know how to read, if we let them'.[4] Deirdre Sklar, assistant professor of dance at the University of California, adds that 'all movement must be considered as an embodiment of cultural knowledge'.[5] This intrinsic visceral comprehension of dance within us makes it possible for us to respond to it no matter from what century or in what form or style it appears. One area where this can apply is in relation to the problem of boys' underachievement, compared to girls, in school. There has long been great concern about this in the UK. For several years I worked alongside Lucinda Neall, the author of a best-selling book called *Bringing the Best Out in Boys*, delivering teacher-training throughout the UK.[6] Neall's studies endorse Steve Biddulph's TNT theory, simply that boys are bundles of 'testosterone needing tuition' [7] and that they are therefore suited to kinaesthetic learning. Neall points to the irony that, whilst we know the science behind this, we still expect boys to spend 11 to 13 years in school sitting at a desk being quiet! She advocates greater opportunities for movement in learning to remedy the situation. Here is an opportunity to look to the past.

In the 16th century, Arbeau explains that 'dances are of two kinds...'. He elucidates:

'One is employed in war for the strength and defence of the State, the other is recreative[...] These contribute greatly to health'.[8] Dance, of any kind is therefore a particularly beneficial activity for boys of all ages. But setting dance in an historical context and empathising with the overtly physical pursuits of masculine role-models from the past is a useful catalyst for 'switching them on' to learning and provides boys with the much-needed kinaesthetic outlet

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4 Joan Acocella, 'Imagining Dance', *Moving History/Dance Cultures*, p.12.

5 Deirdre Sklar, 'Imagining Dance', *Moving History/Dance Cultures*, p.30.

6 Lucinda Neall, *Bringing the Best Out in Boys: Communication Strategies for Teachers*, Hawthorn Press, 2003.

7 Steve Biddulph, *Raising Boys*: 3rd edition, Read HowYouWant, 2013.

8 T. Arbeau, *Orchesography*, Dover inc, 1967, pp.17-18.

they lack. Perhaps the most effective tool, in almost every type of setting, and with every age group, is one of the oldest and most universal of dances, the *Farandole*, which never ceases to work its magic on everyone, young and old. Within minutes of taking hands and joining together in line, with the security of knowing that a leader will show the way combined with reassurance that the dance requires no other skills than walking, the participants are grinning with pleasure and surrendering themselves as individuals to the 'whole organism' of the group. The farandole offers a permission to connect safely, both physically and socially, with others, even strangers, within a group. It is neither competitive nor challenging so there is little chance of the humiliation of failure. It is no surprise that the farandole, in various forms, has survived throughout the centuries to the present day.

Figures 1 and 2: The Farandole

As a pedagogue, in choosing what to teach, I frequently employ the farandole as a vitally important 'gateway' dance. It takes moments to set up, there are virtually no limits to the numbers taking part and only the teacher, as leader, requires any prior knowledge. With its 'follow-the-leader' format, it can be used to get people dancing before they have the chance to realise that they are doing so. Once a person has taken part, the ice has been broken.

All teaching in UK schools is subject to the National Curriculum for England and Wales (Scotland's specifications have slight differences). The recent changes in the National Curriculum mean dance history specialists have to find new routes into schools and must be responsible for helping schools understand the advantages which experiencing dance from the past can offer. Like all teachers, visiting agencies need to keep abreast of the aims, objectives and areas of study laid down by this document, as it evolves, so they can determine where historical or early dance can fit appropriately into a school's curriculum and sell their wares to schools accordingly.

First, one has to identify the routes into the school curriculum. Thanks to the 1909 *Syllabus of Physical Training* dance teaching is often found within the PE Department: Patricia Sanderson of the University of Manchester covers this at length in her article 'Dance within the National Curriculum'.[9] The relationship between Dance and Physical Education continues despite the fact that dance teachers nowadays consider themselves to be part of arts education. In many schools, therefore, dance teaching is found within a performing arts department – in Scotland dance is categorised as an Expressive Art.

The current *National Curriculum for England and Wales* allows schools more flexibility in interpreting and delivering the new curriculum. It has been criticised for its 'rote learning without understanding' with core subjects 'English, maths and science leav[ing] little space *for other learning'*.[10] In History, for example, 'The Tudors' is an area of study which has disappeared. Consequently primary schools no longer feel the need to invite specialists in to cover 16th century dance and music. Fortunately, there are still 'examples' of study in the History curriculum at each Key Stage which lend themselves to the inclusion of dance history content: 'Pupils should…

KS1 (age 5-7 yrs)

…understand some of the ways in which we find out about the past and identify different ways in which it is represented.

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9 'Dance within the National Curriculum', *The European Physical Education Review* vol 2, no 1, 1998.

10 Guyver, Robert. Michael Gove's history wars 2010-2014: The rise, fall and transformation of a neoconservative dream [online]. Agora, Vol. 49, No. 4, Nov 2014: 4-11. Availability: <http://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=787010623172797;res=IELHSS>ISSN: 0044-6726. [cited 03 Nov 16]

KS2 (age 7-11 yrs)

…understand how our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources.

KS3 (age 11-14 yrs)

…understand how different types of historical sources are used rigorously to make historical claims and discern how and why contrasting arguments and interpretations of the past have been constructed.'

These aims provide a fine opportunity for the inclusion of a study of evidence from original sources which underpin the discovery of our knowledge about dances of the past. Extracts from dance treatises, samples of Feuillet notation, engraved plates or illustrations of dancers, letters and diaries (by Samuel Pepys, for example) all serve as the range of sources implied in the National Curriculum document. By KS3 pupils can learn to discern the differences in interpretation from the various versions of dances in the Inns of Court MSS, for example. The description of the 'Canary' in Arbeau's *Orchesography* in 1589 can be compared with Fabritio Caroso's 'Il Canario' choreography in his 1581 treatise *Il Ballarino* or in his 1600 publication *Nobilita di Dame* in order to appreciate the subjectivity of individual sources and the need to investigate a wide range of research material.[11]

If we look at examples of subject content in the National Curriculum document, KS1 includes

> 'A study of events beyond living memory that are significant nationally or globally, for example, the Great Fire of London'
>
> or
>
> '… the lives of significant individuals in the past who have contributed to national and international achievements, some should be used to compare aspects of life in different periods, for example, Elizabeth I and Queen Victoria.'

These study areas provide openings for practical demonstrations of renaissance and baroque dance and an opportunity to teach them, facilitating in turn the execution of another KS1 learning objective, to 'identify similarities and differences between ways of life in different periods'.

Addressing this particular aim is another significant way in which dance history can use the past to reflect the present. Comparing dances of the past with dance trends of today can provide enlightening perspectives on society and the role of the individual within it. Comparing *hip-hop* with a popular 16th century dance, *the galliard*, and Romanian gypsy dance immediately reveals

---

11 F Caroso, *Il Ballerino,* 1581, New York, Broude Bros, 1967 edn, and M F Caroso, *Nobilita di Dame,* 1600, Bologna, Forni, 1980 edn.

16th century – 21st century

3

4

5

6

Figure 3 Arbeau's Capriol in 'pieds croisé droit' position
http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/pics/arbeau/p084.gif
Figure 4 Hip-hop dancer in 'pieds croisé' position
www.nice-cool-pics.com
Figure 5 Cesare Negri 'Il Gratie d'Amore' 1602 – online facsimile
http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/negri/facsimile/0102.pdf
Figure 6 Hip-hop dancer leaping
www.harbourdance.com

how much they have in common. (see Figures 3-6)

These are all demonstrations of masculine display, exhibiting the importance of power and status and the need for males to compete and to excel easily in athletic feats of prowess. Perhaps one of the most breathtaking examples of

such posturing and *sprezzatura*[12] can be seen in the Romanian Gypsy dance, Verbunk from Transylvania.[13]

Figure 7 Romanian Gypsy Dancers: Romafest 2013
www.facebook: Romafest (Hong Kong Album 2013)

By understanding that these issues are not particular to their own community or their own time, young people can explore their sense of self, developing perspectives on gang culture, drug use, prejudice and bullying in the process – never mind getting lots of exercise!

At secondary level there is even more opportunity for teaching dance history. Examples of apposite areas for study at KS3 include…

Renaissance and Reformation in Europe

- the first colony in America
- the Restoration, 'Glorious Revolution' and power of Parliament
- the Act of Union of 1707, the Hanoverian succession and the Jacobite rebellions of 1715 and 1745
- society, economy and culture across the period: for example, work and leisure in town and country, religion and superstition in daily life, theatre, art, music and literature

Again, it is easy to see how the wealth of dances from the 17th and 18th centuries would be relevant here. The choice of dances to be studied will depend upon pupil numbers, ability, time available and, especially, the particular school's

12 *Sprezzatura* is the term defined in Baldassare Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier* to denote a studied nonchalance and perfect, artless conduct. The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as '*a studied carelessness*'.

13 A performance of this dance by ROMAFEST GYPSY ENSEMBLE, TG-MURES, ROMANIA-TRANSYLVANIA (2007 and 2009) may be viewed on www.romafest.com

requirements. When approaching schools in the UK it is therefore imperative to do the necessary market research and then advertise services appropriately. Dance history specialists may understand the incredible value of dance history but it is their business to explain its value to the countless schools out there who are already battling against a shortage of time and money. If literacy, numeracy and science now occupy the greatest proportion of the timetable, then visiting agencies must ensure that proposed visits hit targets within those areas so that head teachers can justify the expense. It should be emphasised here that core subjects can also be effectively delivered or supported through historical dance:

Supporting Core Subjects at KS1

Dances:
Farandole – from *Orchesography* by Thoinot Arbeau, 1589

Branles – selections from *Orchesography* by Thoinot Arbeau, 1589
(simple, double, gai, horses, etc)

Country dances – selections from *The English Dancing Master* by John Payford, 1651-1728 ('Sellinger's Round', 'Halfe Hanniken', 'The Slip' etc)

Learning aims:

Numeracy skills counting steps aloud, partners (2) & groups (3+)
spatial cognition – left, right, forward, back etc (Cornazano's *partire de terrano*[14])
measurement – length of steps, number of steps in a given distance/figure
geometry – floor patterns
memory – remembering sequences, techniques etc (Cornazano's *memoria*)

Literacy skills listening and speaking
appreciation of our literary heritage – primary sources
following instructions
extending vocabulary

Science skills using observations and ideas to suggest answers to questions
identifying and classifying

14 Antonio Cornazzano, *The Book on the Art of Dancing*, 1455, trans. Madeleine Inglehearne & Peggy Forsyth, Dance Books, London 1981 edn.

One KS2 lesson I devised, which was commended by OFSTED,[15] involved two dancers who enter in costume, a Spanish ambassador from King Philip's Court and a lady-in-waiting to the Queen.

Figure 8 Tudor dancers – Mary Collins and Alex Badell at Bournville Infant School.

Birmingham UK (permission granted)

They are meeting the local gentry, ahead of an impending visit of the Queen, to ensure they are suitably prepared with all the latest dances and etiquette. Issues such as the Queen's Marriage, national allegiance, Mary Queen of Scots, loyalty and religious tolerance are introduced and discussed during various activities. Alongside practical dance teaching and the practising of bows & curtseys, the session features a simple fencing exercise for the boys following which 'champions' are chosen. The class teacher or teaching assistant dons a costume and becomes an unruly maid whose fate is decided by the children at the end.

Music activities are also included. Renaissance and baroque dance teachers were competent musicians. Today both disciplines are studied separately which has resulted in not only a division of cultures but often a mutual lack of understanding. Years of working closely with musicians have contributed

15 OFSTED is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills and is a Government Department.

towards developing a much greater awareness and communication between the perspectives of both dancer and musician. Even so, both sides of the desk need to be vigilant and be sure they are indeed speaking the same language. For example, Bach's Courantes may be based upon a dance which is French but they may be composed in a musical style which is Italian!

One of the greatest examples of 'best practice' I have ever had the pleasure to experience was through *The Young National Trust Theatre*'s education work. To date, I maintain that this type of strategy offers one of the most effective contexts for the teaching, learning and sheer experiencing of dance forms from past eras it is possible to encounter.

During my time with the company, the process involved a group of actors and educationalists collaborating during a period or research and rehearsal to devise an experience or show for pupils visiting a National Trust property. The show was designed to impart a knowledge of the history of the specific National Trust property being visited and of the people who had lived there. National Curriculum areas of study were carefully integrated and the process was truly interactive so that the children not only gained a practical experience of the historical context of the property but were allowed to make contributions to the plot, based upon that experience. Both this approach and the school workshop session described earlier were designed to provide a rich stimulus for follow-up work with the teacher in the classroom.

A pre-visit session with the schools introduced the teachers to content and methodology so that they might prepare their students appropriately. On the day of the visit, children would arrive already split into groups, often wearing appropriate costume props (sometimes made of paper – ruffs, fans, etc). Each group proceeded to experience two hours of role play, living through a narrative which included opportunities to decide upon various plot outcomes and involved the undertaking of activities such as archery, broom making or carding wool, among others. One activity which the entire group experienced was dance. Both 'above-stairs' and 'below stairs' groups danced and watched the actors dancing before coming together to end the show in a dance for all. Here again, the farandole was an invaluable tool. Not only did it function in ways already described but it became a magical and simple tool for returning the children to the current century. As the two leading actors in the line drew near the door or gateway and made an arch, the rest of the line danced through it. The children were bidden farewell and they danced through the arch to find themselves back in the present time.

Once the children returned to school, they were able to discuss their experiences and the plot they had encountered from the perspective of the characters they had played. Dance became one of the follow-up activities they were able to pursue with their teachers and to showcase for the rest of their school.

Strategies like this were highly beneficial in terms of actively involving teachers and in providing them, through the process, with in-service dance training. Because the entire experience was so novel and such fun and because it was shared by teachers and pupils alike, within a stimulating new learning environment, we observed that both adults and children became more confident and willing to follow through with dance teaching when back in school.

T.S. Eliot in his essay, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' pointed out that each new work of art is based upon and connected to all the other works of art which came before.[16] Over the years I have lost count of the times where I have seen people of all ages light up and re-connect to the joy of living after engaging in the dances of past generations. The 'Bach in the Workplace' project I took part in with the Bach Steinitz Orchestra galvanised disenfranchised young office workers in a scene straight out of TV's *The Office* by Ricky Gervaise.[17] The line of bored-looking faces was soon transformed. As I witnessed the Office Cleaner and Managing Director *chassé* down a contredanse set together while young salesmen *bourée*d past with beaming smiles calling out 'Where can we do more of this?' I knew then that one certainly *can* teach elephants to dance – and indeed we must!

Figure 9 Small dancing elephants -
www.somersptacouncil.org

16 T.S. Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', *Selected Essays, 1917-1932*, Faber & Faber, 2009.

17 Ricky Gervaise & Stephen Merchant, *The Office*, BBC, 2002-2003.

Grete Wiesenthal's 'latent' Choreographies and Modernism's Contested Spaces: Modern Dance in Vienna, 1906-08

MATTHEW WERLEY

> I am all set for Iphigenia. Tomorrow's general rehearsal of *La muette [de Portici]* does not interest me at all. [...] And then, then together with my [wife] Mileva we will depart from this wretched Vienna and we will have each other and our dear beautiful open air [*freie Natur*], and not have to think for a long time about this nasty city with its common people.
>
> Alfred Roller, diary entry for 24 February 1907

'Grete Wiesenthal. Has Berlin forgotten about her?' The prolific dance critic Artur Michel (1883-1946) posed this question in the opening line of a review for the *Vossische Zeitung* on 31 October 1924. From a purely historical standpoint, Michel's question simply underscored the chronological fact that roughly a decade had passed since the Viennese dancer last made an appearance in the German capital. Much of her highly acclaimed solo career from 1910 to 1914 had unfolded in this city, but her last known public performance took place in January 1915 at the Wintergarten to coincide with Max Reinhardt's invitation to choreograph his celebrated production of *Rappelkopf* at the Deutsches Theater. During the war years and immediately thereafter, the Austrian largely avoided German stages, and had returned only once (to Dresden) since the November 1918 armistice. The German *Hauptstadt* may well have forgotten her, but perhaps she forgot them as well.

Yet there is something inherently rhetorical and open-ended about Michel's pointed question. Interpreted in a more critical light, it touches upon the collective suspicion that Wiesenthal (and more generally, her Austrian brand of prewar modern dance) had ceased to capture the attention of novelty-seeking Berlin audiences during the early years of the Weimar Republic. It was not so much that Wiesenthal's artistry was any less mesmerizing or technically proficient than it once had been. (To the contrary, Michel's review confirmed that the Austrian dancer still had 'it'.) Rather the tone of his question – situated as an opening gambit and interpreted against its historical backdrop – strongly implied that the former darling of the *Jung-Wien* circle had become eclipsed by a younger generation of homegrown (i.e. German) Expressionist dancers, particularly those whom Michel was fond of championing, namely Niddy Impekoven (1904-2002), Valeska Gert (1892-1978), Mary Wigman (1886-

1973), Gret Palucca (1902-1993) and Harald Kreutzberg (1902-1968).

The ambiguity between these two readings of his question is not irrelevant for her subsequent critical reception. Were Michel's question asked again today, it could, with slight adjustment, just as easily apply to Wiesenthal's critical reception among dance historians. Although the Austrian dancer received a passing mention in Claudia Jeschke's article on *Ausdruckstanz* for the 1998 *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, her name has largely been absent in dance histories covering the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This is especially so in English-language publications in the field of dance studies, where she remains entirely overlooked. Take for example Kate Elswit's recent *Watching Weimar Dance*, a strategically argued monograph that challenges and broadens the definition of *Ausdruckstanz*, but dismisses the Austrian side of this phenomenon, not to mention ignores, if not consigns, by implication, *Ausdruckstanz's* pre-First World War representatives into a heap of ill-defined antecedents. Indeed, there has been a tendency for dance historians (passim Hedwig Müller et al) to view modern dance before 1914 as merely transitional, rather than approach it on its own terms as particular to the late Habsburg and Kaiserreich periods.

Within the German-speaking world, Wiesenthal has recently enjoyed a modest re-appraisal, but research has only recently begun to scratch the surface. A small public exhibition at Vienna's Hermesvilla took place in 1985, followed over two decades later by the first academic conference in Salzburg (3-5 May 2008), which resulted in the publication of a conference proceedings. At the time, however, the eminent Austrian musicologist Jürg Stenzel (Salzburg) registered his astonishment at the dancer's extremely belated critical reception, as well as the glaring omission from cultural, dance and musical histories. While this preliminary scholarly assessment of a once highly influential figure of Viennese Modernism constitutes a major step forward in her rediscovery, it has hardly resulted in a full-scale rehabilitation. Even Wiesenthal's younger Austrian colleagues, such as Gertrud Bodenwieser (1890-1959), Margherita Wallmann (1901-1992) and Hanna Berger (1910-1962), to name three examples, have received far more sustained critical interest over the last half century.

This omission could be contested by arguing that Wiesenthal stands as a kind of 'keystone figure' between nineteenth-century classical ballet and early twentieth-century modern dance. This is certainly true on technical grounds alone: unlike her turn-of-the-century free-dance forebears such as Isadora Duncan (1877-1927), Loïe Fuller (1862-1928) and Ruth St. Denis (1879-1968) (strictly speaking, all dilettantes), Wiesenthal was the product of one of the foremost ballet companies of central Europe, a technical pedigree she embraced throughout her career as it traversed from ensemble act to solo career,

then sporadically through film, before eventually settling as a dance pedagogue, choreographer and director from 1919 until her death over five decades later in 1970. Extremely few of the canonical Weimar-era dancers whom historians now associate with the (somewhat contested) term *Ausdruckstanz*, by contrast, ever received such extensive, long-term formal training in classical ballet. When Wiesenthal chose to forge her own independent career path after May 1907, she could draw upon more than a decade's worth of formal dance training and professional stage experience. But it was not only her technical prowess, phenomenal bodily command and lean, Riefenstahl-like athletic physique; it was also her unusually open-minded approach toward music and choreography, coupled to a highly imaginative fusion of music and movement, that repeatedly elicited praise from an illustrious cultural elite including Peter Altenberg, Alfred Kerr, Gustav Klimt, Max Reinhardt, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Oskar Kokoschka, Rainer Maria Rilke and even Vaslav Nijinski. As early as 1908, even the young and as-of-yet unknown Mary Wigman became inspired after seeing her perform in Hannover, and sixteen years later, her somewhat anachronistic approach toward modern dance even disarmed Wigman's most significant supporter in the German press, Artur Michel, as cited above. The core of her artistic virtuosity stemmed, as we will see, just as much from her extensive training as from her ability to draw inspiration from the eclectic and at times paradoxical aesthetic-political circumstances of turn-of-the-century Vienna.

Yet to push these technical and historiographical points would be to miss the larger issue about Wiesenthal. What I would like to argue here is not so much that she represents a hybrid or transitional figure in the evolution of modern dance out of classical ballet. (Although arguably her position in dance history is in fact entirely unique, this type of thinking is methodologically dubious.) Instead, I would like to consider the ways in which she embodied a specific sensibility and historical moment within late Austro-Hungarian culture before the outbreak of the First World War, a moment when both ballet and 'modern dance' (or whatever label one chooses to retrospectively assign to free dance this period) began to push the friction points between gender politics and ideologies of creative inspiration – as was the case with the American Isadora Duncan and her European followers – as well as those between the socio-aesthetic conventions of traditional choreography and performance-venue space (issues especially germane to densely populated and culturally highly diverse urban spaces such as the Austro-Hungarian capital). To peel away the tensions within these layers of cultural meaning, I would like to examine Wiesenthal's final season with the Vienna Court Opera Ballet (*Wiener Hofopernballett*), a watershed period in her artistic development, albeit one that has been hitherto neglected within previous studies on Wiesenthal. Putting this period under the magnifying glass reveals the deep influence of Austro-German theatre reforms

circulating around Vienna when her artistic vision drew her to a point of internal crisis in the spring of 1907. Revisiting this period can also provide occasion to challenge dance historians' understanding of the emergence of free dance, or *Ausdruckstanz* in the decades between 1900 and the beginning of the Weimar Republic.

Early ballet career, 1895 to 1906

Margarethe 'Grete' Wiesenthal was born in Vienna on 9 December 1885. She was raised in a lower-middle class household and her upbringing was oriented to an unusual degree around artistic expression. Her father Franz Wiesenthal (1856-1938) was a professional painter and amateur musician, and her mother Rosa (née Ratkovsky) appears to have been a competent musician and devoted teacher to her seven children. As a young child Grete occasionally modeled in her father's art studio. While this certainly provided her with a refined appreciation for the visual arts (which she later developed through other avenues), it was her father's domineering tastes in music, especially Wagner and the Austro-German canon, that were to play a more decisive role in her artistic education. Wiesenthal became an accomplished though self-taught pianist, and her understanding of music stemmed directly from her own private study as well as through domestic music making with her younger siblings. Relatively little is known about her family members, but it is a testimony to their artistically rich upbringing that four of her six sisters – Elsa (b. 1887), Gertrud (b. 1890), Berta (b. 1892) and Marta (b. 1902) – all pursued careers in either dance or music.

In 1895, at the age of ten, she began her formal dance studies, and in late March 1901, after a long apprenticeship, the fifteen year-old Wiesenthal became formally registered as a member of the Viennese Court Opera Ballet (*Hofopernballett*). Her first stage appearance (and later most frequent repertoire role overall) was in Act II of *Die Fledermaus.* What she performed between 1901 and 1906, during the era of Josef Hassreiter (1845-1940) and Gustav Mahler (1860-1911), remains difficult to reconstruct from available sources. Overall, this period in Viennese theatrical history was characterised by constant artistic innovation, rigorous development of musical standards, and steady expansion of the core repertoire, despite Hassreiter's ballet serving a largely subservient role to Mahler's demanding opera productions. A closer look at the repertoire and roles she took on during her final season (1906-07) provides a contextual framework shedding light on what may ultimately have been the true catalyst for her decision to break away from the company by the end of the season.

Atelier Brüder Japonet, November 1906

In 1903 the Ballettmeister Josef Hassreiter assigned Wiesenthal her first solo part: 'Die Jugend' (the youth) in the second scene ('Im Apollosaale') of Louis Frappart, Franz Gaul and Josef Bayer's *Wiener Walzer* (1885), a staple of the ballet repertoire since the late nineteenth century. Over the following seasons Hassreiter continued to assign her the occasional solo part (e.g. *Guillaume Tell* on 1 June 1905), but he withheld giving her a solo in a world premiere for another three years, which took place at the start of her sixth and final full season with the company.

At the start of every new season Hassreiter was typically expected to deliver one new ballet of his own making. For the 1906/7 season it was the comic farce *Atelier Brüder Japonet* (The Japonet Brother's Studio), a one-act pantomime-divertissement with music composed by Franz Skofitz and conducted by the prolific ballet composer Josef Bayer (1852-1913). The plot is premised on a rich uncle (Monsieur Marechal) who bequeaths his inheritance to his boisterous nephew (Alex) and his four younger brothers (a painter, piano virtuoso, student and singer). The brothers then use the money to establish an art studio in which various figurine models come to life and dance an eclectic mix of waltzes, polkas, gavottes, as well as Mexican and African dances. There are unfortunately no surviving printed editions, manuscripts, libretti, photographs or even costumes, making it impossible to reconstruct what music, scenery or choreography accompanied her performance. Although dismissive of the highly contrived story and somewhat tasteless smattering of exotic dances, the Viennese critics repeatedly singled out Wiesenthal for her convincing interpretation of the minor role of 'Eine Kongonegerin' (A Negro woman from the Congo).

Example 1: *Atelier Brüder Japonet* (1906), dramatis personae

Alex Japonet, Maler
Francois Japonet, Maler
Richard Japonet, Klavier-virtuose
Eduard Japonet, Student
Jacques Japonet, Sänger
Monsieur Marechal, dessen Onkel
Madame Groseceur, dessen Freundin
Ein Herr
Eine Dame
Eine Aufwärterin
Ein Groom
Der Theaterdiener
Musette, erste Tänzerin der großen Oper / Die erste Tänzerin
Daniella

Die drei Grazien
Zwei Südamerikanerinnen
Ein Gaucho
Zwei Nigger
Eine Kongonegerin
Ritter Kuno
Ritter Dagobert
Vier Tänzerinnen

The critics, however, just as routinely drew attention to Louise Wopalenski's (alternatively: Luise Wopalensky) performance in the role of Daniella, the only notable female character listed with a first name among the dramatis personae (see **Ex. 1**).[1] It is not clear what dramatic function this character served (whether formal or characteristic), but the critic for the *Deutsches Volksblatt*, Hans Puchstein, praised Wopalenski's interpretation as distinctly modern. He specifically lauded her portrayal of recognisable free-dance elements on the ballet stage: 'Best of all was Fräulein Wopalenski in her barefoot dance à la Miss [Isadora] Duncan. In her movements there lay a genuine classical beauty paired with a Viennese tenderness and typical Viennese humor.'[2] Surviving portraiture of Wopalenski clearly shows an elegant dark-haired woman with a physique closely resembling Duncan's (c.f. **Ex. 2-3**).[3] On stage, the physical similarities may well have been further accentuated by the costumes designed by the renowned choreographer and crossover dancer Carl Godlewski (1862-

1 Daniella is the only character given a first name. The advertisements in both the 11 December 1906 *Neue Freie Presse* (p. 19) and 4 April 1907 *Wiener Zeitung* (p. 22) – as well as the remaining performances listed in these newspapers thereafter – list Daniella as a 'Modelle'. This suggests either a slight reconception of her role, or an editorial error. Other newspaper listings do not indicate her role as a Modelle. According to official history of the institution, Louise Wopalenski (dates unknown) was formally engaged in the *Wiener Hofopernballettkorps* from 1 January 1897 to 30 April 1901. See, *50 Jahre Wiener Operntheater*, Vienna, 1919, p. 48. On her involvement with Vienna after 1906, as well as the author's views on barefoot dancers in suburban theatres, see n.a. 'Louise Wopalensky: Solotänzerin am k. k. Hof-Operntheater in Wien', *Der Humorist*, 11 February 1907, p. 2. She interpreted the role of Columbine in the first fully staged world premiere of Erich Wolfgang Korngold's *Der Schneemann* on 4 October 1910 under Felix Weingartner.

2 'Allerliebst war auch Fräulein Wopalenski in einem Barfußtanze à la Miß Duncan. Es lag in ihren Bewegungen echt klassische Schönheit, gepaart mit wienerischer Lieblichkeit und Wiener ursprünglichem Humor.' Hans Puchstein, *Deutsches Volksblatt*, Nr. 6434, 29 November 1906, p. 2. Not all critics appreciated the placement of her role in the ballet; see *Wiener Salonblatt* (8 December 1906), p. 15: 'Sonst tanzten ausgezeichnet wie gewöhnlich die Frl. Wopalenski (als Daniella einen Barfußtanz, der gar nicht schön ersonnen ist)...'.

3 See especially the striking portrait in *Sport and Salon*, 7 February 1903, p. 25.

1949), who likely clothed her Daniella/Duncan character with a flowing white-robed costume to draw attention to the neo-classical setting and barefoot choreography.

Example 2: Luise Wopalensky (photo: Ludwig Gutmann), date unknown

Source: Kunst Historisches Museum Wien, FS_PM213992alt, used with permission

For Viennese audiences, Isadora Duncan was the first to introduce a new vision of theatricality for female dancers during a string of appearances nearly four years prior to this premiere. The American's sensational debut in February 1902 at the Hotel Bristol (and later at the Secession House and Carl-Theater) had deeply impressed the Kaiser, but especially Hermann Bahr (1863-1934), who published a celebrated review in the *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*.[4] Likewise,

4 'Isadora Duncan', *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, 15 February 1902, pp. 1-2. The first substantial announcement was 'Miss Isadora Duncan', (no author) in the *Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt*, 13 February 1902, p. 4.

most male critics in Vienna were fundamentally attracted (both erotically and artistically) to Duncan's performances, and collective memories still remained vivid for Viennese audiences years after. Despite the attention lavished on her, it is still unclear to what extent Duncan actually influenced or challenged ballet style and institutionalised choreography in the Austrian capital before the First World War.[5]

Example 3: Isadora Duncan, Vienna 1903

Source: ***Sport & Salon***, 3 April 1903, p. 19

In the case of Wiesenthal, there is no evidence to suggest that either she or her sisters had attended any of the Viennese performances by Duncan, Fuller or St.

5 In a new production of *Alt-Heidelberger Frühlingsfest* (1901), given on 25 April 1902, the actor Franz Tewele (1842-1914), from the Deutsches Volkstheater group, may have been one of the first. According to one critic: 'Tewele wird die neue Tanzkunst der Miss Isadora *Duncan* nach seiner Auffassung darstellen'; in *Sport & Salon*, 19 April 1902, p. 25. Also see the anonymous author of 'Louise Wopalensky: Solotänzerin am k. k. Hof-Operntheater in Wien', *Der Humorist*, 11 February 1907, p. 2, who noted that knock-off imitations of Duncan's trademark bare-legged dances were common on the stages of lower-class entertainment venues in the Viennese suburbs.

Denis between 1902 and 1906.[6] Whether there was any verifiable connection linking Austria's most influential proponent of prewar modern dance with her American forebears has hitherto remained speculative at best.[7] The presence of Duncan-esque parody elements in *Atelier Brüder Japonet* provides not only a valuable missing link between Duncan and Wiesenthal, but also the first known example where a member of the Viennese Royal Opera Ballet (*Hofopernballett*) imitated her trademark barefoot-style onstage, and seemingly in a positive, artistically constructive sense. Of course some critics regarded the genre of *Atelier Brüder Japonet* more as a characteristic *varieté* piece than a formal ballet, through over the next decade Hassreiter, along with the composer Josef Klein (1870-1933), would occasionally devise ballet characters with barefoot dances and flowing white robes as a nod to Duncan.[8] While a handful of additional examples might also be found during the prewar years, this work initially suggests that traditional ballet and modern dance in Vienna were not positioned in a fundamentally antagonistic relationship around the time Wiesenthal left the stage.

Wiesenthal thus received a distinctly Viennese image of Duncan, one filtered through the artistic imagination of Hassreiter and Skofitz, and repeatedly embodied on stage by the feet, hands and movements of her colleague Wolpenski. The impact of all this on Wiesenthal's embryonic conception of modern dance is difficult to estimate in artistic detail, but the timing is certainly highly significant. More concretely and conclusively, however, is that Wiesenthal interpreted the role of 'Eine Kongonegerin' in *Atellier Brüder Japonet* a total of 15 times between 28 November 1906 and 2 May 1907 (her penultimate performance at Hassreiter's ballet altogether), thereby giving her consistent exposure to Wolpenski's celebrated role.[9] To put this in quantitative terms, she not only performed it more frequently than any other work in her final

6 Wiesenthal may have been exposed to orientalism in Vienna around these years, including Sada Yakko, who made a significant impression on Kessler and Hofmannsthal. Contemporaries at the ballet such as Hermine Wasserbauer and Maria Helene Jamrich (1885-1941) were attracted to Indian dances around 1907 through their involvement in Roller's ballet for Delibes's *Rübezahl* (1906), though this was somewhat 'varitéartig' in conception. See *Wiener Salonblatt,* 8 June 1907, p. 19. Elements from Hassreiter's *Chopin's Tänze* (1905) and Rudolf Braun's *Marionettentreue* (1906) certainly informed Wiesenthal's first private performance in Rudolf Huber's studio in 1906, at which Alfred Roller was present.

7 See Barbara Lesák, 'Neuer Tanz sucht neuen Raum', in Brandstetter (ed.) *Mundart der Wiener Moderne,* München, 2009, pp. 103-113.

8 Elsa von Strahlendorf, who interpreted the 'Erste Tänzerin' in *Atelier Brüder Japonet*, was later cast in their ballet *Faun und Nymphe* (1917). See the photo of her in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Bildarchiv, Signatur Nr. Pf 32.470:C (4).

9 These dates were: 11, 21, 27 December 1906; 11, 22 January 1907; 10, 17, 22 February; 6, 13 March; 4, 22, 28 April, 2 May.

season, but her performances also outnumbered all of her other formal ballet engagements combined that year.[10] This comic ballet was hardly an isolated performance, and it is therefore all the more curious why Wiesenthal omitted any mention of this work in her later memoirs.

Only a few months later, Wiesenthal received additional exposure to modern dance on the operatic stage, this time transmitted more sharply through theatre reforms of Alfred Roller (1864-1935), a towering and visionary figure in this movement who may have helped inspire Wiesenthal's final departure.

Alfred Roller's *Iphigènie in Aulis*, March 1907

Roller's landmark production of Christoph Willibald Gluck's *Iphigènie in Aulis* (1774) featured set designs and direction characterised by intentional historicising dance elements similar to Duncan's neo-classical dances[11] – indeed, in a manner even more explicit and on a larger scale than in Hassreiter's ballet. Gluck's reform opera had been neglected in Vienna since 1894, and the decision to revive this austere classical-themed subject afforded Roller opportunity to culminate a recent string of experimental designs for the stage that he started with *Tristan und Isolde* in 1903, but had reached a milestone over the course of his Mozart/Da Ponte productions for the 1905-06 season, especially his staging of *Don Giovanni*.[12] Roller's theatrical conception, in brief, re-incorporated the proscenium frame at multiple layers within the on-stage set designs, an effect that created the illusion of spatial depth as well as gave audiences the feeling that they were partially incorporated within the same spatial environment as the performers on stage. The predominantly flat geometrical sets, with minimal decorative elaboration, radically de-cluttered the stage, and even seemed to collapse the space-time equation in ways that reflected hypothetical ideas formulated by Peter Behrens (1868-1940) and Edward Gordon Craig (1872-1966) (incidentally Duncan's lover), who only a few years earlier had developed ground-breaking theatre-reform proposals for the 1901 Darmstädter Künstlerkolonie.[13] For this performance Mahler had chosen Richard Wagner's

10 i.e. operas by J. Strauss, Rossini, Auber and Gluck.

11 On the recreation of antique scenes in modern dance, see for example Carrie J. Preston, *Modernism's Mythic Pose: Gender, Genre, Solo Performance,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011; and especially Simon Goldhill, *Who Needs Greek? Contests in the Cultural History of Hellenism*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp. 108-177, esp. pp. 115-116 and pp. 148-149.

12 See Evan Bonds, *Alfred Roller's Production of Mozart's* Don Giovanni*: A Break in the Scenic Traditions of the Vienna Court Opera*, Ph.D. diss. New York University, 1993.

13 To date, there has been no widespread investigation of the theatre reforms in Darmstadt aside from Institut Mathildenhöhe (eds) *Künstlerkolonie Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt 1899-1914*, 2nd ed., Darmstadt: Stadt Darmstadt, 2007. An excellent discussion of Behrens and Darmstadt can be found in Tamara Barzanty's *Harry Graf*

1847 Dresden arrangement of Gluck's opera, and he later remarked that the production was 'the best [thing] that Roller and I have yet pulled off.'[14] The production received its premiere on 18 March 1907, though it was to be Roller's last new production for both Mahler and Wiesenthal before they each left the institution later in the season.[15]

In addition to the innovative visual aspects of the stage set, Mahler and Roller decisively chose a cast of first-rank singers known for their versatile acting abilities and occasional crossovers into light ballet/mimic roles. This included Marie Gutheil-Schoder (1874-1935) in the titular role, Anna Bahr-Mildenburg (1872-1947) as Klytemnestra, and the legendary Leopold Demuth (1861-1910) as Agamemnon.[16] For Act II, Roller placed a white-cloth screen in front of the port of Aulis (**Ex. 4**). This stage prop, which became central to the dramatic tension of the entire opera, formed a neutral backdrop against which the chorus prepared for Iphigenie's marriage to Achilles. From the audience's perspective, the dancers' profiles cast silhouetted images onto the curtain, thereby creating a 'mosaic' visual effect (essentially a moving tableau), which critics hailed as one of the most compelling aspect of the production.[17] 'The choruses', according to Richard Specht's Mahler biography of 1913,

> were ordered in a gentle Reigen that suddenly became living Etruscan pottery paintings; the scenes of the main characters moved inwardly throughout, but as a whole, portrayed a relief effect in the subdued calm of antique sculptures – all of which, however, was not in the slightest bit postured, forced or rehearsed. The highest expression of the white Parian

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Kessler und das Theater: Autor, Mäzen, Initiator: 1900-1933, Köln: Böhlau, 2002, pp. 48-53.

14 '[D]as Beste, was Roller und ich bisher geleistet haben.' Quoted in Franz Willnauer, (ed.) *Gustav Mahler: Verehrter Herr College!: Briefe an Komponisten, Dirigenten, Intendanten*, Vienna, Paul Zsolnay, 2010, p. 323.

15 On Roller and Mahler (with brief mention of Grete Wiesenthal in this production), see Vana Griesenegger-Georgila, 'Eine Reform Bühne für Mahler', in Reinhold Kubik and Thomas Trabitsch (eds) *Gustav Mahler in Wien und München: Komponist, Operndirektor, Dirigent*, Vienna, Christian Brandstaetter, 2011, pp. 134-148, esp. p. 146.

16 See for example Anna Bahr-Mildenburg, 'Darstellung aus der Musik', in Rudolf Roessler (ed.) *Thespis: Das Theaterbuch 1930*, Berlin, Bühnenvolksbundverlag, 1930, pp. 114-120. Also see Karin Martensen, *Die Frau führt Regie. Anna Bahr-Mildenburg als Regisseurin des Ring des Nibelungen*: *Mit einem Anhang: Regiebücher zu Walküre, Siegfried und Götterdämmerung,* Munich: Allitera-Verlag, 2013.

17 'zusammengesetztes Mosaik', Richard Wallaschek, *Die Zeit*, 20 March 1907, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 146. Also see Paul Stefan, *Die Wiener Oper: Ihre Geschichte von den Anfängen bis in die neueste Zeit*, Vienna, Augartenverlag Stephan Szabo, 1932, p. 73, who quoted Goethe to Schiller in his description: 'die Iphigenie in Aulis von Gluck, "völlig wie antike Basreliefen" vorüberzeihend, von aller inszenierten Wirklichkeit gelöst und gegen einen Vorhang gespielt, der sich nur am Schluß teilt und den Hafen der Abreise freigibt'.

> marble was the shimmering music, in which Mahler avoided all chromatic shadings and in which he transported its French Corneille-character into an atemporal heroism.[18]

The Austrian poet Max Mell (1882-1971) elaborated even further on the historicist dance elements of this production in his 1922 monograph on Roller, noting that the production was a 'revolutionary development of conventional decorative style', particularly as it 'brought a conceptually integrated simplicity to the scene'. Above all, Mell (who collaborated with Wiesenthal in 1907 and 1908) credited the scene's success to the dancers who had eagerly realised the artist's vision of Greek antiquity: '[T]hese were the two sisters Grete and Elsa Wiesenthal, who then as leading pair initiated these delightful dances.'[19] It seems unlikely that the Wiesenthal sisters danced barefoot on this occasion, but their costumes, designed by Roller, likely resembled those worn by Duncan and St. Denis.[20] Wiesenthal performed in this production five times between

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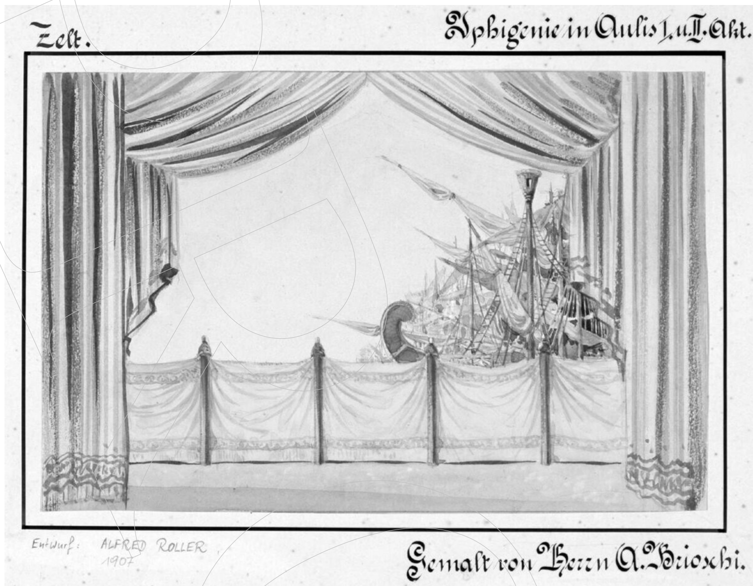
18 '[D]ie Chöre waren zum sanften Reigen geordnet, gleich lebendig gewordenen etruskischen Vasenmalereien; die Szenen der Hauptgestalten durchaus innerlich bewegt, aber in der gebändigten Ruhe antiker Plastiken, ganz auf Reliefwirkung gestellt – all das aber nicht im geringsten posenhaft, gezwungen oder einstudiert; der edelste Ausdruck der wie in weißem, parischem Marmor schimmernden Musik, in der Mahler auf alle Polychromie verzichtete und die aus ihrem französierenden Corneille-Charakter ins unzeitlich Heroische entrückt wurde.' Richard Specht, *Gustav Mahler*, Berlin, Schuster & Loeffler, 1913, p. 143.

19 'Doch bedeutete die 'Iphigenie' von Gluck eine weitere Revolutionierung des hergebrachten Ausstattungsstils, indem sie mit glatten hellen Vorhängen eine mit dem [31] Begriff der Oper sonst nicht verbundene Einfachheit auf die Szene brachte. Der Reiz antiker Vasenbilder, der von dieser Behandlung der Bühne ausgehen sollte, machte es aber auch notwendig, den Balletteil der Oper auf eine vom Hergebrachten abweichende Art zu stimmen, und Roller, der oft und oft Fragen der Regie zu lösen hatte, zägerte nicht, auch hier mit Neuerungen einzugreifen. Dabei stellte sich heraus, daß zum Beispiel einfache Schritte, bloßes Gehen auf den Zéhen, dem Ballettkorps fremd waren. Doch gab es darin auch Künstlerrinnen, deren eigenes künstlerisches Wollen den Rollerschen Intentionen entgegenkam: es waren die beiden Schwestern Grete und Elsa Wiesenthal, welche dann auch als führendes Paar in diesen Tänzen Entzücken erregten. Grete Wiesenthal war ja von Roller schon früher bemerkt und in einer neuen Vorstellung der 'Stummen von Portici' als Fenella herausgestellt worden: sie [32] hat die Begegnung mit dem finster scheinenden, ob seines kurzangebundenen Wesens unbequemen und gefürchteten Ausstattungschef in ihrem Buch 'Der Aufstieg' reizend beschreiben'. Max Mell, *Alfred Roller,* Vienna, WILA, 1922, pp. 31-33.

20 A photograph taken by Moriz Nähr of Grete Wiesenthal in a body-length classical-style robe, dated to 1907, may in fact be Roller's Gluck costume instead of the undocumented performance during this year, though falsely attributed to Beethoven's *Andante con moto* from his Fourth Piano Concerto, op. 58/II (though the Orpheus-myth provides a fitting echo for both works). This photo is reproduced on the title page of *Die neue Körpersprache*, Vienna, 1986, with commentary on p. 60.

March and early May, and it constituted her final performance as member of the ballet.[21]



Example 4: Alfred Roller's 1907 set designs for *Iphigenie* Act II (illustration by Anton Brioschi)

Source: Kunst Historisches Museum Wien, HZ_HOpU5167 (Archiv der Staatsoper), used with permission

Wiesenthal's 'Durchbruch'?

These two back-to-back examples, the November 1906 Hassreiter-Skofitz opera and the March 1907 Roller-Gluck productions, raise a large question mark over the conventional explanation that Wiesenthal left the court ballet because of aesthetic differences with the senior artistic management.[22] This was undoubtedly a contributing factor in her decision, though how much her views were intertwined with those of her younger sister Elsa's – about whom little is known – remains speculation.[23] But such a one-dimensional, face-value

21 Dates were: 18 & 23rd March, 13 & 18 April, and 5 May 1907. Franz Schalk stepped in as conductor for Mahler on the 23 March performance.

22 See *Der Aufstieg*, Berlin, 1919, p. 68-69: '[es] war eine Zeit des Niederganges de Balletts, überhaupt der ganzen Tanzkunst. […] Die Ballettkunst war erstarrt zu schablonenhaftem Kitsch.' *Der Aufstieg*, Berlin, 1919, p. 68; and the explanation in Andrea Amort's 'Free Dance in Interwar Vienna', in Holmes and Silverman (eds), *Interwar Vienna*, New York, 2009, p. 121.

23 Elsa entered the ballet in 1 October 1902, nearly a year and a half after her

account of the tensions between ballet and modern dance – an historical fiction generated during the Weimar-Republic era as a means to relegate its forebears to a prehistory or 'Vorgänger' status – neither gives credit to the complexity of aesthetic attitudes circulating in Vienna during the pre-war years, nor stacks up against contemporary primary sources, which slightly undermine, if not gently discredit even Wiesenthal's long-assumed (postwar) explanation for leaving the institution.

The reasons given in her 1919 autobiography, published the year she began her career as a dance educator, were entirely personal, artistic and self-serving. Wiesenthal recounted that the final straw was not being selected for the Viennese premiere of *Samson and Dalila* on 11 May 1907 under Bruno Walter (who, like Mahler, clearly favoured her talent). As she recounted:

> So I also danced this time with complete joy, despite that I already knew that I would never do this dance on the evening. At the end of the dance I threw myself to the ground in highest ecstasy. But it appeared that not everyone alongside had danced with such commitment. Then, as Bruno Walter left the rehearsal room, the Ballettmeister commented angrily about the lack of dedication and interest among certain dance members, in which he implied that some of them could be considered as a good example. With that he glanced toward me. That disturbed me especially, almost shocked me. [...] Then the rehearsal carried on quietly and I saw this dance before me as a whole, as I had previously danced it. I saw the dancer who now took my place, and the trepidation gave way to a great feeling of joy and knowledge of one's own strength.[24]

Wiesenthal constructed this account to portray her final moments at the ballet

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elder sister, and enjoyed a high reputation both before and after 1907, despite not having received the career boost her sister had during the Auber/Mahler/Hassreiter affair. See: *50 Jahre Wiener Operntheater*, Vienna, 1919, p. 47.

24 'So tanzte ich auch diesmal, trotzdem ich ja wußte, daß ich bei diesem Tanz nie am Abend mittun würde, voll Freude am Tanz, und warf mich am Ende des Tanzes in höchster Ekstase zur Erde. Es scheint aber, daß nicht alle so hingebungsvoll mitgetanzt hatten, denn als Bruno Walter den Saal verlassen, äußerte sich der Ballettmeister zornig erregt über die Pflichtlosigkeit und Uninteressiertheit mancher Tänzerinnen des Personals, indem er meinte, daß sie sich an einigen ein gutes Beispiel nehmen könnte. Dabei blockt er zu mir hin. Das berührte mich so besonders, fast erschreckte es mich. [...] Dann aber ging die Probe ruhig weiter, und ich sah diesen Tanz als ein Ganzes vor mir, in dem ich bisher selbst mitgetanzt, ich sah die Tänzerin, die jetzt meinen Platz einnahm. Und die Beklommenheit wich einem großen Freudegefühl und Wissen um die eigene Kraft. Alles, was nun folgte, war schön und süß erregend, die Vermutungen der Kolleginnen, über den Grund unserer auf eigenes Ansuchen erfolgten Entlassung und ihre Neugierde und Interesse für uns, die wir ihnen auf einmal so interessant geworden waren.' *Der Aufstieg*, Berlin, 1919, pp. 204-206.

in a flattering light, as a self-appointed martyr, righteously alienated from the hegemonic structures of an ageing, socially estranged, male-dominated ballet establishment. To what extent it represents an accurate recollection of the rehearsal remains questionable.

The historical sequence of decision making probably occurred during the rehearsals or initial performances of *Iphigènie*, if not earlier. Three days after her last Gluck performance, and almost a week before the premiere of *Samson*, the *Prager Tagblatt* announced Wiesenthal's departure in a more optimistic, manner-of-fact tone:

> The ballerinas from the Viennese Court Opera, Grete and Elsa Wiesenthal, have requested and also received their dismissals. Fraulein Grete Wiesenthal recently appeared as Fenella in *Die Stumme von Portici*. Both ballerinas have their sights set on guest appearances as serpentine dancers at select theaters.[25]

This previously overlooked report (with no mention of the Camille Saint-Saëns rehearsals or hits of a scandalous back-story) challenges Wiesenthal's subsequently self-styled account, just as it lends weight to the thesis that her final *Iphigènie* performance (on 5 May) may have been an event that helped inspire her new vision of dance, definitively prompting her final departure from the ballet stage.[26]

Modernism's 'contested spaces'

Wiesenthal's career-break in 1907 unfolded within the unique cultural-political landscape of late Habsburg Vienna, a city that embraced its modernism through an eclectic and often paradoxical relationship with the past, defined geographically and temporally by what cultural historians refer to as the city's 'contested spaces'.[27] While research into Wiesenthal has analysed numerous facets of her mature career, dance scholars and cultural historians have yet to map out the full constellation of cultural, political and aesthetic factors that prompted her to take this leap from a secure professional career-path into an unpredictable, unstable private venture as a freelance modern dancer. To stress the transition as one of an abrupt 'Durchbruch', however, is to assume

25 'Die Ballerinen der Wiener Hofoper Grete und Elsa Wiesenthal haben ihre Entlassung genommen und auch erhalten. Frl. Grete Wiesenthal trat vor kurzem als Fenella in 'Die Stumme von Portici' auf. Die beiden Ballerinen beabsichtigen an verschiedenen auswärtigen Theatern als Schlangentänzerinnen zu gastieren.' n.a. 'Hofopernballerinen als Schlangentänzerinnen', *Prager Tagblatt*, 8 May 1907, p. 9.

26 Wiesenthal's last day on record was 31 May 1907. See *Jubiläumsausstellung 100 Jahre Wiener Oper am Ring*, Vienna, Erwin Metten, 1969, p. 179.

27 See the essays in Monika Sommer and Heidemarie Uhl, (eds), *Mythos Alt-Wien: Spannungsfelder urbaner Identitäten*, Innsbruck, Studien Verlag, 2009.

an underlying ethos of antagonism between ballet and modern dance in the context of Vienna. This simply does not appear to have been the case. Embracing such a rupture narrative runs the risk of overlooking some major themes and continuities in her long career, particularly her interest in defining dance in relation to nature, a proclivity fuelled by her own memory of a lost utopian childhood experience where her art enjoyed an intimate connection with natural landscapes.

In Wiesenthal's case, one indicator of the porous boundaries between ballet and modern conceptions of dance is what we might identify as the presence of a 'latent' choreography in her dance aesthetic. This term seeks to capture the tentative nature and not-fully emancipated aspects that defined her initial departure from mainstream institutionalised dance, its technical apparatus, framing conventions and performance expectations. Aspects of latency are clearly evident in her routines with her two sisters, Elsa and Berta between 1907 and 1910, insofar as the sets they performed encompassed an eclectic mixture of *varité*-styled small-group dances as well as free-form solo expressive dances.

I will return to this point below, but it is important first to stress that the overarching catalyst stemmed from Wiesenthal's search for new venues, specifically those that resonated with her bold vision of dance as a return to 'Nature'. Elements of this began to emerge whilst still a ballerina in her simultaneously first, last, and most famous lead solo part on 27 February 1907 when Gustav Mahler chose to cast her in the lead mimic role of Fanella for the revival of Auber's *La muette de Portici* (*Die Stumme von Portici*). For Wiesenthal, caught in the middle of Hassreiter's heated argument with the conductor, this small scandal thrust her into the public spotlight for the first time.[28] Her inspired performance, along with the current production's scandalous administrative backstory, was widely reported in the newspapers, generating a great boost for the 21-year-old dancer's career.[29] What has been overlooked about this episode,

28 Critics had already noted by 1902 that she was among the talented up-and-coming beginners within the dance troupe. See the theatre page review by Lorgnon in *Sport & Salon*, 31 May 1902, p. 23.

29 And yet, Wiesenthal performed the role of Fanella only twice: 27 February and 8 March. As a compromise between Mahler and Hassreiter, the other two performances of the opera alternated with the older and more experienced Camilla Weigang, who appears to have captured the limelight as well. See the *Neues Wiener Journal*, 7 March 1907, p. 7: 'Jetzt gibt es in der Hofoper zwei Darstellerinnen der "Stummen von Portici". Die eine ist Fräulein Wiesenthal, die andere Fräulein Kamilla Weigang. Die beiden Damen alternieren. Fräulein Weigang mimte die Partie der Fenella mit großem Erfolg. Die interessante und charakterischische äußere Erscheinung und das wohldurchdachte Spiel fanden starke Anerkennung. In der morgigen Aufführung der "Stummen" tritt wieder Fräulein Wiesenthal auf.'

particularly in her postwar autobiography, is that Wiesenthal later framed this intense moment of anticipation and stage-fright anxiety by contrasting it against a little picturesque story about the serenity of mountain landscapes as told by her future husband on the way to the theatre on the opening night:

> In the evening, Erwin Lang accompanied me on my way to the opera. The most beautiful thing about this day was his story about his hike on the glacier in northern Tirol. Entirely under the spell of these wonderful images, I walked slowly up the stairs to the dressing room, where one was already waiting for me, and where one could hardly have wondered about my nerves; it was then only a half hour before the beginning of the performance.[30]

This mention of a hike across a glacier was no mere nerve-calming chit chat. Wiesenthal's emphasis on the pristine mountain terrain in Tirol reflected the much broader national identity crisis then current in postwar Austria, which sought to root all variety of cultural endeavors in terms of the country's defining geographical feature: the Alpine landscape.[31] Ostensibly the most pivotal moment between her formal ballet training and her later solo career, this insertion created a juxtaposition that reflected on a micro level the entire sweep of her autobiography, which moves at the macro-level from the urban setting of Vienna to a transcendent calm among the snow-covered mountains of Tirol (Sankt Johann): hence, 'der Aufstieg' (the ascent, p. 213f). For Wiesenthal, space was equally important as the forms of movement (and symbolic transformations) through it.

Long before the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the First World War, however, Wiesenthal had delivered several public lectures in which she elucidated her aesthetics of dance as possessing a special affinity with nature. Following a talk titled The Development from Dance to Pantomime ('Entwicklung vom Tanz zur Pantomime'), delivered at Heller's Art Salon on 27 October 1910, one critic summarised her aesthetics thus:

> She explained how such was inspired by the upper-Austrian farmer-dance, already as a child exhibiting determination to become a dancer. Her years

30 'Am Abend begleitete mich Erwin Lang auf der Fahrt in die Oper. Und das Schönste dieses Tages war seine Erzählung von seinen Gletscherwanderungen in Nordtirol. Ganz noch im Banne dieser wunderbaren Bilder ging ich langsam die Stiegen hinauf zu den Garderoben, wo man schon auf mich wartete und sich nicht genug wundern konnte über meine Ruhe, denn es war nur mehr eine halbe Stunde bis zum Beginn der Vorstellung.' *Der Aufstieg*, Berlin, 1919, pp. 196-197.

31 Postwar Austria, now only a shadow of its former Habsburg multinational empire, sought to realign its national identity in relation to the Alps (e.g. the founding of the Salzburg Festival in 1920). See volume 18 of *Austrian Studies*: *Austria and the Alps*, 2010, especially the Introduction 'Austria and the Alps' by John Hughes, pp. 1-13, which is devoted entirely to this topic.

> of apprentice in the ballet school of the opera, where she studied, brought her a few disappointments. She had to stand very accurately in line and at an early stage missed the relationship between music and dance [taught] in this school. She and her sister went their separate ways. She then got fully into her dance forms and their musical mood. She danced Chopin and Beethoven. Later it was Nature that afforded her inspiration, particularly in movements outside, with which she seemed she had an inner connection.[32]

In many aspects, her post-ballet career, though indebted to the naturalism of Viennese art nouveau, was seeking to recapture an idyllic landscape tied to memories of her family house in Hietzing, where at the age of around nine (i.e. just before she began her training) she first 'produced' a stage work (or improvised pageant) in the family's summer garden. As she recalled with a sense of nostalgic longing: 'It was a garden-dream (*Gartentraum*), it was a new kingdom in which we might have stepped inside.'[33] This was the kingdom Wiesenthal felt she needed to re-establish, and she most certainly received encouragement, if not inspiration from some sectors of the ballet establishment (most notably Roller and his network of artistic associates). Indeed, Wiesenthal's aesthetic sensibilities and career transformation were the beneficiary of ongoing debates in Vienna about theatre reform, debates that crossed interdisciplinary boundaries and concerned artists, dancers, composers, poets and architects. Behrens's open-air theatre for the 1907 Mannheim Tercentenary Garden Exhibition (**Ex. 5**), for example, which the Wiener-Werkstätte members Josef Hoffmann and Kolo Moser visited and later modeled for their own outdoor stages upon which Wiesenthal would perform, was highly influential in Viennese theatre and architectural circles between 1907 and 1909.[34]

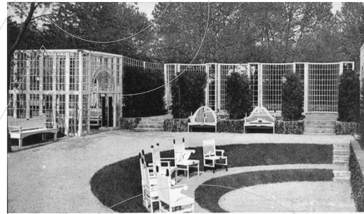
Even if Wiesenthal had witnessed Duncan's Viennese debuts between 1902 and 1904 (there is no evidence she did), it is clear that her aesthetic conception of performance space stood in marked contrast with the American's. Duncan, Fuller and St. Denis appeared almost exclusively in windowless rooms at the

32 'Sie erzählt, wie sie durch einen oberösterreichischen Bauerntanz angeregt, schon als Kind mit Entschiedenheit darauf bestand, Tänzerin zu werden. Ihre Lehrjahre in der Opernballettschule – dort ging sie studieren – brachten ihr manche Enttäuschung. Sie mußte sehr akkurat in der Linie stehen und sie vermißte frühzeitig in dieser Schule den Zusammenhang zwischen Musik und Tanz. Sie und ihre Schwestern gingen nun ihre eigenen Wege. Sie gaben sich zunächst in ihren Tanzformen völlig der musikalischen Stimmung hin; sie tanzten Chopin und Beethoven. Später gewannen sie ihre Anregung in der Natur, selbst in der Bewegung draußen, die sie innig mitempfanden.' n.a. 'Grete Wiesenthal-Vortrag', *Neue Freie Presse*, Nr. 16589, 28 October 1910, p. 13.

33 'Es war ein Gartentraum, es war ein neues Reich, in das wir eintreten sollten.' *Der Ausstieg*, Berlin, 1919, p. 55.

34 Gertrud Pott, *Die Spiegelung des Szessionismus im österreichischen Theater*, Vienna, Branmüller, 1975.

Hotel Bristol (**Ex. 6**), the Secession House, and Carl-Theater. By contrast, Wiesenthal's first 'off-stage' performance before the public was on the forest floor of Weigl's Dreher-Park, an old middle-class leisure park in the leafy suburbs near Schloss Schönbrunn.[35] In the initial years of her new career, Wiesenthal strove again and again to perform in spaces enshrouded by natural landscapes, whether in spa parks, lush suburban gardens or even tennis courts, where she was frequently photographed between 1908 and 1910.[36] Even when she did venture indoors during the winter months and on tours abroad, she constantly tried to emphasise nature-themed programmes through her selective choice of music and costumes.



Example 5: Peter Behrens's garden theatre for the 1907 Mannheim Jubiläums-Ausstellung

Source: private collection

Example 6: Hotel Bristol's 'Große Halle', Vienna 1930

Source: Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Bildarchiv, Signatur Nr. 94.708-D, used with permission

35 See Hofbauer, *Grete Wiesenthal – Einer Varietétänzerin?* Universität Wien, 2009.

36 Her conception of modern dance as rooted in outdoor spaces has obvious parallels with later movements such as Ascona, the FKK and the Wandervögel. See Karl Toepfer's *Empire and Ecstasy: Nudity and Movement in German Body Culture, 1910-1935*, Berkeley & Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1997.

But Wiesenthal's critique of performance-space was not wholly tethered to concerns about balletic techniques or practices either. Although Wiesenthal herself added to the myth that her ballet career arose amongst a great decline in the public's interest in the genre (not to mention an internal collapse of the art form in general), behind this stood a deeper critique of dance's lack of social engagement, about which questions of space were necessarily integral to the discourse surrounding theatre reform in Vienna at the time.[37] For the Austrian dancer, as for Viennese cultural theorists (with parallels in Loos, Schoenberg, Hofmannsthal and Wittgenstein), traditional theatre and dance were complicit with moral and metaphysical bankruptcy of the age.[38] Wiesenthal's actions, as well as some passages of her writings, suggest that her critique grew out of the accusation that traditional ballet had limited social outreach, rather than a lack of technique or style. As she noted in *Der Aufstieg*:

> The ballet also had no relationship to society. While a good actor or a beloved actress served as an ornament to every salon, it was only an exception when a dancer was found stepping into the salons of middle-class society. But the loyalist disciples among the young and older aristocrats came for the sake of the beautiful girls whom they perhaps could have found in any local establishment....[39]

Of course Wiesenthal had willingly performed in many such local establishments herself, but her illustrious career as a former ballerina bracketed her off as a former insider performing on the 'outside' (here, in both senses). This double-sided profile, which simultaneously became part of her intrigue and the means through which she could exploit her own agendas of dance and theatre reform, carried distinct socially loaded resonances intrinsic to prewar Habsburg cultural life, resonances that have not yet been fully recovered.

Choreography through musical collaborations: Wiesenthal's unclaimed legacy

The underlying premise of Wiesenthal's conception of modern dance, I would contend, stemmed from the aesthetics of performance-space, both at the macro level (i.e. Vienna and its artistic debates), and at the micro level (i.e. the parks,

37 *Der Aufstieg*, Berlin, 1919, p. 68.

38 See Schorske, *Fin-de-siècle Vienna*, New York, 1981, and William J. McGrath, *Dionysian Art and Populist Politics in Austria*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1974.

39 'Auch hatte das Ballett zur Gesellschaft keine Beziehungen. Während der gute Schauspieler oder die beliebte Schauspielerin zur Zierde eines jeden Salons gereicht, war es nur eine Ausnahme, wenn ein Tänzer oder eine Tänzerin Eintritt in die Salons der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft fand. Die treuesten Anhänger aber hatte es unter den jungen und alten Aristokraten, die um des schönen Mädchens willen kamen, die sie ja vielleicht auch in jedem Vergnügungslokal gefunden hätten...' *Der Aufstieg*, Berlin, 1919, p. 70.

outside stages, and landscapes in which she chose to perform). To hold up a canned definition of choreography to Wiesenthal's dance – such as one finds in Susan Macpherson's *Dictionary of Dance* as 'the invention and arrangement of dance movement into a set form for performance'[40] – would yield frustratingly inconsistent results as the starting point for a critical analysis of her artistry. Rather, her dance aesthetic was rooted just as much in a thoroughly saturated musical sensibility. Already by October 1909, for the second issue of *Der Merker*, Wiesenthal took pains to formulate her aesthetics of modern dance as 'ein absolutes Zusammenwachsen' (an absolute symbiosis) of music and dance.[41] Both elements proceeded out of the other from the same point of creative origin. As her career developed during the war years, pantomime would ultimately hold a privileged status for its potential to narrate stories subconsciously through the body in such a way that preceded verbal expressions, incorporating but also transcending (though not excluding) dance, choreography and music.[42] While this free-form expression seems to have applied to her semi-naked, free-form solo realisations of Beethoven's *Allegretto* (from his Piano Sonata op. 10), she also arranged pre-set choreographies for heavily lace-clad ensembles for her sisters, such as the gavotte from Massenet's *Manon* (1884), a piece that happily co-existed on the same programme with risqué realisations of Beethoven (**Ex. 7-8**).[43] Despite Duncan and her latter-day heirs' subsequent rejection of the term choreography as a signifier of patriarchal oppression of the female dancer and her body, Wiesenthal affirmed a more moderate, inclusive use of the term – though never verbally stated as such – that betrays her own Austrian, antagonistic-less, through unsettlingly iconoclastic interpretation of modern dance.[44]

40 Susan Macpherson, *Dictionary of Dance: Words, Terms, and Phrases*, Toronto, Dance Collection Danse Press, 1996, p. 28.

41 Wiesenthal, 'Unsere Tänze', *Der Merker*, 1909, pp. 65-68.

42 Though heavily indebted to Kessler, Hofmannsthal's concept of pantomime as non-verbal 'Ur-Drama' began with his obsession with Ruth St. Denis (see his 25 November 1906 essay 'Die unvergleichliche Tänzerin' in *Die Zeit*, later reprinted as 'Die Berührung der Sphären in 1931), but developed most fully through his contact with Wiesenthal, Sada Yakko (the 'japanische Duse') and Nijinsky. See his 1911 essay 'Über die Pantomime', in *Hugo von Hofmannsthal Gesammelte Werke: Reden und Aufsätze I: 1891-1913*, Frankfurt am Main, S. Fischer, 1979, pp. 502-505.

43 Both pieces were performed at their debut at the Kabarett Fledermaus on 14 January 1908. See Michael Buhrs, Barbara Lesák and Thomas Trabitsch, eds. *Kabarett Fledermaus 1907 bis 1913: Ein Gesamtkunstwerk der Wiener Werkstätte: Literatur, Musik, Tanz*, Vienna, Christian Brandstätter, 2008. On the connection between Beethoven, Klimt and the performing body (i.e. dance), see Karnes's *A Kingdom Not of this World*, Oxford, 2013.

44 Wiesenthal preferred the term 'sphärischer Tanz' (spherical dance) as a slight deviation to the popular 'Serpentine Dance' (often translated into German as

Example 7: (*left*) Grete Wiesenthal performs Beethoven's *Allegretto* (Erwin Lang, 1910)

Example 8: (*right*) The Wiesenthal sisters dance Massenet's gavotte from *Manon* (1909)

Sources: Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, GS_GPU1025 (Nachlass Anna Bahr-Mildenburg); *Der Merker*, vol. 1, no. 2 (October 1909)

Wiesenthal's penchant for stylistic mixture reflected not only a typical Austrian sensibility, but also an intensively musical one borne out of an unprecedented string of collaborative projects with Viennese composers between 1907 and 1920 (see **Table 1**).[45] It is in her tenacious interest in modern dance as an expression of musicality that her most important contribution to the history of prewar modern dance remains to be recovered and appreciated. The most prolific and sensational of these occurred in 1908 with Franz Schreker (1878-1934), who composed the score to Oscar Wilde's *Der Geburtstag der Infantin* that launched both of their careers to the next level of fame at the 1908 Kunstschau (premiered on the open-aired stage of the exhibit's Gartentheater). The two worked on a number of projects together, to great acclaim, but toward the end of 1909 she paid him the left-handed compliment of being a 'self-sufficient musician'.[46] After this collaboration broke down, she spent the next decade of her career, well into the war years, trying to find an ideal composer to suit her

'Schlangentanz', literally 'snake dance'), which alluded to Loïe Fuller's flowing silk garments and whirling style of modern dance. On Wiesenthal's theoretical writings on this term, see the reprint in *Grete Wiesenthal: Die Schönheit*, Salzburg, 1985, pp. 147-150.

45 Mixture of styles and even genres was a typical characteristic of Austrian theatre history. See for example, W. E. Yates, *Theatre in Vienna: A Critical History, 1776-1995*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996.

46 'Sicherlich keine leichte Aufgabe für einen selbständigen Musiker', in Wiesenthal, *Der Merker*, October 1909, p. 67.

artistic visions. Ultimately, it was a search that she exhausted herself, though her artistic relationships and collaborations with several other composers, such as Victor Hollaender (1866-1940), the blind composer Rudolf Braun (1869-1925), and the Kabarettist Hannes Ruch (1867-1928), yielded results in a variety of different mediums and stylistic genres.

TABLE 1: Wiesenthal's musical collaborations, 1907-1930

Year	Title	Composer	Author	Choreography	Location
1907	*Die Tänzerin und die Marionette*	Braun, Rudolf	Mell, Max	Wiesenthal/ Wimmer-Wisgrill	Vienna
1908	*Der silberne Schleier*	Lafite, Karl	Mell, Max	Wiesenthal, Grete	Vienna
-	*Der Geburtstag der Infantin*	Schreker, Franz	Wilde, Oscar /Wiesenthal, Grete	Wiesenthal, Elsa	Vienna
1909	*Der Wind*	Schreker, Franz	Wiesenthal, Grete	Wiesenthal, Grete	Vienna
-	*Pans Tänze*	Schreker, Franz	Wiesenthal, Grete	Wiesenthal, Grete	Vienna
1910	*Sumurûn*	Hollaender, Victor	Freska, Friedrich	Wiesenthal, Grete	Berlin
1911	*Amor und Psyche*	Braun, Rudolf	Hofmannst-hal, Hugo von	Wiesenthal, Grete	Berlin
-	*Das fremde Mädchen*	Ruch, Hannes	Hofmannst-hal, Hugo von	Wiesenthal, Grete	Berlin
1916	*Die Biene*	Franckenstein, Clemens von	Hofmannst-hal, Hugo von	Wiesenthal, Grete	Darmstadt
-	*Sieg des modernen Tanzes*	Moegsen, Hugo	Wiesenthal, Grete	Wiesenthal, Grete	[not realised]
1920	*Die Todestarantella*	Bittner, Julius	Hardt-Warden / Welleminsky	Wiesenthal, Grete	Zürich
1930	*Der Taugenichts in Wien*	Salmhofer, Franz	Wiesenthal, Grete	Wiesenthal, Grete	Vienna

To what extent Wiesenthal's musical collaborations forged a new path for her dance remains open to future research, but important clues that trace its overall trajectory can been glimpsed in two small episodes. In February 1915, following

a programme of Johann Strauss, Schubert and Liszt at the Apollo-Theater in Vienna, one critic mentioned that the spontaneity in her dance had somewhat slipped: 'Only in certain passages does one notice that not everything appears so improvised as once before when Frau Grete first charmed the world.'[47] Her work the following year (during the height of Austria's involvement in the war effort) continued to show signs of a fading vision. Her antepenultimate collaboration, this time with the composer Clemens von Franckenstein (1875-1942) on Hugo von Hofmannsthal's pantomime *Die Biene*, ended in bitter disappointment for all involved.[48] Full details of this episode remain veiled, but to Hofmannsthal's wife, Gerty, the dancer confessed that her expectations for this collaborative project had fallen short: 'well you know, one cannot so easily get what one really wishes for' with such musical things.[49] Slightly over a year later, following a subsequent performance of the pantomime *without* Wiesenthal, Hofmannsthal hinted at his own dissatisfaction in a letter to the composer: 'I'm very pleased that things are going well for *Die Biene* without the evil dancer.'[50]

Something had gone drastically wrong in the overall conception and fundamental trajectory of Wiesenthal's musical collaborations between 1907 and the end of the First World War, so much so that with the advent of the Weimar Republic, she began to re-engage with currents in the revitalisation of classical ballet through modern dance (using pre-existing music).[51] What had been latent in her dance aesthetic reemerged to the foreground, though transformed once again. The assorted artistic relationships and shifting historical circumstances that drove her artistic ambitions during these crucial wartime

47 'Nur stellenweise merkt man, daß nicht alles mehr so improvisiert scheint, wie damals, als Frau Grete zum erstmal die Welt entzückte.' n.a. *Wiener Montagblatt*, 8 February 1915, p. 3.

48 *Die Biene: Eine Pantomime in zehn Bildern von Grete Wiesenthal, op. 37, Musik von Clemens von Franckenstein,* Berlin, Drei Masken-Verlag, 1917.

49 The full passage reads: 'Das Gastspiel [in Zürich] is heute zuende und ich bin frei. *Die Biene* hatte guten Erfolg und ich habe mich nach langer Zeit – da ich die Musik nicht hörte wieder ausgesühnt mit ihr – ja weißt du, man kann eben nicht so leicht das bekommen was man wirklich wünscht.' Letter dated 28 March 1917; quoted in Gisela Bärbel Schmidt and Klaus-Dieter Krabiel (eds), *Hugo von Hofmannsthal Sämtliche Werke Kritische Ausgabe: Band XXXVII: Ballette, Pantomimen, Filmszenarien*, Frankfurt am Main, S. Fischer, 2006, p. 518.

50 'Freue mich sehr, daß es der Biene ohne die böse Tänzerin gut geht.' (14 April 1918), *Hugo von Hofmannsthal Sämtliche Werke,* Frankfurt, 2006, p. 518; Later on 20 August 1918, as they were planning for the Munich premiere of *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, Hofmannsthal wrote to the same composer: 'Ich hoffe, […] daß diese Sache nicht abermals wie die Wiesenthal-sache so endet, daß ich etwas aus Freundschaft u. um Dir Freude zu bereiten, einfädle u. das Gegentheil herauskommt!' (*Ibid.*).

51 See the insightful but frequently overlooked essay by Raoul Auernheimer, 'Eine Wiener Tänzerin im Kriege', *Neue Freie Presse*, 11 March 1917, pp. 1-3.

years, and what methodological approaches are best suited to uncovering them, remain deeply challenging questions for both the dance historian and musicologist. By undertaking a much-needed longitudinal study of her other collaborative musical projects, I soon hope to offer a rich and comprehensive account of her aesthetics of dance, as well as a recovery or partial reconstruction of her choreographies through a close critical reading of the musical and dramatic sources. Such a study would be of great value not only to dancers, dance historians and musicologists, but also to all cultural historians working in the now well-trod field Viennese Modernism and its contested afterlife.

APPENDIX: New Productions in Vienna, 1901-1907[52]

1901 *Hoffmanns Erzählungen*, Offenbach (11 November)
1902 *Feuersnot*, Richard Strauss (29 January)
Der dot mon, Josef Forster (28 February)
Zaide, Mozart (4 October)
Pique Dame, Tchaikovsky (9 December)
Die Perle von Iberien, Josef Hellmesberger/Irene Sironi/Josef Hassreiter (7 April)
Farfalla (Walzer), Ettore Golli (24 May)
1903 *Louise*, Charpentier (24 March)
La Bohème, Puccini (25 November)
Der faule Hans, Oscar Nedbal/Josef Hassreiter/F.K. Hejda (28 April)
1904 *Der Corregidor*, Hugo Wolf (18 February)
Falstaff, Verdi (3 May)
Lakmé, Léon Delibes (14 November)
Die kleine Welt, Josef Hassreiter (20 January)
1905 *Das war ich*, Leo Blech (28 February)
Die Abreise, Eugen d'Albert (28 February)
Die Rose vom Liebesgarten, Hans Pfitzner (6 April)
Die neugierigen Frauen, Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari (4 October)
Chopin's Tänze, H. Riesenfeld / Josef Hassreiter (16 April)
Grande valse, Leo Délibes (14 November)
1906 *Der polnische Jude*, Camille Erlanger/P.B. Ghensi & Henri Cain (4 October)
Marionettentreue, Rudolf Braun/Rudolf Holzer (17 October)
Flauto solo, Eugen d'Albert/Hans von Wolzogen (28 November)
Atelier Brüder Japonet, Franz Skofitz/Josef Hassreiter (28 November)
Il Penseroso, Händel, Arie (n.d.)
1907 *Samson und Dalila*, Saint-Saens (11 May)

52 Extracted from *50 Jahre Wiener Operntheater*, Vienna, 1919, pp. 122-123.

Beyond the Choreography – Social Dance in Context in Georgian Bath

MATTHEW SPRING

A current major concern in musicology, following Georgina Born's edited book *Music, Sound and Space*, is the interconnection between music and space – and it links into architecture, politics, and dance studies.[1] The social boundaries implicit in the music of social dance are reflected in the boundaries within society between the insiders who had enough money and cultural capital to join the social space, and the outsiders who did not. But to join the dance you also needed to understand and be able to participate through the demonstration of the correct codes of dance, dress and etiquette. The music was both public for those within the space, but private and exclusive to those within the rooms. There were further gradations within the building where music could permeate the more public arenas of the ballrooms near to the sound source – and the more private spaces of the corridors, or, where in the larger rooms, the music was further away and less prevalent. The building and its intended function was an embodiment of the politics and economics of the enlightenment age in which leisure was exclusive to the elites and the 'genteel classes', but which, once joined, could allow a good deal of social mobility and exchange. Indeed this fluidity of social mobility is particularly demonstrated in the phenomena of the masquerade balls with masks and fancy dress.

Eighteenth-century subscription balls have their origins in the formal court balls and masques of the seventeenth century – albeit in a democratised and simplified form. James I had instituted the role of Master of Ceremonies, answerable to The Lord Chamberlain, to be responsible for the smooth running of the events, the observation of rank in the introductions, and seating of the event.[2] For court masques the Master of Ceremonies would visit the Ambassadors in advance to issue invitations and discuss placement. A hundred years later this visitation by the Master of Ceremonies to the lodgings of new arrivals had became an indispensable part of Bath's etiquette and signalled

1 Georgina Born, (ed.) *Music, Sound and Space*, Cambridge, CUP, 2013.

2 Anne Daye, 'Seventeenth-century dance spaces: the infrastructure', in B. Segal and B. Tuck, (eds) *Ballroom, Stage and Village Green*, Early Dance Circle Publication, 2015, pp. 5-12 at p. 7.

one's admittance to the company.[3] With the Jacobean masque itself the guests would be seated in strict order of precedence. At Bath the banquet was replaced by tea at 9pm. Court revels and the masques put on by the Inns of Court in the later seventeenth century would normally start with the measures followed by galliards, corantos and lavoltas; but by the Restoration, French and English traditions were combined, with branles followed by the courant and other French dances, and ending with English country dances.[4] At Bath by 1771 the long minuet was all that remained of the French dances to be followed after refreshments with the country-dances.[5] The placement of the band in a box above was a feature of the Jacobean and Caroline Court masques that was built into the structure of Bath's assembly rooms. Even the chandeliers were reminiscent of the elaborate and complicated lighting arrangements achieved by the Jacobean wireworkers and chandlers in their multi-branched, tasselled and be-jangled structures that were tensioned into place and then attached to support huge numbers of wax candles.[6]

By looking at one particular event it is possible to get some idea of the organisation behind a Georgian Assembly Room Ball. Ultimately, the goal of the event was to make money through providing a purpose-built space for ritualised patterns of human behaviour in the public sphere. The profits went to the investors whose money had built the building.[7] The Ball provided an opportunity to meet across the polite social classes. The event centred on the dancing, but there were alternatives for those not wishing to dance: cards, refreshments, conversation, etc. The dance itself allowed people to intermix with little or no verbal communication – and thus was itself a social leveller.

1. Bath Assemby Rooms

Bath's 'New or Upper Rooms' opened on 30 September 1771 with a much-advertised 'ridotto' to which the citizens of Bath and Bristol were very much invited, as well as the elite visiting company. In England the term 'ridotto' suggested a concert, masquerade, banquet and dancing all in one and was more likely to be within the summer season. Jonathon Tyers had re-opened the Vauxhall gardens with a *ridotto al fresco* in 1732.[8] Fanny Burney's novel *Evelina*

3 Lewis Melville, *Bath under Beau Nash*, London, 1907, p. 105. This visitation is satirised in Dicken's *Pickwick Papers* when the Master of Ceremonies, Cyrus Angelo Bantam, visits Mr. Pickwick shortly after his arrival, *Pickwick Papers*, chapter 35.

4 Daye, 'Seventeenth-century dance spaces', p. 9.

5 Melville, *Bath under Beau Nash*, p. 61.

6 Daye, 'Seventeenth-century dance spaces', pp. 6-7.

7 It was built under a Tontine system with 112 original shares. See R.S. Neale, *Bath 1680-1850, A Social History*, London, 1981, p. 220.

8 Jonathan Conlin, ed., *The Pleasure Garden, from Vauxhall to Coney Island*,

gives a full account of her heroine's first ridotto in 1778.[9] In London ridottos were especially associated with Ranelagh and involved fancy dress and masks in the Venetian manner, and a musical entertainment with dance. The whole event cost a guinea entrance.[10] Famously the Bath event (which was entirely inside) turned into a riot when the guests, that included a good percentage of locals not used this sort of event, stampeded from the ballroom to get to the banquet set up in the Tearoom.

The twenty year-old apprentice poet Richard Brinsley Sheridan was living in Bath where his father, the actor-manager Thomas Sheridan, had retired from theatrical management to open a school of elocution. This venture proved fruitless though the elder Sheridan's 'Attic entertainments', begun in Bath in November 1770, had some success.[11] This was the year before Richard Sheridan's celebrated duel with Captain Thomas Matthews and ensuing elopement with Elizabeth Linley in February 1772. Both Elizabeth and Richard were almost certainly present at the event. Sheridan wrote 'The Ridotto of Bath'[12] for the *Bath Chronicle* from the perspective of the servant Timothy Screw 'Underservant to Messers Khuff and Fitzwater' to his brother Henry, servant at Almack's – the fashionable Ballrooms in London that had opened in 1765. The brothers 'Screw' are both aghast at the social chaos that ensued at the event.

From Sheridan's poem we learn that Captain Wade, the Master of Ceremonies at the Upper Rooms, had given orders that no black was to be worn (though some came in black 'as the devil').[13] Wade had only recently been appointed Master of Ceremonies to the New Rooms (on 4 June), for which he was to get two benefit Balls each season – with the lighting and music paid for by public subscription on those nights.[14] This is significant as, after the fees of the musicians, these were the most costly overheads that a ball entailed on top of the normal running costs. Wade had been Master of Ceremonies at the Lower Rooms from 1769 after a contested election.[15]

Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania, 2013, p. 104.

9 Fanny Burney, *Evelina*, London, 1778; London, Penguin Classics, 1994, vol. 1, Letter XIII.

10 Conlin, (ed.) *The Pleasure Garden*, pp. 42-3.

11 Linda Kelly, *Richard Brinsley Sheridan, A Life*, London, Faber and Faber, 1992, p. 28.

12 *Bath Chronicle*, 10 Oct 1771, no. 573, p. 3/c-d.

13 Sheridan, *Ridotto*, line 39.

14 Wade was appointed on 13 Nov 1770. 'Proceedings of the Committee for Managing the New Assembly Rooms, 1771-5', Bath City Archives, Acc. 28/21 F, for 4 June 1771, p. 5.

15 Francis Fleming, *The life and extraordinary adventures, the perils and critical escapes of Timothy Ginnadrake, that child of chequer'd fortune*, Bath, 1771, 3 vols. pp. 124-232 of

Thomas Gainsborough had painted a full-length portrait of Wade for the octagon room as a gift, and the Bath Ridotto was the first public viewing of the painting *in situ*. Today it has been returned to its original position after having been removed and sold in the 1920s. Gainsborough had painted the work at his home at number 17 The Circus and had been sent free tickets for the event.[16] Wade proved a popular choice as a natural son of General George Wade, the man credited with discovering and putting down a Jacobite circle in Bath in 1715, and who had been its MP from 1722 until his death in 1748.[17]

At a meeting on the 17 September the committee managing the New Assembly Rooms decided on the order of events. The doors were to open at 7pm, (followed by music) with food at 9pm (then dancing) and to finish at 12pm.[18] The guests arriving by coach, either from the south or north, passed along corridors to the entrance after disembarking, or from the front if arriving in a sedan chair. Colonnades were provided for the chair-men to wait along the side of the building.

The event was publicised in the Bath newspapers – with 'sideboards by Khuff and Fitzwater' – and also in the *London Evening Post*, and the Salisbury and Bristol papers.[19] The date was significant as it marked the end of the summer period, when Bath had no official season, and the start of Bath's new autumn season. Thus it was intended to catch both the local clientele as well as those coming early to Bath for the season, and was both local and cosmopolitan. After the guests had gone to the cloakrooms to deposit their coats and cloaks they were given access to the Ballroom and the Octagon Room, where they could admire the celebrated chandeliers:

> Two rooms were first open'd—the long and the round one –
> (These Hogstyegon names only serve to confound one)
> Both splendidly lit with the new chandeliers,
> With drops hanging down like the bobs at Peg's ears.[20]

The chandeliers are still there and are one of the wonders of Bath (there are five in the Ballroom alone); they have their own histories and are jealously maintained. Originally they would have been adorned with hundreds of spermaceti candles and raised and lowered each evening for each event. As suggested above, a major expense in running the rooms was the cost of the

vol.3 are devoted to this election.

16 'Proceedings of the Committee', p. 27.

17 *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 'George Wade'.

18 'Proceedings of the Committee', p. 24.

19 *Bath Chronicle*, 26 September, 1771, no. 572, p.1/c.

20 Sheridan, *Ridotto*, lines, pp.41-4.

thousands of best quality candles that were required. [21]
The poem makes it clear that few of the guests understood what a ridotto was and much of the poem dwells on the mingling of the classes:

> But here I must mention the best thing of all,
> And what I'm inform'd ever marks a Bath ball;
> The Variety 'tis which so reign'd in the crew,
> That turn where one would the classes were new;
> For here no dull level of rank and degrees,
> No uniform mode, that shews all are at ease;
> But like a chess table, part black and part white,
> 'Twas a delicate checquer of low and polite;
> The motley assemblage so blended together,
> 'Twas Mob, or Ridotto—'twas both, or 'twas neither.[22]

A full ticket cost one guinea and admitted one gentleman and two ladies.[23] Single tickets were half a guinea for a man or seven shillings for a woman, only marginally more than the usual five shillings for a single ticket for a full concert with a ball to follow that was normally charged at Bath's Assemblies:

> From Bristol too come many dames of high breeding;
> Seven Shillings was money—but then there was feeding:[24]

In total the whole event brought in £285 and 15 shillings, catering for around 1,000 people with some 50 caterers, waiters and musicians.[25] On top of this were a number of permanent staff – headed by a steward and a housekeeper, and under them maids and footmen. One major chore during the evening was to keep the many screened-fires burning along the walls of all the main rooms, for which the best quality coal was ordered in some bulk.[26] But excessive heat was a common complaint.

There may have been a concert part of the evening, though it is clear there was dancing before the food, and that daughters and wives of the band were among the costumed guests. Thomas Linley senior had already been appointed to lead the musicians. This appointment caused major problems for all the musicians in the city as it divided them into those who followed Linley and

21 For instance a £50 bill for candles was paid on the 15 October, 1771; and on 25 October a further £24, 15s was paid for candles. 'Proceedings of the Committee', pp. 39-40.

22 Sheridan, *Ridotto*, lines, 55-64.

23 *Bath Chronicle*, 26 September 1771, no. 572/1/c.

24 Sheridan, *Ridotto*, lines 79-80.

25 'Proceedings of the Committee', p. 31.

26 For instance a bill of £34 was paid out on 5 November in William Brownes. 'Proceedings of the Committee', p. 43.

were in his band and those left out. As the band for the balls was effectively the Pump Room band this affected just about every musician in the city and its reverberations went on for years afterwards.[27]

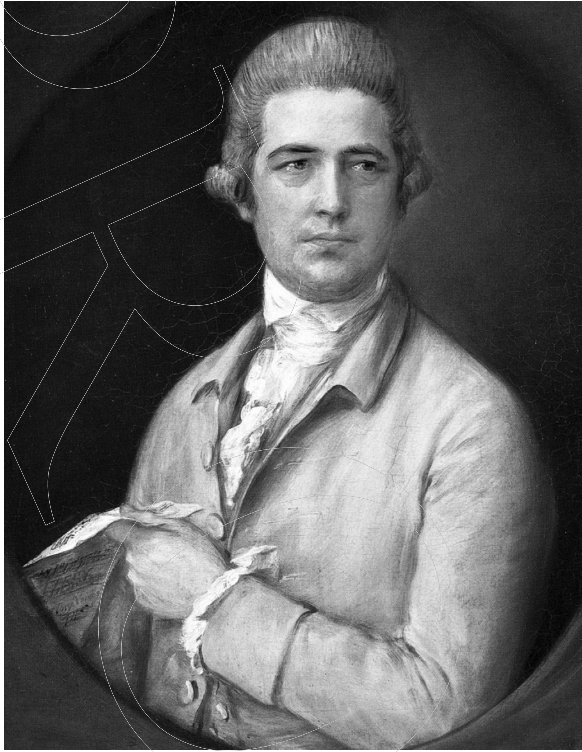


Figure 1 Thomas Linley Senior by Gainsborough

Nay more—there were some this grand ball to adorn,
Whose husbands were puffing above at the horn:
O, spare not your Cornu's! secure you may blow—
Your spouses are planning you fresh ones below:
But sure I was charm'd to behold little Rona
Jig it down all in time to her husband's cremona;[28]

This may be a reference to Linley's wife, Mary and the wives of the other band members like John Brooks, John Grant and William Rogers. It reinforces the theme of the poem that the artisan classes were not deterred from attending by the costs, dress and codes of behaviour.

27 See Kenneth Edward James, 'Concert Life in Eighteenth-Century Bath', PhD dissertation, 2 vols., University of London, 1987, i, pp. 191-220.

28 Sheridan, *Ridotto*, lines 83-6.

Then the greatest disorder broke out at the banquet:

> Well, the doors were unbolted, and in they all rush'd;
> They crouded, they jostled, they jockey'd, and push'd:
> Thus at a Mayor's feast, a disorderly mob
> Breaks in after dinner to plunder and rob.
> I mean not by this to reflect on the gentry,
> I'd only illustrate the mode of their entry.[29]

The ridotto was good value as it also included food as provided by Khuff and Fitzwater – for which they were paid £52 and 10 shillings, plus 10 shillings for the teaspoons.[30] It is suggested that this latter was to reimburse the bespoke caterers for spoons that had gone missing during the evening. According to the advertisement of 26 September, Khuff and Fitzwater 'are employed on like occasions at the Haymarket' and were specially brought down for this event.[31] The King's Theatre, Haymarket, was London's main theatre for Italian Opera but also put on Masquerades Balls.

Figure 2 Haymarket Theatre Masquerade Ball 1724

29 Sheridan, *Ridotto*, lines 93-8.

30 'Proceedings of the Committee', p. 31.

31 *Bath Chronicle*, 26 September 1771, no. 572, 1/c.

The painting of a masquerade ball in 1724, though fifty years earlier, shows the arrangement of the higher and lower sideboards with the waiter serving between them (Figure 2). The higher boards behind, on which the silverware is carefully arranged, are reminiscent of medieval and renaissance banquets in which food and silverware were displayed as emblems of pomp and luxury. The huge Pantheon that opened in January 1772, only six months after Bath's Assembly Rooms, also put on assemblies, masquerades and concerts.[32] Sadly of all England's great eighteenth-century palaces of pleasure only Bath's Upper Rooms remain.

In Bath it is clear that the locals did not understand the choreography of the sideboards, on which food was placed in warming containers to be dispensed by waiters and taken to be eaten standing, but away from the tables. Instead the guests fought to grab all they could in an unseemly manner. A good deal of the poem is taken up with likening the throng to a military assault, trampling the food under foot, some of which sticks to their footwear and clothes.[33] For the rest

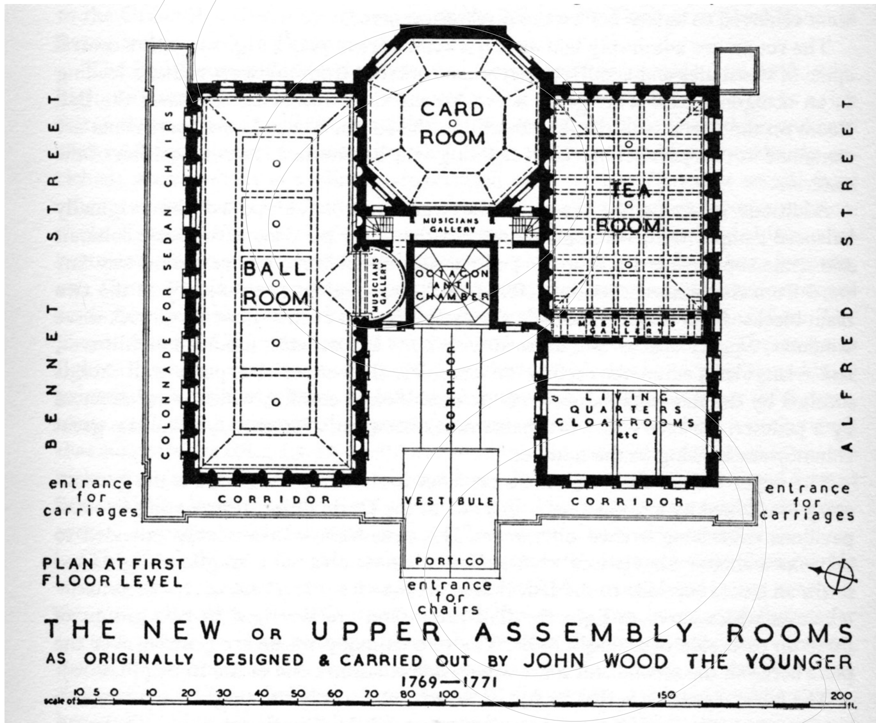


Figure 3 Plan of the Assembly Rooms when first opened.

32 *Survey of London: Volumes 31 and 32, St James Westminster, Part 2*. Originally published by London County Council, London, 1963, pp. 268-8.

33 Sheridan, *Ridotto*, lines 93-150.

of the evening the guests return to dancing cotillions in one room and country dances in the other. Thus both the Ballroom proper and the Octagon room are again used for music and dance. [34]

In plotting the overall choreography of the evening, the guests appear to have stampeded to the Tearoom from the Ballroom, via the joining corridors and the Octagon room, or directly from the Octagon room. The musicians could also move along the upper corridors that connected the musician's galleries in all rooms. The gallery that let out onto the Octagon room originally had an organ that is now lost. Thus they may have played during the refreshments, as all the music could be performed from the connected galleries as suggested in the poem. The Ballroom is 100 feet long and 45 wide with a high ceiling that is two stories high and designed to be filled with music.[35] Cards do not feature in the poem though usually an Assembly had one of the rooms dedicated to card-playing all evening – and a fourth room was added in 1777 as a dedicated card room – though both the Octagon room and Tearoom could on occasion serve as such.[36] The acoustics of the rooms and corridors, with their different ceiling heights, meant that the music would have echoed, refracted and diffused though spaces, especially so when more than one type of dance was being played in adjoining rooms. Both rooms became impossibly hot. There is reference again to Wade and his plumed hat:

> And, 'Madam, pray how do you like the Rudotter?
> 'To see Capt. Plume dance—sure none can dislike him—
> 'Wade 's picture, I think, is purdigiously like him—
> 'Do you dance, Sir, to-night?'—'No, Ma'am, I do not:'
> 'I don't wonder at it, 'tis suffoking hot.'[37]

The fires in the various rooms were probably unnecessary so early in the season and overheating was a common complaint.

34 Sheridan, *Ridotto*, lines 93-150. Line 161 'Cotillions in one room, country-dance in another'.

35 Trevor Fawcett, *Bath Entertained*, Bath, Ruton, 1998, pp. 7-8.

36 Fawcett, *Bath Entertained*, pp. 7-8.

37 Sheridan, *Ridotto*, lines 164-8.

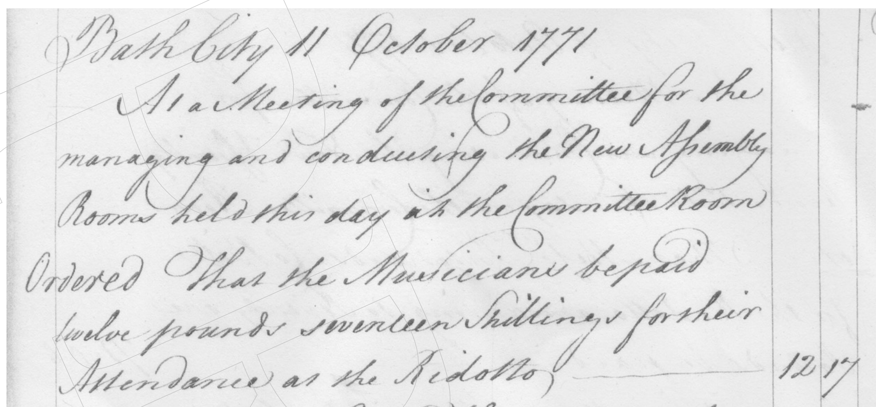

Bath City 11 October 1771
At a Meeting of the Committee for the
managing and conducting the New Assembly
Rooms held this day at the Committee Room
Ordered That the Musicians be paid
twelve pounds seventeen Shillings for their
Attendance at the Ridotto —— 12 17

Figure 4 Minute Book for the years 1771-75 of the committee that managed the New Assembly Rooms (1771-75. Acc. 28/21 F). Payment to the musicians on 11 October 1771.

Unusually and uniquely the Minute Book for the years 1771-75 belonging to the committee that managed the New Assembly Rooms survives and gives a great deal of detailed information on the costs of the ridotto, including the fees paid to the musicians. There were eleven Musicians (if we include Linley) who were paid £12 and 17 shillings for their attendance at the ridotto that night.[38] Linley was the leader and he received all the money for distribution to the band. It is clear that a fee of 10 shillings and 6 pence (half a guinea) was a normal musician's fee for a night, but as this was a special event they may have been paid more.[39] The musicians under Linley were required to attend on Mondays (Dress Ball) and Thursdays (Cotillion Ball).

From the names of those listed in the Minute Book we can have a good idea who played what.[40]

Probable Instruments for the band in 1771
John Bassett – violin
John Grant – violin
John Brooks- cello
James Brooks – violin
Alexander Herschel – oboe, clarinet or cello
William Rogers senior – Viola

38 'Proceedings of the Committee', 11 October, p. 35.

39 'Proceedings of the Committee', 18 June 1771, p. 7. 'Resolve that Wm. Rogers Jun be added to the band of Musick for the Balls, and Concerts at 10 shillings and six pence a night.'

40 'Proceedings of the Committee', 7 October, p. 6.

William Rogers, jun – violin
James Cantelo – horn
Taverner Wilkey – violin
Daniel Miller – bassoon

However most pictures show a more mixed band than this would suggest – sometimes with trumpets, but always with horns, as mentioned in the poem. Most eighteenth-century musicians played a range of instruments and some would have been able to move from strings to wind and brass. They would have played from the three musicians galleries that were all on a connecting corridor. But it was not unknown for the musicians to be placed on a specially constructed orchestra for especially big events, as seen in Rawlinson's 'Comforts of Bath' drawings.[41]

The listed band of ten also formed the basis of the band that played for the concerts on Wednesday nights, though for some concerts a few others were added to the group – 'Also the said performers proposals for playing at the Concerto, together with those of Miss Linley, Mr Linley Jun, and Mr Wm Herchall be likewise accepted.'[42]

2. Bath's other sets of Assembly Rooms.

Sheridan's 'Ridotto' poem is modelled on Christopher Anstey's long and hugely successful *The New Bath Guide* of 1766.[43] In it all features of Bath's life from the point of view of visiting company are characterised in the exploits of the visiting Barnard family, described in a series of letters, each of which takes the reader to an event on the social round that was Bath's season.

Letter 11 takes us to a Ball at the Lower Rooms:

> But hark, now they strike the melodius string,
> The vaulted roof echoes, the mansions all ring:
> At the sound of the hautboy, the bass and the fiddle,
> Sir Boreas Blubber, steps forth in the middle,
> Like a holy-hock, noble, majestic and tall,
> Sir Boreas Blubber first opens the ball:
> Sir Boreas great in the minuet known,
> Since the day that for dancing his talents were shewn
> When the science is practis'd by gentlemen grown,

41 Thomas Rawlinson, 'Comforts of Bath', 1798, plate 10 in a set of satiric drawings.

42 Proceedings of the Committee', 7 October 1771, p. 6.

43 Christopher Anstey *The New Bath Guide, or Memoirs of the B-N-R-D Family*, London, 1766. This long poem in 15 letters went through many editions in eighteenth century and early nineteenth.

For in every science in ev'ry profession.
We make the best progress at years of discretion.
How he puts on his hat, with a smile on this face,
And delivers this hand with an exquisite grace!
How genteely he offers Miss CARROT before us,
Miss Carrot Fitz-Oozer, a niece of Lord Porus,
How nimbly he paces, how alive and light!
One never can judge of a man at first sight;
But as near as I guess from the size of his calf,
He may weight about twenty-stone and a half.
Now why should I mention a hundred or more,
Who went the same circle as others before,
To a tune they play'd us a hundred times o'er?[44]

Figure 5 Sir Boreas Blubber – with horns

Sir Boreas Blubber is unlikely to be Richard ('Beau') Nash (1674-1761), as he is mentioned in the poem as having died. Nash was followed in 1761 for two years by the athletic French dancing master Jacques Caulet (or Collett) who resigned his post on account of the poor earnings, and gave way in 1763 to

44 Anstey, *New Bath Guide*, tenth edition, London, 1776, pp. 100-1.

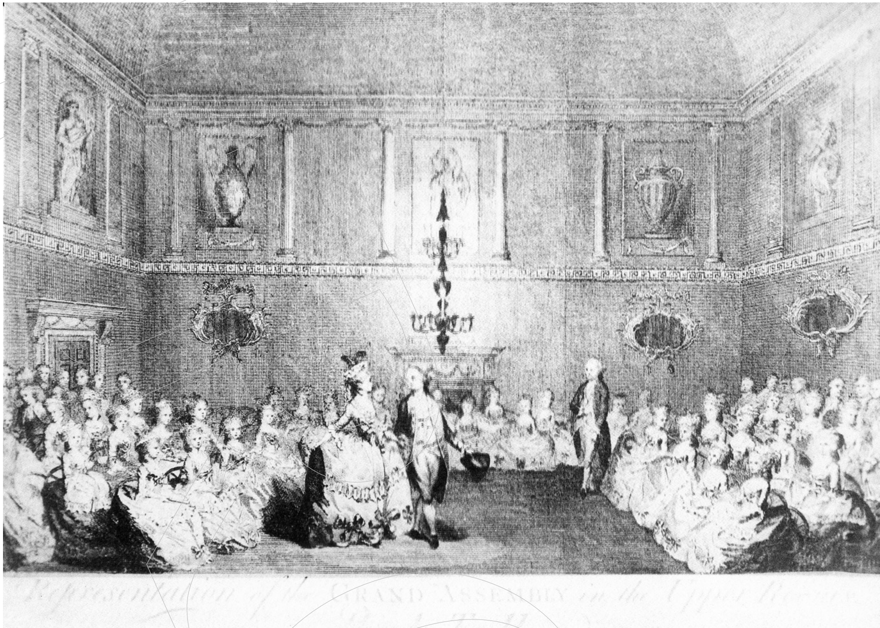


Figure 6 Wade Dancing the Minuet in the Assembly Rooms

the diminutive but scandalous Samuel Derrick (1724-1769), who like Nash coupled the winter and spring seasons in Bath with the summer season as Master of Ceremonies (MC) at Tunbridge Wells.[45] The quote from Anstey refers to the long minuet that survived in Bath until towards the end of the century and indicates elsewhere that they played the same tune for up to two hours. The MC conducted and danced the minuet, introducing new partners into the dance as it progressed through the social ranks.

In fact Bath already had two sets of assembly rooms in 1771 and Anstey's poem is not clear on which is attended – though probably it is Harrison's. These were the first purpose-built assembly rooms, and were constructed in 1709 on the Terraced Walks, near the Abbey and river. These rooms remained until 1820, and were first referred to as 'Harrison's'. After 1745 they became 'Simpson's', later still 'Gyde's', and finally the 'Old or Lower' when the New Assembly Rooms were opened in 1771. Harrison's initial building was a simple two-story structure built into the old city walls with a front entrance on the Terrace Walks. To this was added a ballroom in 1720. It was adjacent to the Parade Gardens and later became the Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution. Harrison's rooms had attached grounds, 'walks' by the river with a summerhouse, and

45 Fawcett, *Bath Entertained*, p. 6.

were also used for music and dancing after breakfast concerts in particular, but also more elaborate musical events with fireworks.[46]

Until 1730 Harrison had a monopoly but overcharged and exploited his position. The public complaints were such that Nash encouraged the London druggist Humphrey Thayer to finance a new set of Assembly Rooms, also built on the Terraced Walks but on the opposite side to Harrison's with a ballroom larger, at 86 feet in length, than Harrison's. The two sets of rooms did not exactly face each other but were only a short distance apart. These new rooms occupied the land where York Street now overlooks Terrace Walk. The rooms that Thayer financed were opened with a breakfast followed by a ball in April 1730. The first proprietor was Dame Lindsey who had run a successful gambling room from her own house in the Gravel Walks and was an established Bath hostess. She was an ex-opera singer who ran the rooms under her own name until her death in 1737 when they were taken over by her housekeeper Catherine Lovelace who entertained the Prince of Wales there in 1738.

Under Nash the rooms functioned well together and operated such that the card assemblies and balls were shared out on different nights so that direct competition was avoided. By convention the Rooms were referred to by the name of the current proprietor. Thus Lindsey's Rooms became Lovelace's in 1738 and Harrison's Rooms became Hayes's when Harrison died in 1731/2. Elizabeth Hayes was Lindsey's sister and the two connived to fix prices for a while in the 1730s.

Subscription Balls in the assembly rooms were a feature of Bath life and followed a strict formula. For full dress Assemblies proper dress was essential. They started at 6pm with formal French dances. This part of the evening was over by about 8pm when refreshments were called for. The dancing would resume at about 9pm with country-dances and continue until 11pm exactly. Dance callers where unheard of and you needed to know the dances in advance in order to participate. Sometimes dancers would meet in other rooms before the start of the ball to rehearse the dancing. Bath had many dance academies where skills could be acquired. [47]

The subscription for the balls was payable on arrival in Bath (at the Assembly Rooms) and gave you a ticket that allowed admission for three people. According to Wood in his *Description of Bath* (p. 417), 'for the Master of [the family] to go to the publick Places, and subscribe Two Guineas at the Assembly-House towards

46 Fawcett, *Bath Entertained*, pp. 5-9.

47 Matthew Spring, 'The Fleming Dance Academy at Bath, 1750-1800', in 'Seventeenth-century dance spaces: the infrastructure', in B. Segal and B. Tuck, eds., *Ballroom, Stage and Village Green* (Early Dance Circle Publication, 2015), pp. 47-52, at 42, and Trevor Fawcett, 'Dance and Teachers of Dance in Eighteenth-Century Bath', *Bath History Journal* 2 (1992), pp. 27-48.

the Balls and Musick in the Pump-House, for which he is entitled to three Tickets every Ball Night. His next Subscription is a Crown, Half a Guinea, or a Guinea, according to his Rank and Quality, for the Liberty of Walking in the private Walks belonging to *Harrison's* Assembly-House.'[48]

The money was used principally to pay the musicians (who also performed in the Pump Rooms in the mornings for two guineas a week). The proprietor of the room made money from the sale of refreshments (tea, chocolate and coffee) and Nash, who orchestrated and directed the whole event, received nothing. Nash instead made his money from gambling – a source of income that gradually dried up as more and more laws were passed to prohibit it.[49] He had not only to be a capable dancer, as he needed to take the place of any missing male dancers, but also to understand all the rules of etiquette and social precedence. He would visit new arrivals to ascertain their rank and fortune and thus be able to fit them in accordingly and to find appropriate partners.

The room was arranged with long benches on which the women who wished to dance would sit and titled women would need the best seats. Where women sat indicated their desire to dance – and older women who did not intend to dance were encouraged to take the back seats. It was impolite for an available man not to ask a woman who wished to dance. The band played from the galleries and it is clear that the band included wind (reed and brass) as well as string players. A large amount of music survives that is titled 'as danced at Bath at the assembles' and a good deal of it was published in Bath. However, little survives with full sets of parts and it is likely that arrangements were hastily assembled and quickly forgotten. As each dance could take a long time it may be that little in the way of music notation was ever used. There were music porters employed at Bath for despatching parts that had been quickly written out.

Apart from playing in the Pump Rooms the real 'bread and butter' work for the band was to play dance music for balls. According to Gillespie, in a typical week of the season there might be a Dress Ball on Monday in the Upper Rooms, a Cotillion Ball in the Lower Rooms on Tuesday (Theatre also on Tuesday), Thursdays saw a Cotillion Ball in the Upper Rooms (Theatre Royal), and a Dress Ball in the Lower Rooms on Fridays. Cotillions were an early form of quadrille. Hundreds of books of dance tunes, arranged for harp or keyboard, were published between 1750 and the1820s and inscribed 'As danced at Court, Bath and all fashionable Assemblies'.

There was one further large city space that was in regular use for balls and that was the City Guildhall. The old Guildhall from the Jacobean period had a long upper room of 29 feet by 72. The present Guildhall was built in 1777 with

48 John Wood, *An Essay towards A Description of the City of Bath*, (Bath, 1742) vol. 2, p. 417.

49 Fawcett, *Bath Entertained*, pp. 45-7.

a large upper ballroom with musicians gallery – to replace the old. Both were used for municipal events, including balls, for the city's permanent inhabitants – the trades people and servant class in particular.[50] As Dickens recounted, in the words of his Master of Ceremonies:

> 'This is a ball-night,' said the M.C., again taking Mr Pickwick's hand, as he rose to go. 'The ball-nights in Bath are moments snatched from Paradise, rendered bewitching by music, beauty, elegance, fashion, etiquette, and – and – above all, by the absence of tradespeople, who are quite inconsistent with Paradise; and who have an amalgamation of themselves at the Guildhall every fortnight, which is, to say the least, remarkable.'[51]

3. Outside spaces for dance

The Walks that were part of Harrison's Assembly Rooms were venues for occasional outside music and dance events throughout the century and constitute Bath's first garden venue. Bath's tradition of breakfasting started in the Assembly Rooms, either inside in the rooms, or from late April or May outside, as the weather allowed. The *Bath Chronicle* for 24 May 1780 mentions that the annual breakfast benefit concert for the wind band that provided the twice-weekly breakfast concerts would take place in the Walks, that year, not in the Spring Gardens. As an 'add on', musicians were available for those wanting to dance Cottilions:

> The Band of Clarionets and Horns most respectfully inform the Nobility, Gentry and public in general, that their Annual BREAKFAST CONCERT, of Vocal and Instrumental MUSIC, which used to the be at the Spring-Gardens, will this year (by particular desire of several Ladies and Gentlemen) be at Mr Gyde's Garden, Walks and Rooms, tomorrow the 25th. The Concert will be performed in the Garden, where an Orchestra will be erected for that purpose. Particulars of the performance will be expressed in the bills of the day. Horns and Clarinets during the Breakfast in the Walks at 10.00; the concert at half past eleven. Tickets at 3s 6d each, breakfast included …N.B Those Ladies and Gentlemen who choose to dance Cotillions, &c a band will be provided for that purpose.[52]

Here the usual annual benefit for the garden musicians was back on the city side of the river in the walks and gardens by the assembly rooms – proving that they were still used for garden functions. The 'orchestra erected for the

50 Fawcett, *Bath Entertained*, p. 48.

51 Charles Dickens, *The Pickwick Papers* [1836] (Chatham: Wordsworth Editions, 2000), p. 465.

52 *Bath Chronicle*, 24 May 1780, no. 1023, p. 3/c.

purpose' would be a raised wooden structure to allow the musicians' sound to travel throughout the gardens, decorated for the event. At this benefit concert 3 shillings and 6 pence purchased the liberty of the gardens (from around 10am, giving you time to have taken the cure), with horns and clarinets performing in the walks outside, a breakfast, followed by a concert at 11.30 and dancing that would go on until around 2pm. It may be that the musicians who were the 'horns and clarinets' would also be the string band provided for the dancing.

The city's first purpose-built pleasure gardens 'The Spring Gardens' appeared in Wood's plan of 1735 on the other side of the river (where the Rugby Ground is today). They were in operation by the 1740s and gathered pace during the 50s. The gardens were modeled on London's Vauxhall Gardens (indeed the London Gardens under Tyers were renamed and re-opened as 'The New Spring Gardens', on the 7 June 1732). The Spring Gardens in Bath were the longest to survive of the six eighteenth-century commercial gardens, finally closing in 1799 after operating for some 60 years, and provided music for public breakfasts in a purpose-built breakfast room. John Wood mentions concert breakfasts at the Assembly Rooms after a visit to the Pump Rooms and Baths, as early as the 1740s,[53] but as the Spring Gardens expanded its activities it took up this commercial activity as well as outside dancing. Under Edmondson's period of tenure 1742-59 the gardens were developed with formal walks, water features and buildings for music, eating and dancing,[54] but it was William Purdie who took over the lease in 1759 who really expanded the programme of entertainments in the spring and summer months.

Prominent and persistent advertising of the music-related events in the Spring Gardens appears from 1761 onwards. Here Purdie is imitating the Vauxhall Gardens in Bristol that had opened for large-scale summer events as early as 1751 under the Austrian horn-playing Charles family. Their events, however, only last during the 1750s and were over by 1760 – and it is then that Bath's garden galas become a feature of Bath life.

The Rev. Penrose was ferried across the river in 1766 for a Spring Gardens public breakfast with dancing that continued until 2pm:

> We … were ferried across the Avon from Orange Grove. Spring Gardens lie along the opposite side of the River. The Passage Boat would hold thirty people, covered over the Head and Sides …. The Gardens are a most delightful Spot, laid out with Gravel Walks, some straight, others serpentine, with a fine Canal in one Place, and a fine Pond in another, with the greatest Variety of Shrubs. In these Gardens is a large handsome Building, wherein is a Breakfast Room capacious enough to hold many sets of Company, having

53 John Wood, *An Essay towards A Description of the City of Bath*, (Bath, 1742) vol. 2, 437-38.

54 Fawcett, *Bath Entertain'd*, 58.

> six windows in the side, (so you see it must be long) and proportionally wide.[55]

Spring Gardens were only accessible by ferry until Pulteney Bridge was completed in 1774. Indeed the ferry ride across and along the river was part of the experience (Purdie also held rights in the ferryboat service). Normal admission to the gardens was 6d (or 2s 6d for a season ticket), and a metal disc was provided by way of a ticket – these could be copper or silver. This compares with Tyers's normal charge of a shilling for London's New Spring Gardens (Vauxhall). However, Bath's garden breakfasts on Mondays and Thursdays with music cost more at 1s and 6d. Penrose's diary account of a breakfast party in the Spring Gardens is closely corroborated in Christopher Anstey's satire on Bath, *The New Bath Guide*, first published in the same year, 1766. Here Lord Ragamuffin on meeting the Barnard family invites them to his private breakfast party at the Spring Gardens. He suggests to Simkin Barnard: 'it would greatly our pleasure promote, If we all for *Spring-Gardens* set out in a boat'.[56] This they do and later at the breakfast table:

> The company made a most brilliant appearance,
> And ate bread and butter with great perseverance;
> All the chocolate too, that my Lord set before 'em,
> The ladies dispatched with utmost decorum,
> Soft musical numbers were heard all around,
> The horns and the clarionets echoing sound:
> Sweet were the strains, as od'rous gales that blow
> O'er fragrant banks, where pinks and roses grow.[57]

Somewhat later after his Lordship attempts the courtship of Lady Bunbutter,

> … while she ate up his rolls and applauded his wit:
> For they tell me that men of true taste when they treat,
> Should talk a great deal, but they never should eat:
> And if that be the fashion I never will give
> Any grand entertainment as long as I live:
> For I'm of opinion 'tis proper to cheer
> The stomach and bowels as well as the ear,
> Nor me did the charming concerto of Abel:
> Regale like the breakfast I saw on the table:

55 John Penrose, *Letters from Bath, 1766-1767*, B. Mitchell and H. Penrose (eds), Gloucester, 1983, 96, 106.

56 Richard Anstey, *The New Bath Guide, or Memoirs of the B-N-R-D Family*, London 1766, 120.

57 Anstey, *New Bath Guide*, 122.

I freely will own I the muffins preferr'd
To all the genteel conversation I heard.[58]

Mention of Carl Frederick Abel is interesting as he was a great favorite in Bath from his first visit in 1760 and returned regularly to play his own music, principally on the viol, in the Card Rooms of the Lower Assembly. He was a prolific composer and leader of the Bach/Abel concerts that led one section of London's musical elite. The younger company of Lord Ragamuffin's Spring Garden's breakfast party then proceed to dancing, after much gossipy conversation, again with reference to 'Horns tickling the ear' during the meal:

But those who knew better their time how to spend,
The fiddling and dancing all chose to attend.
Miss CLUNCH and Sir TOBY perform'd a *Cotillion*,
Just the same as our SUSAN and BOB the postillion;
All the while her mamma was expressing her joy,
That her daughter the morning so well could employ.[59]

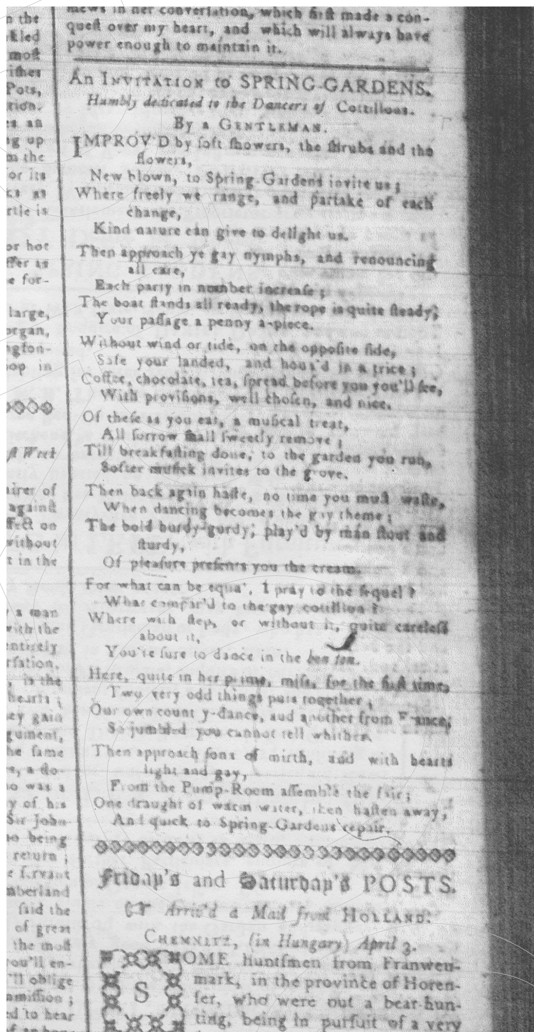
Lord Ragamuffin produces a climax to the breakfast festivities 'In handing the Lady Bumfidget and daughter, This obsequious Lord tumbled into the water.' Here we have horns and clarinets playing outside in gardens while the breakfast is eaten, followed later by violins to play for the dancing.[60] Numerous advertisements throughout the 1760s to the early 1790s indicate that horns and clarinets were indeed the normal music of the Spring Gardens for public and private breakfasts, though they might also be a feature of inside breakfasts.

Further details of the music for public breakfasts is found in the newspaper poem 'An Invitation to SPRING-GARDENS, *Humbly dedicated to the Dancers of Cottillions*. By a GENTLEMAN.' This is little more than an advertisement paid for by, or at the behest of, Purdie, to advertise the start of the season for outside breakfasts at the beginning of May (Figure 7). From it we learn that the boat passage cost a penny, that the company assembled at the Pump Rooms after the cure, that both French and English tunes were used for the cotillions and that several sorts of music were provided, firstly in the breakfasting house – presumably the horns and clarinets that also played in the grove – but whereas Anstey's breakfast party then danced to fiddles, the 'Invitation' suggests a single hurdy-gurdy man provided the music for the dancing. The implication is that the dancing went on both in the purpose-built breakfasting room as well as outside in the gardens.

58 Anstey, *New Bath Guide,* 124.

59 Anstey, *New Bath Guide*, p. 127.

60 Anstey, *New Bath Guide,* p.128.



...news in her converſation, which firſt made a conqueſt over my heart, and which will always have power enough to maintain it.

An Invitation to SPRING-GARDENS.
Humbly dedicated to the Dancers of Cotillons.
By a Gentleman.

IMPROV'D by ſoft ſhowers, the ſhrubs and the flowers,
New blown, to Spring-Gardens invite us;
Where freely we range, and partake of each change,
Kind nature can give to delight us.

Then approach ye gay nymphs, and renouncing all care,
Each party in number increaſe;
The boat ſtands all ready, the rope is quite ſteady;
Your paſſage a penny a-piece.

Without wind or tide, on the oppoſite ſide,
Safe your landed, and hous'd in a trice;
Coffee, chocolate, tea, ſpread before you you'll ſee,
With proviſions, well choſen, and nice.

Of theſe as you eat, a muſical treat,
All ſorrow ſhall ſweetly remove;
Till breakfaſting done, to the garden you run,
Softer muſick invites to the grove.

Then back again haſte, no time you muſt waſte,
When dancing becomes the gay theme;
The bold hurdy-gurdy, play'd by man ſtout and ſturdy,
Of pleaſure preſents you the cream.

For what can be equal, I pray to the ſequel?
What compar'd to the gay cotillion?
Where with ſtep, or without it, quite careleſs about it,
You're ſure to dance in the *bon ton*.

Here, quite in her prime, miſs, for the firſt time,
Two very odd things puts together,
Our own country-dance, and another from France,
So jumbled you cannot tell whither.

Then approach ſons of mirth, and with hearts light and gay,
From the Pump-Room aſſemble the fair;
One draught of warm water, then haſten away,
And quick to Spring-Gardens repair.

Friday's and Saturday's POSTS.
Arriv'd a Mail from Holland.
Chemnitz, (*in Hungary*) *April* 3.

SOME huntſmen from Franwenmark, in the province of Horenſer, who were out a bear-hunting, being in purſuit of a very...

Figure 7 Invitation to Spring Gardens, *Bath Chronicle* **7 May 1767, no. 342, p. 1/c.**

4. Other Venues for Social Dance

There were three other main venues for social dance. The several large hotels and inns in Bath had large upper rooms in which balls were advertised to take place – in particular the coaching inns such as the White Lion and Pelican had spaces large enough for dancing. For instance, an advertisement for the Pelican Great Room of Tuesday Dec 26 1758 reads: 'Ball: There will be a good Band of

Music provided: And no Persons in Livery will be admitted.'[61]

At any time Bath had a number of dance 'Academys' which had spaces for rehearsal and the teaching of dance. Lastly, private homes were frequently fitted up for private balls on a smaller scale throughout the Georgian period. And clearly the company practised dancing in their homes. When in Anstey's New Bath Guide, Simpkin Barnard, the son of house, shortly after his arrival in Bath is accosted by the sound of bells and fiddles:

> No city, dear mother, this city excels,
> For charming sweet sounds of fiddles and bells.[62]

The bells are the Abbey bells that are rung for each new member of the company – a distinction that he has to pay for. Then the city musicians, that is, the Town Waits arrive:

> For when we arrived here at Bath t'other day,
> They came to our lodging on purpose to play,
> And I thought it was right, as the music was come,
> To foot it a little in Tabitha's Room:
> For practice makes perfect, as often I've read,
> And to heels is of service as well as the head,
> But the lodgers were shocked such a noise we should make,[63]

After complaints from the neighbouring lodgers he pays them off:

> So while they were playing their musical aires,
> And I was just dancing the hay round the chairs,
> He roars to his Frenchman to kick them down stairs,[64]

Again he must pay for the music to stop:

> So I thank'd the musicians and gave them a guinea,
> Tho' the ladies and gentlemen call'd me a ninny;[65]

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61 *Bath Advertiser*, Dec 23 1758 no.163. p.4/a. Ball on Tuesday December 26 1758, 'There will be a good Band of Music provided: And no persons in Livery will be admitted.'

62 Anstey, *New Bath Guide*, tenth edition, p. 35.

63 Anstey, *New Bath Guide*, tenth edition, p. 38.

64 Anstey, *New Bath Guide*, tenth edition, p. 39.

65 Anstey, *New Bath Guide*, tenth edition, p. 41.

5. Conclusion

Social dance was a central activity that took place in a variety of Bath's city spaces. It could not take place without the music that animated these spaces. Without music they could not fully function as public and private spheres where social interactions based on codes of movement, dress and gesture could take place. Some, like the Upper Assembly Rooms were designed specifically for it – but other buildings and indeed the outside could be adapted to serve as a dancing space. The most important and costly elements that were needed were lighting and music. The organisation of the evening moved from the formal dances to the less formal, and provision for non-dancers was always there. The whole evening had its own greater choreography with the movement to and from the rooms and through the rooms during the course of the evening. Dance was the key means of social engagement, both within one's class and outside, around which the evening was structured. All that was necessary was to have paid the ticket fee, have the appropriate dancing skills and be correctly dressed.

PROOF

Quarrelling Brothers: The establishment of the Académie Royale de Danse and changes in dance teaching

RICARDO BARROS WITH NICOLETTE MOONEN

Nicholas Bonnard, Le maître à danser, 1682.

In March 1661 King Louis XIV of France announced the foundation of the Académie Royale de Danse. The decree, one of his first after Louis effectively rose to power, has been regarded by modern eyes as a beacon symbolising the King's passion for dancing and, most importantly, for the further enhancement of the dance profession and teaching.

Its founding document – the *Lettres Patentes*,[1] verified by the Parliament in March 1662 and only published the following year – outlines a twofold purpose: to prevent 'abuses capable of ruining this art beyond repair, caused by those ignorant or unskilled who show it in public',[2] and to 're-establish the art to its former perfection and to develop it whenever possible'.[3] Rather succinct, with only twenty-two pages, the document sets out twelve statutes and, as we shall note, implicitly pledges the standardisation of teaching methods and rising standards in dance profession (including performance and choreography).

The modus operandi of the Académie consisted of nominating, at first, thirteen so-called 'experts', or 'Ancient Dancing Masters',[4] who would meet once a month in order to 'discuss the status of dance, advise and deliberate on methods to improve it, and correct abuses and faults that have, or might henceforth, be introduced'.[5] Quite importantly, it established that the thirteen masters should run the Académie 'according to the set of [twelve] statutes' [6] attached to the *Lettres Patentes*.

However, what were such 'abuses' that compromised the integrity of the Art? What was the status quo, political or social, which set the scene for such shuffling to happen? Did the new institution fit its purpose? In order to answer that, we need to observe the political controversy that rose from its creation – a bitter quarrel that lasted over three decades and which brought centre stage another powerful character: the Confrairie [sic] de St Julien.

In reality, the Académie Royale de Danse wasn't the first institution created in France with the purpose of regulating artistic production and teaching. Established in 1331, the Confrairie de St Julien was a guild (or 'Maîtrise') formed with the purpose of regulating Dancing Masters and instrumentalists. These included 'high' musicians (i.e. violin family and viols) and 'low' musicians (i.e. minstrels, bagpipers, hurdy-gurdy, pipe & tabor players). Interestingly, another Royal Decree of 1658 (just three years before the foundation of the Académie) established the revised statutes of the Confrairie which ruled, amongst many other things, that:

> The Masters, either in Paris or any other town of the Kingdom, shall keep any apprentice for a period of four years. […] Nobody from the Kingdom

1 *Letres patentes du Roy pour l'etablissement de l'Académie Royale de Danse en la ville de Paris* (Paris, 1663) <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k76291j> (last accessed 28 April 2016).

2 *Letres patentes*, pp.4-5.

3 *Letres patentes*, p.6.

4 *Letres patentes*, I, p.13.

5 *Letres patentes*, II, p.13.

6 *Letres patentes*, pp.8-9.

> or from abroad can open schools, particularly teach dances or how to play instruments, congregate in ensembles either at day or night – be it in public or private assemblies – or for this matter engage in any exercise of this science without having received the title of Master, or having it agreed by the 'King of the violins' [a title given to the chairman] or any of his lieutenants. [7]

Furthermore, any candidates who wished to join the Confrairie should (in addition to being submitted to the four-year long apprenticeship) pay sixty *livres* to the 'King of Violins', and ten *livres* for each single Master. Every Master should in turn pay the Confrairie thirty *sous* per year for their licence, and to pay the 'King of Violins' an extra fee for each of their pupils.[8] One can quickly appreciate the substantial amount of money being exchanged for the licenses to join the Confrairie, considering that there were between four and five thousand Dancing Masters associated to the guild in the early 1660s.[9]

One of the main controversies surrounding the establishment of the Académie was the self-proclaimed 'independence' of Dance from the Confrairie's statutes, as that Art would thenceforth be overseen by the new, rivalling Royal Academy:

> We wish that the Art of Dancing to be forever more exempt from any regulations of guilds [*Lettres de Maîtrises*] [...], and if any such regulations rose, they are to be considered revoked, null and with no effect [...], and [the culprits] be subject to a fine of 1500 *livres*, plus damages and interest, payable to the Académie. [10]

In fact, the Académie stood in direct opposition against the old Confrairie in many other issues, as can be noted in the Académie's *Lettres Patentes* and statutes. For instance:

- **Article III** dictates that every Saturday, two chosen Ancient Masters would meet and receive other Dancing Masters 'or others' (complete novices,

7 *Statuts et Reglemens des Maîtres de Danses et Joueurs d'instrumens, tant hauts que bas, pour toutes les villes du royaume, registrés en Parlement le vingt-deuxième Août 1659.* Statues I and VI (Paris, D'Houry et Fils, 1753), contained in Micheline Cumant, *Musicien et Professeur de Musique au XVIIIème siècle*, Wisconsin, Books on Demand, 2013, pp.12-14.

8 According to Francis Turner in 'Money exchange rates in 1632' <http://1632.org/1632Slush/1632money.rtf> (last accessed 28 Dec 2014), 1 French *livre* = 1 guilder of the time = £24 in today's money. Thus, approximate conversions are: 60 *livres* = £1440; 10 *livres* = £240; 30 *sous* = 1.5 *livres* = £36. For an indication of monetary value based on estimate of rates of pay, please visit <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~unclefred/MONETARY.htm> (last accessed 28 Dec 2014).

9 Guillaume Dumanoir, *Le Mariage de la Musique avec la Dance*, Paris, 1664, Arnaldo Forni facs. edn., Bologna ,1985, p.47.

10 *Letres patentes,* p.10, also repeated on article X of Statutes, p.20.

perhaps?) who wished to teach dancing. Their task was 'to instruct these candidates on the way of dancing', and show them both old and new dances that had or would be created by the thirteen Ancient Masters. That way 'those wishing to teach would be capable of showing and avoiding the abuses and bad habits that could be contracted'.[11]

- **Article VI** dictates that those wishing to apply for a membership should submit to the training with the 'Ancients', at a cost of 150 *livres* chargeable to the sons of existing Masters, or 300 *livres* from anybody else.[12]
- **Article VII** says that all those wishing to embark in the dance profession should register with the Académie, at the risk of never being allowed to join it if found otherwise.[13]
- **Article VIII** dictates that any choreography (old or new) should be approved by the Académie before being shown or taught.[14]

As one would expect this caused uproar, because violinists – who until then were entitled to teach violin and dancing under the Confrairie's regulations – were no longer permitted to 'hold classes' unless they, too, submitted to a costly re-training process to become associates of the new institution.

At that time, the 'King of the Violin' (the leader of the Confrairie) was Guillaume Dumanoir (1615-1697), a violinist, leader of the famous Vingt-quatre violons du Roy since 1655 – in fact, the one who really had daily contact with the orchestra, while its director Jean Baptiste Lully (particularly from 1661 onwards when the later assumed the post of *surintendant de musique*) only directed the Vingt-quatre on special occasions.

Not surprisingly, the main opposer to the establishment of the Académie was Dumanoir, the one receiving substantial regular payments in the capacity of 'King of the violins'. Soon after its foundation was announced, Dumanoir filed a court case against the Académie. His case was simply dismissed by the Parliament, and a harsh punishment was put in place against those not associated with the Académie who attempted to teach dancing – this included destroying their instruments and imprisonment.[15]

Having stirred the bees' nest, Dumanoir's arguments caused the problem to escalate, with an irate response from the Academicians entitled *Academic*

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11 *Letres patentes*, III, pp.14-15.

12 *Letres patentes*, VI, pp.17-18. According to Francis Turner (footnote 8), 150 *livres* = £3,600; 300 *livres* = £7,200.

13 *Letres patentes*, VII, p.18.

14 *Letres patentes*, VIII, p.18-19.

15 *Letres patentes*, under '*Arrest du Parlement de Paris, qui démet les Maistres Violons, de l'opposition par eux formée à l'enregistrement des Lettres d'établissement de l'Academie de Danse*', p.28.

discourse, to prove that dancing, in its most noble form, does not need musical instruments, and that it is absolutely independent from the violin.[16] This discourse, published together with the original *Lettres Patentes* in 1663, provocatively rebuts Dumanoir's offensives stating, in the opening paragraph, that:

> It is difficult to imagine that Dance and the instruments – which have lived agreeably together for many centuries – could become confused in our [century], where both have reached their perfection. It was believed that their association was formed based on that of the harmony and movement of heavens, and that it should last forever. Also, Dance protests that it has never contributed to their disagreement, and that it has always been ready to follow [Music's] movements, provided these [movements] would equally be willing to adjust to those of Dance, and preserve this equality that made and sustains their association. But since the Violin – swollen with pride for having been introduced in the chambers of the greatest King, and for finding itself being favourably heard in all the entertainments – has wished to grant itself a superiority unheard of […], Dance has believed it necessary to stand opposed to such a novelty, and to announce its independence from Music: to which it has well succeeded, for the King in his Providence has decided it was fair to establish a Royal Academy of Dance, where nothing of Music neither of instruments enter; just to prove that although Dance and the Violin have met thousands of times for the entertainments, they have not melted one into the other, and that there is no reason why to merge them. [17]

It seems that the thirteen academicians must have weighed Dumanoir's repute and considerable influence in the musical scene of the time, having decided to step up their offensive a notch to a quasi-personal level – not so much disparaging 'Music', but aiming at the Violin, and more directly at Dumanoir's person. The Academicians' tirades intensify, with a number of affirmations that are at times contradictory, if not bordering the nonsensical:

- They state that Dance is 'a body capable of subsisting without music'.[18]
- They vaguely attempt to appease matters, stating that Dance shall not 'speak in detrimental terms to Music, to which it shall always hold in high esteem; it will only endeavour to show its independence from the Violin, which has

16 *Letres patentes*, under '*Discours Academique, pous prouver que la Danse dans sa plus noble partie n'a pas besoin des instruments de Musique, et qu'elle est en tout absolument indépendante du Violon*', pp.33-48.

17 *Letres patentes*, pp.33-35.

18 *Letres patentes*, p.36.

attempted to subject her'.[19] Note here the clear distinction between 'Music' and 'Violin', in a subtle innuendo that violinists are not real musicians.

- They argue that music only pleases the ears, while Dance 'truly unveils the secret emotions of the Soul',[20] once again suggesting that Music is nothing but insipid and incapable of stirring emotions.
- They claim that Music is 'absolutely useless to those learning to dance', who wouldn't be able to follow the rhythm of music without first having learned the steps – the violin solely 'animates the dancers',[21] and the implication is that the violins cannot offer anything of value in the teaching of dancing, as if their liaison was so superficial to be singularly based on rhythmical counterpoint, if not on the shallowest form of 'counting'.
- They question the credibility of the violins as they allegedly rise themselves to the status of 'kings' (alluding to Dumanoir's title at the Confrairie) and 'Dancing masters' for all they do is to play sounds – while Dance, 'through studied movements, devised steps, well-ordered figures, and thousands of eloquent movements, [...] endeavours to make the silence speak before the eyes of the spectators [and,] without resorting to the voice, make clear the nature, condition, state and passion of those characters it represents',[22] once again implying that Music is sterile and does not succeed in conveying such Passions.
- They claim that the Violin doesn't leave any lasting impressions on the body or in the spirit, for it only briefly 'flatters the ears' before its sounds disappear – while 'Dance imprints a sense of propriety (decency) and disentanglement on the body of those who practise it, and in the souls of those who watch it.'[23]

It is clear that a major rupture from the previous teaching tradition was on the verge of being adopted. Possibly risen from genuine good intentions at first, the bitterness of the ever escalating arguments – a real battle of wills – must have taken the better of the 'Ancients' who stepped up their offensive with this Discourse, to the point of completely banishing music from dance classes. This brutal response in turn provoked an even harsher open counter-attack by the Confrairie, personified by Dumanoir.

Published in 1664, *Le Mariage de la Musique avec la Danse*[24] was Dumanoir's

19 *Letres patentes*, pp.36-37.

20 *Letres patentes*, pp.38-39.

21 *Letres patentes*, pp.42-43.

22 *Letres patentes*, pp.44-45.

23 *Letres patentes*, pp.45-46.

24 Guillaume Dumanoir, *Le Mariage de la Musique avec la Dance*, Paris, 1664, Arnaldo Forni facs. edn., Bologna, 1985.

published response to the Academicians' aggressive Discourse. It lists the inconsistencies and contradictions of the Academicians' rhetoric, in an attempt to expose their flaws, undermine their influence, diminish their reputation and revoke their powers. Throughout the book, Dumanoir writes under the role of 'Music' itself and refers to Academicians as 'reckless, pretentious, presumptuous, blind, proud children, evil spirits, rebels, great prophets, delicate gents'[25] amongst other derogatory terms – any hint of propriety and composure was long gone, for the controversy had reached new 'lows' and the debate was thence very much indeed in personal terms. Dumanoir argues that the Académie was the product of the thirteen Ancients' ambitions, and not of the King's will, and counter-argues:

- To the statement that dancers shall be free from the Confrairie's ruling: 'These audacious blinds [the thirteen Ancients] have, most of them, played the violin or other instrument for their whole lives, and know deep in their soul that Dance without music shall be nothing but disorder.'[26]
- He points the contradiction that, if the governing body would be composed by 'thirteen Ancient Masters', these would obviously need to be 'Masters' (associated to the Maîtrise), in order to join the Académie; so if all links to the Confrairie and Lettres de Maîtrise to be considered void under the *Lettres Patentes*' regulations, this would also null their own 'Dancing Master' titles and, as such, the Académie would not be able to exist in the first place.[27]
- Dumanoir questions if Ancients have considered the implications of changing the fortune of all Dancing Masters and depriving them of a legitimate 'Maîtrise'.[28]
- To the statements that 'Music shall not be allowed in the Académie' and to the suggestion that the link between Music and Dance is shallowly based on rhythm, Dumanoir states that just like in painting and sculpture there needs to be a material or a canvas in order for the work to be created: 'it's not necessary to just have the wish to dance, and to have created in your soul all steps and figures, and even having good feet and legs to perform such task – above all, you need a medium for this exercise, in the form of harmony, the melody, the rules and bars, the movement and cadence of music [...], otherwise it would be impossible either to teach or to learn any dance, which would be like a body without a soul'.[29]

25 Dumanoir, *Le Mariage*, p.58.

26 Dumanoir, *Le Mariage*, p.4.

27 Dumanoir, *Le Mariage*, pp.13-14.

28 Dumanoir, *Le Mariage*, p.5.

29 Dumanoir, *Le Mariage*, pp.10-12.

- He argues that most of the thirteen 'Ancients' are in fact very young, and there are many older and more experienced 'Ancients' who could more aptly do their job.[30]
- He points Academicians' basic faults when, for instance, choreographing *Menuets* that are set to scores of *Sarabandes* or even *Chaconnes*, 'just because the time signature is the same', and similarly that they have adapted the *Pas de Bourrée* to fit the *Gavotte*, even though these are very different musical forms.[31]
- Dumanoir challenges the statement of the Académie's concern with 'preventing abuses', pointing out that the exclusive group of thirteen Ancients themselves are committing an abuse in taking on the task of the inspecting and overlooking all of the choreographic production, either old or new, according to the Académie's own Statute VIII,[32] not to mention overlooking all the training of candidates, monopolising the process and, more worryingly, moulding and inculcating their own style and approach in the candidates.
- He affirms that nothing but pure jealousy and vanity rule the Academicians' spirits, as they 'incessantly question the incontestable, and wish to separate the two art forms, which are effectively one single body'.[33]

Personal attacks aside, Dumanoir's well-argued counter-case highlights significant inconsistencies in the governing body of the proposed Académie Royale de Danse. Perhaps Dumanoir's social status (given his post as leader of the Vingt-quatre) and closeness to Lully might have lent considerable weight and credibility to his counter-arguments, as it fuelled an ongoing dispute on whether monopoly should be granted to the Académie, and consequently to the thirteen 'Ancients'.

Dumanoir might have been genuinely concerned with the status quo of relations between music and dancing, and how it was about to take a deep plunge. But one cannot fail to consider that the underlying reason for his rage might have been the triple financial impact it had on himself, on violinists in general and on the Confrairie. Dancing masters who defected to the Académie no longer paid their license (a hefty sum, as previously stated) to the Confrairie or to Dumanoir, meaning loss of income to the ageing guild and to himself. Violinists would not be able to teach dance in France (unless they defected to the Académie), meaning personal loss of income; but even those considering to defect would incur the costly expenses of membership, submit to the lengthy

30 Dumanoir, *Le Mariage*, pp.25-26.

31 Dumanoir, *Le Mariage*, p.32.

32 Dumanoir, *Le Mariage*, pp.28-29.

33 Dumanoir, *Le Mariage*, p.59.

and patronising re-training process, resulting in very bruised egos. It is very likely that such impositions may have been a contributing factor in compelling dancing masters to seek employment further afield in Europe, at that specific time.

In defence of the Académie, one could argue that the ageing Confrairie might have lost its hold on the 'quality control' when allowing members to join. After all, the Confrairie enlisted all sorts of musicians, from court violinists to *jongleurs* and street buskers. Perhaps the main aim of the new Académie was not to blatantly dissociate dance from music, but rather to distance itself from the amateurish stigma of the Confrairie.

Amidst the controversy, one could wrongly assume that the Confrairie would have had its final blow in 1669, when the Académie Royale de Musique was created. But the main purpose of the latter was rather different from those of its Dance counterpart. Although to a certain extent it regulated musical artistic production, it wasn't concerned at all with the training of music masters, as its main objective was to develop Opera in France – hence its dual connotation of enlisting composers as members, but also having its head-quarters doubled as the main Parisian Opera house (also known as Académie Royale de Musique). Thus, its establishment did not impose any further threat to the ailing and bruised Confrairie.

Whatever the real motives for both parties were, Dumanoir's intervention and persistence eventually paid off, as according to Philippe le Moal (*inspecteur de la création artistique au ministère de la Culture et de la Communication*), the quarrel finally died down in 1695 with a solemn judgement substantially granting the same rights to both parties.[34] Despite this, the Académie's power and influence grew stronger. Having not managed to secure full control over the training of Dancing Masters, at least it made sure to use a firm hand when exerting control over creative output. One of the most renowned cases of the Académie's intervention in this matter was the heavy criticism they published in the *Mercure de France* in September 1732 on Pierre Rameau's own system of notation, which had been published in the three editions of his *Abbregé* [sic] *de la Nouvelle Methode* (c.1725, c.1728 and c.1732).[35] The newly developed system was greatly derived from the Beauchamps-Feuillet system, but seemed to be met with raised eyebrows by the well-established and powerful top league

34 Philippe de Moal, *Création de l'Académie royale de danse* <http://www.archivesdefrance.culture.gouv.fr/action-culturelle/celebrations-nationales/recueil-2011/beaux-arts-musique-et-cinema/creation-de-l-academie-royale-de-danse> (last accessed 28 April 2016).

35 Pierre Rameau, *Abbregé de la nouvelle methode, dans l'Art d'ecrire ou de traçer toute sortes de danses de ville* (Paris, *c.* 1725) <https://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=musdi&fileName=141/musdi141.db&recNum=0> (last accessed 28 April 2016).

of the Academy's 'elders'. According to Meredith Ellis Little and Carol Marsh, this was originally instigated by the Parisian dancing master Hardoüin.[36] The newspaper article reported that Rameau's system had 'totally destroyed' the previous Beauchamps-Feuillet system, and the criticism led to Rameau agreeing not to republish his work.

On the other hand, the frail Confrairie continued to be battered by rebelling members. The stigma associated with the Confrairie became much more obvious when a group of keyboard players (organists and harpsichordists) rebelled against the forced membership, and published a manifesto in 1695 advocating the reasons why they should not be seen as part of the guild (and, quite conveniently, not having to pay their taxes to them either). The quarrel went on until 1750, when Parliament dismissed the counter-claims pressed by Guignon, by that time Dumanoir's successor as the 'King of Violins'. Guignon renounced his position in 1773, not long before the Confrairie ceased to exist in 1789.

It seems that a varying level of ability amongst instrumentalists and dancing masters in the Confrairie – which caused the separation between 'minstrels' (*bas musiciens*) and violinists (*haut musiciens*) – might have been the cause for the rupture. Dancers no longer might have wanted to be associated with the Confrairie and its stigma as an old institution, but instead be associated to the new, approved by Royal seal, Académie. However, a similar inconsistency in levels seemed to have been carried over to the new institution, as regardless of how rigid the training and monitoring of dancers and their activities were being carried out by the 'Ancient Academicians', there were always better choreographers than others. It is notable that there were choreographers wishing to explore further the intimate choreo-musical relation, as opposed to others devoted to 'functional' dancing represented by choreographies that could work reasonably well to virtually any given piece of music with same time signature and phrase length, illustrating the great chasm between choreographic styles, regardless of the training they received. It seems that the institutionalisation process of dancing – be it to a Royal institution or a guild – might have carried equivalent political kudos, but the results that really count were solely due to the artistic skill of those who were associated to either the Confrairie or the Académie.

After all, what are the factors that so intrinsically tie dance and music together? Apart from the obvious harmony, melody, phrasing, cadence and rhythm provided by the music, Dumanoir refers to what I personally believe to be the precise ligament which amalgamates them: the relationship between bowing and *mouvement*, the building block to achieve cohesive phrasing, technical prowess and, above all, an expressive performance. According to him,

36 Meredith Little and Carol Marsh, *La danse noble: An inventory of dances and sources,* Williamstown, Broude Brothers Ltd., 1992, p. 124.

'the violin is the most appropriate instrument to make one dance, for it marks better than any other, the *mouvements* and all cadences [rhythms]'.[37]

Michel De Pure gives an equally important insight in his book *Idée des Spectacles Anciens et Nouveaux*:

> The airs de Ballet should be played in a way that is not inconclusive, neither as languid as one could possibly play them. One should avoid ornamentations commonly employed by the voice, but give it an outspoken passion, a particular vivacity, while ensuring it always provides a lift [to the dancers]. Its [notes] should be rather shorter than longer, so that the dancer could prepare for the following rest, capriole or any other jump that he might perform in the following bar. [38]

Having entered service to Louis XIV in 1652 as a dancer, already in 1653 Lully was appointed director of the reduced Petits Violons with which he experimented and elaborated the technique demanded for string instruments to play dance music. One can assume confidently that his work was based on the choreomusical relation of retakes-*mouvements*, for being a dancer and musician himself, he understood it like few. He enforced and expanded on the practice of adopting the 'Down-bow rule', already mentioned by Marin Mersenne in 1636.[39] Later in 1661 when he took control of the larger Vingt-quatre violons du Roy, he also imprinted his mark on that renowned ensemble, remarkably raising its status to one of the most famous in Europe. Apart from Mersenne's succinct text, the only other account of such practice survives in Georg Muffat's book *Florilegium Secundum*,[40] in which the author – a German visitor spending a sojourn in Paris – minutely writes down what he witnessed in Lully's orchestra in order to apply that technique back home.

The 'down-bow rule' consisted of making use of the naturally weightier sound of the down-bow stroke in every first beat of music bars, granting a natural and more controlled accent, in contrast to the weaker up-bow. Muffat emphasises how subtle such 'lift' was, and how the phrasing was not compromised by such a refined technique, writing:

> The greatest skill of the Lullists lies in the fact that even with so many repeated down-bows, nothing unpleasant is heard, but rather that they wondrously combine a long line with practised dexterity, a variety of dance movements with the exact uniformity of the harmony, and lively playing

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37 Dumanoir, *Le Mariage*, pp.60-61.

38 Michel De Pure, *Idée des spectacles anciens et nouveaux*, Paris, 1668; Minkoff facs. edn., Geneva, 1972, p.265.

39 Marin Mersenne, *Harmonie Universelle*, part II, book IV (Paris, 1636) <http:imslp.org/wiki/Special:ImagefromIndex/77447> (last accessed 9 May 2016), p.185.

40 Georg Muffat, *Florilegium Secundum*, Passau, 1698.

with an extraordinarily delicate beauty.[41]

Before explaining in detail how the bowing is to be negotiated in various musical passages – according to the practice of the Lullists – Muffat sets out a few general rules:

> Rule 1: The first note of a measure which begins without a rest, whatever its value, should always be played down-bow. This is the most important and nearly indispensable general rule of the Lullists upon which the whole style depends.[42]
>
> Rule 3: Of the three notes which make up a whole measure in triple time, the first would be played down-bow, the second up-bow and the third down-bow, when played slowly, according to rule 1; this means one would play two down-bows in a row at the beginning of the following measure. If one plays faster, the second and third notes are often both played up-bow, the bow springing equally on each note.[43]

This process creates a minute, very subtle gap – more like a 'lift' – in the phrase, allowing dancers to perceive the timing and intensity of such a retake in order to precisely place their next step, at the same time judging the necessary energy to be employed and character to be conveyed in any given passage, only by judiciously being aware of the musical phrasing. Likewise, musicians cross-feed from the phrasing communicated by the dancers, its intensity and character, and are able to judge if – in nexus with the harmonic, phrasal and rhythmical parameters of a given passage – they might continue the flow or present a new, contrasting Passion in their discourse. Rather than being constricted by rigid counting, this way both dancers and musicians achieve a wondrous elasticity and freedom in phrasing which can convey harmonious fusion (when both dance and music share the same ideas in a given passage) or highlight a contrapuntal dialogue (when eventually rhythmical – and phrasal – elements are not congruent and hence retake-*mouvement* relation becomes broken, making a feature of such incongruity).[44]

Unfortunately, it seems that the heated political argument between Academicians and Confrères overlooked the necessity to maintain the integrity of the Art for its sake. Were it not for the spirit of those truly committed to the

41 David Wilson, *Georg Muffat on Performance Practice: The Texts from Florilegium Primum, Florilegium Secundum, and Auserlesene Instrumentalmusik: a New Translation with Commentary*, Indiana, Indiana University Press, 2001, p.41.

42 Wilson, *Georg Muffat on Performance Practice*, p.34.

43 Wilson, *Georg Muffat on Performance Practice*, p.35.

44 A detailed analysis on the choreomusical relation found in retakes-*mouvements* will be the subject of a forthcoming paper.

Arts – who continued to thrive, create and perform – perhaps such high art form might have fallen into oblivion sooner than it did, when eventually dancing and music were fatally separated in distinct sects.

Perhaps the best commentary on the absurd allegations and on the disproportionate nature of the quarrel, can be seen in Molière's prologue to *L'Amour Médecin*, set to music by Lully and premièred in 1665, at the height of the dispute. Here, Music, Dance and Poetry set aside their differences and unite to praise 'the greatest king on Earth':

Quittons, quittons notre vaine querelle,
Ne nous disputons point nos talents tour à tour.
Et d'une gloire plus belle
Piquons nous en ce jour
Unissons nous tous trois d'une ardeur sans seconde,
Pour donner du plaisir au plus grand Roy du monde.

De ces travaux plus grand qu'on ne peut croire,
Il se vient delaisser quelque fois parmy nous,
Est-il de plus grande gloire
Est-il bonheur plus doux.
Unissons nous tous trois d'une ardeur sans seconde,
Pour donner du plaisir au plus grand Roy du monde.

Pour plaire au plus grand Roy de tous les rois du monde. [45]

45 Jean-Baptiste Lully, *L'Amour Médecin*, Prologue (Paris 1665), M.s. Rés.F.523, Conservatoire de Musique, Bibliothèque <http://imslp.org/wiki/Special:ImagefromIndex/01804> (last accessed 9 May 2016), pp.4-9..

La princesse de Darmstadt – history and analysis of an early eighteenth century stage choreography

DR CAROLA FINKEL

La princesse de Darmstadt is an almost unknown German choreography from the early eighteenth century.[1] Firstly, the article will discuss the date of the manuscript and the context it was written for. In the second part, the choreography will be analysed and compared with other contemporary dance sources.[2]

Physical description of the manuscript

The manuscript is 17.5cm by 22.3cm in size and is bound in brown leather. It is undecorated in paste-down and contains twenty-four folios of paper without water marks. The first folio and the last three folios are blank, the rest are written in ink. F. 2 verso and f. 3 contain a dedication by the author Olivier. The choreography is written on f. 4 to 21 and is paginated by the writer. F. 21v contains an empty stave.

The music is written in one voice without the bass line and the inner parts as is typical for dance notations of that time. The music is notated in the French violin clef. The notation of the choreography is aesthetically pleasing because it is very accurate and the paper's space is partitioned perfectly.

The choreography contains minor mistakes. For example, in the gentleman's part on p. 2, the point at the foot sign in bar one is missing and the foot sign needs to be corrected for the last step in bar three. On p. 6 in both parts the foot direction in bar two seems to be in the wrong direction.

Historical background

The undated manuscript was written by Olivier who was a dancing master at Solms-Rödelheim, a small county in the north of Darmstadt with only about

1 Olivier, *La princesse de Darmstadt*, shelf mark HS-1257, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Darmstadt. The manuscript is available as open source file: http://tudigit.ulb.tu-darmstadt.de/show/Hs-1257 (accessed 31 August 2015).

2 This article is based on a paper given at the 17th Annual Oxford Dance Symposium, New College Oxford, 21–22 April 2015. I am grateful to Jennifer Thorp and Michael Burden for inviting me to speak at the symposium.

3,000 inhabitants.[3] After the death of Count Lothar Wilhelm Ernst on 13 April 1722, the territory became part of the county Solms-Rödelheim-Assenheim.[4] Concerning the dancing master Olivier, there is regrettably no further information other than his dance manuscript. Many parts of the county's archive do not exist anymore and in none of the eligible sources is a dancing master mentioned.[5] Also, no indication of earlier or later employment at other German courts could be found. While there is no information about Olivier, it is possible to identify the 'Altesse Serenissime Madame la princesse Hereditaire de Hesse Darmstadt',[6] to whom Olivier dedicated his choreography. In the first quarter of the eighteenth century only one woman at the court of Darmstadt was eligible: Charlotte Christine of Hessen-Darmstadt (2.5.1700–1.7.1726). She was born as Countess of Hanau-Lichtenberg and married the hereditary prince of Hessen-Darmstadt Ludwig on 5 April 1717.[7] By comparing the historical dates of both counties it is possible to date Olivier's manuscript. It must have been written at the earliest for the marriage of Charlotte Christine and Ludwig and at the latest before the renaming of Solms-Rödelheim. This results in a reliable time frame from 5 April 1717 to 13 April 1722. It could perhaps even be narrowed to 1718/19 by considering two more aspects. Firstly, the music, on which a part of the choreography is based, was printed in 1718 (see below) which would raise the lower margin.[8] Secondly, in the author's opinion it is also possible to lower the upper margin: in 1719 the court opera of Darmstadt was closed for economic reasons so the court would be unattractive for a dancing master from this point on.[9]

Why did Olivier dedicate his choreography to Princess Charlotte Christine? Regrettably much of the archive records of Hessen-Darmstadt were destroyed during the Second World War. So it is only possible to venture a guess by looking at the situation in Darmstadt. Ludwig's father, Landgrave Ernst Ludwig, also worked as a composer and had a great interest in Italian and German opera.

3 Busch, Tobias, *Herrschen durch Delegation. Reichsgräfliche Herrschaft Ende des 17. und im 18. Jahrhundert am Beispiel der Grafschaft Solms-Rödelheim*, Kassel, 2007, p. 48. Today Rödelheim is a district of Frankfurt/Main.

4 Busch, *Herrschen durch Delegation*, p. 194.

5 The sources are deposited at Hessisches Staatsarchiv Darmstadt.

6 Olivier, *La princesse de Darmstadt*, f. 2v.

7 Under the name Ludwig VIII he succeeded his father Ernst Ludwig in 1739, who had reigned as Landgrave since 1678. Eckhart G. Franz (ed.), *Haus Hessen. Biografisches Lexikon* (Darmstadt, 2012), pp. 303–305.

8 It is not sure if an earlier manuscript version of the music existed of which Olivier could have known about.

9 Johanna Cobb Biermann, *Die Sinfonien des Darmstädter Kapellmeisters Johann Samuel Endler 1694-1762*, Mainz, 1996, pp. 25–26.

'In 1709 began the most brilliant period for music in Darmstadt.'[10] Christoph Graupner – one of the principal German composers of his time became *Hofkapellmeister* and the opera house was rebuilt. In 1712 a French troupe of actors was also engaged. They not only performed plays at the court of Darmstadt but also took part in balls, *divertissements* and at the opera.[11] Usually the actors also made an appearance as singers and dancers.[12] Hessen-Darmstadt was nearly bankrupt and in 1719 the opera was closed due to enormous financial problems. The theatre troupe and most of the musicians had to leave the court.[13] The Dancing master during that time was Jean Baptiste Tayault who was also violinist at the *Hofkapelle*.[14] He was employed from 1709 at the latest until at least 1718. There is evidence that Tayault was succeeded by a dancing master called Ribon;[15] a former member of the French troupe of actors.[16] While Tayault earned 577 florin in 1718, Ribon surprisingly received 1,200 florin per annum.[17] The reason for this enormous difference remains unknown.

It is in that period when Olivier sent his choreography to the court of Hessen-Darmstadt. Interestingly, he was not the only one. In May 1718 Pierre Dubreil, dancing master at the Bavarian Court, dedicated a dance collection to Charlotte Christine's husband, Prince Ludwig.[18] Both their manuscripts show striking similarities. Their dance titles are connected with the county: Olivier's

10 Elisabeth Noack and Dorothea Schröder, 'Ernst Ludwig', in Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians,* 2nd edn, Oxford, 2001, p. 307.

11 *Kabinettskasse des Landgrafen Ernst Ludwig*, shelf mark D4 350/1, Hessisches Staatsarchiv Darmstadt.

12 Scharrer, Margret, *Zur Rezeption des französischen Musiktheaters an deutschen Residenzen im ausgehenden 17. und frühen 18. Jahrhundert*, München, 2014, pp. 157–167.

13 Cobb Biermann, *Die Sinfonien des Darmstädter Kapellmeisters Johann Samuel Endler*, pp. 25–26.

14 In some documents he is only called Baptiste.

15 Hermann Kaiser, 'Ballett in Darmstadt. Ein Abriß der Geschichte des Balletts von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart mit einer Jahreszahlentabelle für Turnier, Invention, Carroussel, Feuerwerk und Ballett', in *Amtliches Adressbuch Darmstadt 1939*, p. 56.

16 *Kabinettskasse des Landgrafen Ernst Ludwig*, shelf mark D4 350/1, Hessisches Staatsarchiv Darmstadt. It could not be clarified if he is identical to a dancer called Ribou, who was active in Paris around 1704.

17 *Einrichtung des fürstlichen Hofetats, Auszug aus den Besoldungslisten*, shelf mark D4 350/1 and *Letter from Ribon to Landgrave Ernst Ludwig (Korrespondenzen des Landgrafen Ernst Ludwig mit Privatpersonen, R)*, shelf mark D4 363/1, Hessisches Staatsarchiv Darmstadt. According to the undated letter Ribon was later employed somewhere in France. The landgrave asked him to return to Darmstadt to educate Charlotte Christine and Ludwig's children. Ribon demanded a salary of 1500 gulden but it is unknown if that was accepted by Ernst Ludwig.

18 Dubreil, *La Hessoise Darmstat* [*sic*], shelf mark Mus Ms 1827, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Darmstadt.

choreography bears the title *La princesse de Darmstadt* while *La Hessoise Darmstat* [*sic*] is the title of Dubreil's manuscript. Both used tunes for their dances which were composed by the reigning Landgrave of Hessen-Darmstadt. Both dancing masters wrote couple dances for the prince and the princess as well as *contredanses*, albeit in a different context.[19] Several times Olivier and Dubreil also make use of arm positions which are characteristic for the allemande. It is surely not a mere coincidence that two dancing masters from foreign courts sent dances to Darmstadt at nearly the same time. The author believes that both Olivier and Dubreil sought employment as *maître de ballet* at the court of Darmstadt. In the dedication of Dubreil's collection he wrote that he would be happy if he could serve Prince Ludwig. Indeed, Dubreil had a respectable appointment at the court of Munich,[20] but the historical records show that he did not receive his money for many years.[21] So he was certainly unsatisfied with his situation. Regarding Olivier, it is to be supposed that he earned not much at such a small court as Solms-Rödelheim.

The music

The music for the choreography consists of two parts with the titles *La princesse de Darmstadt* and *La Contredanse*. The tune of *La princesse de Darmstadt* is in G major and is written in duple time with a quarter-note up-beat. It has the three-part structure ||: 8A :||: 8B 8A :|| which consists of regular four-bar phrases. The tune has a hymn-like solemn character. The origin of the composition could not be identified by the author.

19 Olivier combined *belle dance* and *contredanse* in one choreography while Dubreil's collection amongst others contains three *danse à deux* which are followed by three *contredanses* to the same tune.

20 Between 1715 and 1732 Pierre Dubreil was dancing master, choreographer and *valet de chambre* under the reigns of the Bavarian electors Max Emanuel II and Karl Albrecht.

21 *Pierre Dubreil*, shelf mark Hofamtsregistratur I Fasz. 466 Nr. 403 and *Besoldungsbücher 1715–1732*, shelf mark Kurbayern Hofzahlamt 755–772, Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv München. A book about Dubreil's life and works is in preparation by the author.

Figure 1 Music of *La princesse de Darmstadt*

The second part *La Contredanse* has the character of a gavotte; it is written in duple time with a half-note up-beat. The melody is structured in three four-bar phrases of which the last one is the repetition of the second phrase.

Figure 2 Music of *La Contredanse*

The author of the tune can be identified as the above mentioned Landgrave Ernst-Ludwig von Hessen-Darmstadt, father-in-law of Princess Charlotte Christine. His *Partition de douze suites et symphonies* was published in 1718 in which the tune can be found. It is called *Air* and is the tenth of thirteen movements in the first Suite in A major.[22]

Figure 3 Ernst Ludwig von Hessen-Darmstadt: *Air* from *Suite in A major*

22 Ernst Ludwig von Hessen-Darmstadt, *Partition de douze suites et symphonies* (1718), f. 6v. Shelf mark Mus-268, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Darmstadt (RISM A/1 E 770).

Besides Olivier forgoing the repetition of the first four bars, one significant distinction attracts attention: the dancing master displaced the bar so that the tune got a half-note up-beat which gives it the character of a gavotte. In the foreword of his manuscript Olivier refers to this. He wrote that he improved an already existing dance and made it perfect.

> La danse que j'ai l'honneur de vous presenter aujord'huy et que je nomme la princesse De Darmstadt–nèst pas toute de moi; mais je pourrois bien m'en dire l'autheur, puisque de toute imparfaite qu'elle étoit, je crois l'avoir renduë parfaite je l'ai rectifiée autant qu'il m'a été possible, et je n'ai rien oublié pour la metre dans un bel ordre de choregraphie.[23]

Olivier's statement is quite bold, considering that the composer of the tune is the reigning Landgrave. On the other hand, it is understandable that for a dancing master, a dance was only perfect when it was possible to dance it.

The above mentioned dancing master, Dubreil, wrote in the dedication of his collection *La Hessoise Darmstat* that he also wrote dances to music by Ernst Ludwig. However, in this case the tunes cannot be found in the extant musical sources. So it cannot be excluded that the first tune in Olivier's choreography also originated from the Landgrave.

The choreography

The choreography consists of 180 bars and is written on 35 pages. Depending on the chosen tempo it has a duration of between four and five minutes. As mentioned above, the dance has two parts of which the first one bears the title *La princesse de Darmstadt*. It is choreographed for a solo couple and written in Beauchamp-Feuillet notation. The second part is entitled *La Contredanse*. Here a group of four couples and the solo couple alternate with each other. At the end, they all dance together. The group parts are written in Feuillet's *contredanse* notation[24] while the solo part is first notated in Beauchamp-Feuillet notation and later in *contredanse* notation, too. On some pages the choreography also contains verbal descriptions for arm positions. The following table shows the main structure of Olivier's choreography.

23 Olivier, *La princesse de Darmstadt*, f. 3r.

24 For his *Recüeil de contredances mises en chorégraphie …* (1706) Feuillet developed a simplified notation system based on Beauchamp-Feuillet notation.

Bars	Musical Structure	Dancers	Notation
1–48	||: 8A :||: 8B 8A :||	La princesse de Darmstadt Solo Couple	Beauchamp-F. Notation
49–60	4C 8 D	La Contredanse Four Couples	Contredanse Notation
61–84	||: 4C 8D :||	Solo Couple	Beauchamp-F. Notation
85–108	||: 4C 8D :||	Four Couples	Contredanse Notation & verbal descriptions
109–120	4C 8D	Solo Couple	Contredanse Notation
121–132	4C 8D	Four Couples	Contredanse Notation
133–180	4x ||: 4C 8D :||	All dancers	Contredanse Notation

Table 1 Structure of the choreography

The choreography starts with *La princesse de Darmstadt*, which is a typical *belle danse* for a solo couple. While the soloists open the dance, the couples of the group part stand in their starting positions. The floor tracks make more use of straight lines than curved lines. The floor pattern is axially symmetric except on p. 3 and p. 5. On p. 3 the dancers imitate each other but with reversed step sequence.

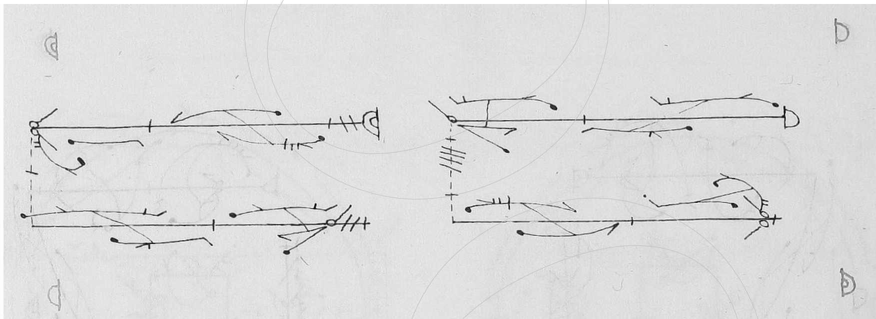

Figure 4 Olivier, *La princesse de Darmstadt*, p. 3 (detail)

On p. 5 the gentleman has four quarter *pirouettes* while the lady circles around him with three *pas de bourrées* and one *pas coupé* and with taken hands. The figure is repeated reversely. One page before, a step sequence occurs,[25] which is found in a similar way in Pecour's *L'Allemande*:[26] *contretemps balloné – contretemps balloné – pas de bourrée – pas assemblé*. While in *L'Allemande* it is danced in allemande hold, Olivier demands right hands taken. Jennifer Thorp analysed several

25 Olivier, *La princesse de Darmstadt*, p. 4 bars 5–8.

26 Louis-Guillaume Pecour, *L'Allemande*, Paris, 1702, bars 9–12 and 13–16.

dances which contain this step sequence and came to the conclusion that 'it is possible to see a link between the steps and what might have been perceived as rustic, outlandish or eccentric dance.'[27] This characterisation applies here less to Olivier's solo couple part than to the second part *La Contredanse* which is shown below. The level of the *danse à deux* is moderate because of the imitation structures and the step repertoire. The most elaborate steps which appear in the choreography are *pas de gaillarde* (bar nine) and *contretemps battu* with half turn (bar forty-one).

After the '*entrée*' of the solo couple, the second part of the choreography follows which is named *La Contredanse*. Olivier used Feuillet's *contredanse* notation, which means that, except for figures on the spot like *pas de rigaudon*, no steps are indicated.[28] Despite its title, it is not a typical *contredanse* at all for several reasons. Firstly, a group of four couples alternate with a solo couple, and secondly, its choreographical structure is quite free and has no repetitions. *La Contredanse* starts in an improper longways formation which is abandoned immediately. During the dance the four couples will not return to their starting positions. The only aspect that is characteristic of a *contredanse* is the music, because it has a simple melody which is repeated constantly; in this case, eleven times.

In the beginning, two couples interact with each other and change places. The phrases end with a turned *sauté* (sometimes as part of the *pas de rigaudon*). After twelve bars the dancing of the four couples is interrupted by a performance of the soloists which is again written in Beauchamp-Feuillet notation.[29] The floor pattern is axial symmetric. In the first eight bars the two dancers imitate and reverse their steps. The gentleman starts with *contretemps* and *pas de bourrée* which is imitated by the lady in the next two bars. Then both dance simultaneously but with the steps in inverted order. The gentleman has two half-*pirouettes* followed by a *pas de rigaudon* while the lady starts with the *pas de rigaudon* and ends with two half-*pirouettes*. In a symmetrical way, the soloists dance back to their starting positions. The page is repeated with changed roles; now the lady starts the sequence.

After the solo part, the next group part follows. Couples two and four always interact with each other, which is copied by couples one and three but with reversed gender roles.[30] Here a peculiarity in the notation occurs: at the bottom

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27 Jennifer Thorp, 'Pecour's *L'Allemande*, 1702–1765: How "German" was it?', *Eighteenth-Century Music*, vol. 1 no. 2, 2004, p. 194.

28 In the chapter *Avis sur le pas qui convienent le mieux sur le contradanse* of his *Recüeil de contredances* (1706) Feuillet gives recommendations on which steps can be used.

29 Olivier, *La princesse de Darmstadt*, p.11.

30 In this part of the dance couple two is always positioned top left and couple four top right. Couple one is notated bottom left and couple three bottom right.

of the page Olivier notates the end positions of the eight dancers.[31]

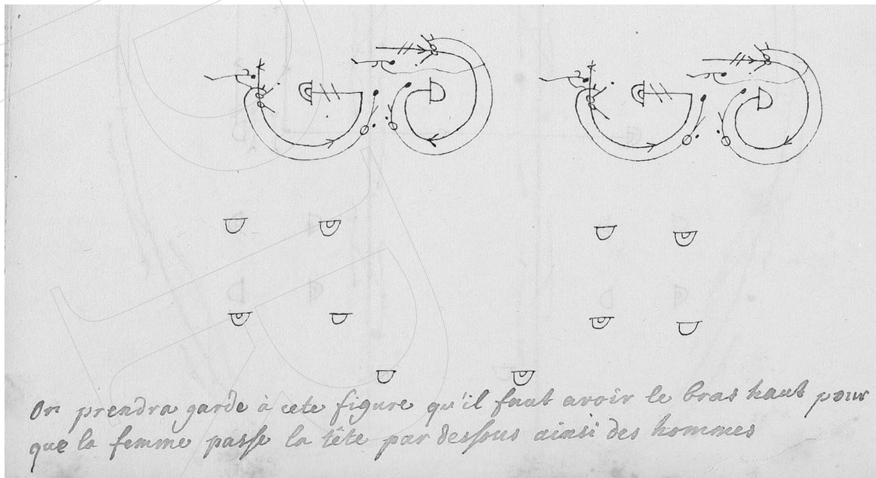

Figure 5 Olivier, *La princesse de Darmstadt*, p. 14 (detail)

This section of the choreography is characterised by the use of several arm positions which are typical for the allemande and for which Olivier gives verbal descriptions. In the first figure one dancer turns his partner under their raised arms and reversely. 'On prendra garde à cete figure qu'il faut avoir le bras haut pour que la femme passe la tête par dessous ainsi des hommes' (see figure 5).[32] This arm position is illustrated on the well-known engraving *Le bal paré* (side couples).[33] The couple in the middle show the allemande hold which follows in Olivier's choreography immediately on p. 15. When Pecour published his *L'Allemande* in 1702 he illustrated this arm position by small sketches in the notation because it was unusual at that time.[34] Olivier describes it as: 'On observera que la femme doit passer la main gauche derriere le dos de l'homme pour lui prendre la main gauche et l'homme pas sera sa main droite derriere le dos de la femme de maniere qu'ils se tiennent les deux mains et chassent en

31 Olivier, *La princesse de Darmstadt*, pp. 13 and 14. The notation of end positions occurs in rare cases in Beauchamp-Feuillet notation, for example in *Le Passepied à quatre*, Feuillet, Raoul-Auger, *IX. Recueil de danses pour l'année 1711*, pp. 11–15.

32 Olivier, *La princesse de Darmstadt*, p. 14. As the choreography shows the description also applies to the opposite case. In his dance collection for the court of Darmstadt Dubreil also used this arm position in *La Florentine*, Dubreil, *La Hessoise Darmstat*, f. 22v.

33 Antoine-Jean Duclos after Augustin de Saint-Aubin, *Le bal paré*, 1774.

34 Pecour, *L'Allemande*, pp. 2, 3, 8 and 9. Also see Thorp, *Pecour's 'L'Allemande'*, p. 189.

face'.[35] In Olivier's choreography the couples dance to the side in allemande hold, presumably with *chassés* which is also reminiscent of Pecour,[36] and end the phrase with a *pas de rigaudon*. Three pages later the dancers shall place their hands on their hips while dancing. 'On observera ici qu'il faut metre les mains sur les côtés'.[37] This was also illustrated by Pecour when it was used for the first time in a notated dance and is described in Isaac's *The Morris*.[38] This arm position gives the dance a bit of a rustic character. While the floor track otherwise is notated without steps, Olivier here writes the first two bars in Beauchamp-Feuillet notation (half-turned *coupé to point* – quarter-turned *coupé*) which is quite an exception in *contredanse* notation.[39]

A short episode of the solo couple follows, this time in *contredanse* notation. The two dancers meander through the other couples and after dancing successively a *pas de rigaudon* they return to their starting positions. The final part of the choreography starts with the eight group dancers who change their places in several ways before the soloists join them. Now the four gentlemen of the group stand to the left and the four ladies stand to the right. The two soloists dance to the front side of the room and come back to their places by circling with each dancer on their side.[40] The choreography ends with a *grande ronde* of all ten dancers which is danced half anti-clockwise and half clockwise. Instead of a *référence* the choreography finishes with the departure of the dancers and with the soloists as the last ones who leave the stage.

35 Olivier, *La princesse de Darmstadt*, p. 15. An English description occurs around the same time in *The Morris*, 1716, by Mr Isaac, Thorp, *Pecour's 'L'Allemande'*, pp. 193–194, while Dubreil in *La Salamaleck*, 1718, adopts Feuillet's arm notation for the allemande hold, Dubreil, *La Hessoise Darmstat*, f. 23r and f. 23v.

36 Pecour, *L'Allemande*, p. 8.

37 Olivier, *La princesse de Darmstadt*, p. 18.

38 Pecour, *L'Allemande*, p. 4 and Thorp, *Pecour's 'L'Allemande'*, pp. 193–194.

39 More examples can be found in Dubreil's *La Bavaroise*, Dubreil, *La Hessoise Darmstat*, f. 10r, and in the collection *Chorégraphie*, shelf mark Durlach 209 and 210, Badische Landesbibliothek Karlsruhe. The last mentioned collection contains an unusually large amount of notated step sequences.

40 Olivier, *La princesse de Darmstadt*, pp. 25–30.

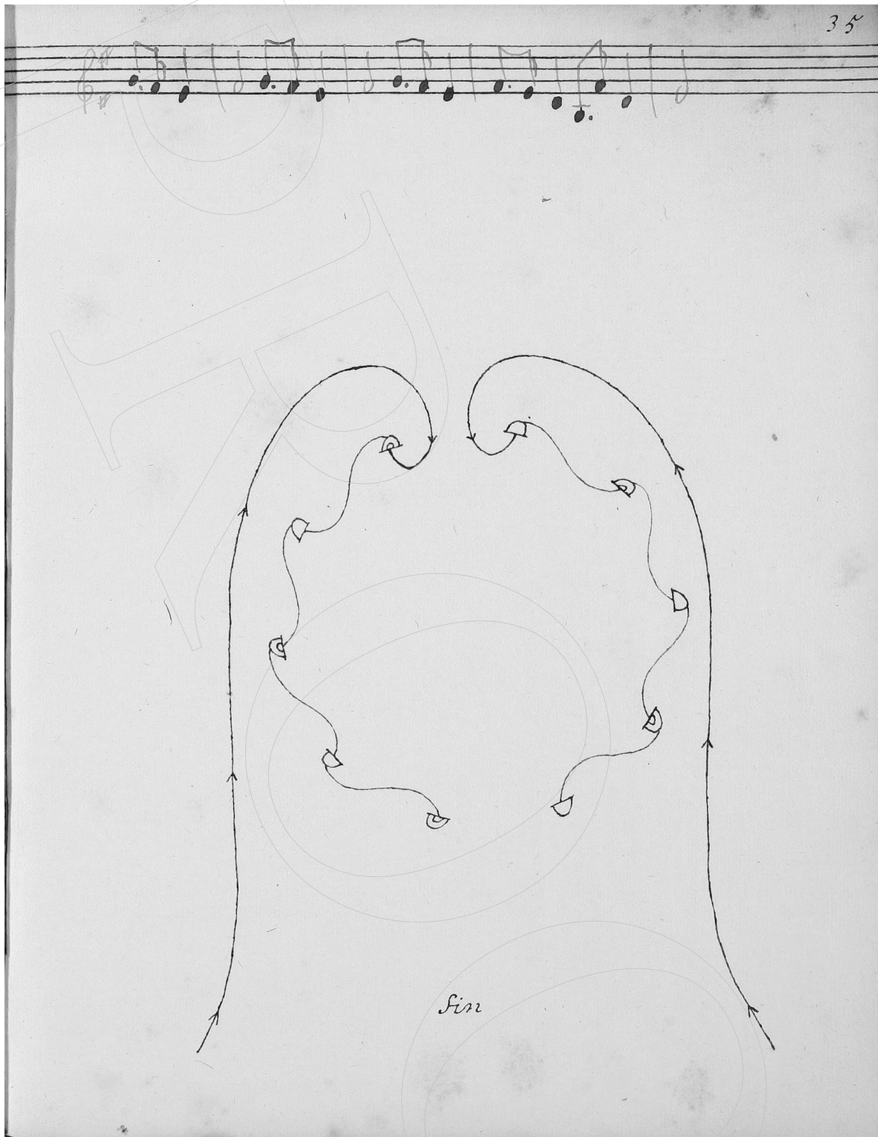

Figure 6 Olivier, *La princesse de Darmstadt*, p. 35

Conclusion

Three aspects of *La princesse de Darmstadt* are particular: the use of different allemande arm positions, the structure of the choreography and the use of different notation systems. The dances of the early eighteenth century which use special arm positions had, apart from that, nothing in common with the

social dance called allemande which was very popular in the second half of the eighteenth century. Allemande arm positions were less used in a 'German manner' than in a rustic or unusual context. However, it is striking that Olivier and Dubreil, who were dancing masters at German courts, made use of several kinds of arm positions in their choreographies. As shown above, the floor pattern of *La princesse de Darmstadt* is also influenced by Pecour's *belle danse* choreography *L'Allemande.*

In his dedication, Olivier commends the dancing skills of the princess ('La danse étant un art aussi dificile à aprendre, que delicat à bien executer, … tout le monde rend la justice qui Vous est duë, en confessant que Vous excellés si fort en cet art.')[41] and so it is to be supposed that he had the princess and her husband in mind for dancing the solo parts. The way *La princesse de Darmstadt* is choreographed – the alternation of soloists and ensemble as well as the free structure of the *contredanse* part – indicates that it is written not for the ballroom but for the stage. Extant sources with complete theatre works are rare; so far discovered are *Le mariage de la grosse Cathos* by Jean Favier l'aîné (1688) and *Ludus pastoralis* by D. Dalizon (1734).[42] In comparison, many other dances in Beauchamp-Feuillet notation exist which were (initially) written for the stage. Normally they are written for one or two dancers. Exceptions are the *Balet de neuf dancers* by Feuillet (1700)[43] and the eight 'figure dances' in Pemberton's collection *An essay for the further improvement of dancing* … (1711). They are written for 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 12 ladies respectively.[44] In this context, *La princesse de Darmstadt*, a two-partchoreography for ten dancers, has to be added. Except for the first dance in Pemberton's collection, all dances are jigs and minuets (separate or as a two-part dance) which are mostly written in Feuillet's *contredanse* notation. Concerning the notation, the two-part dance *An ecchoe. By Mr. Groscort* for three ladies comes nearest to *La princesse de Darmstadt*: the *bourrée* is written in Beauchamp-Feuillet notation while the minuet part makes use of the simpler *contredanse* notation. In the jig and minuet *By Mr. Couch* for nine ladies, only the first figure is notated in Beauchamp-Feuillet notation. In

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41 Olivier, *La princesse de Darmstadt*, f. 2v.

42 Favier's masquerade was performed at the court of Louis XIV and is unique because of its own dance notation system which was invented by the choreographer. The dances are written for two to eight people. *Ludus pastoralis* was choreographed for the Jesuit college in Metz. It is written for one to eight male dancers and is completely notated in Beauchamp-Feuillet notation.

43 Raoul-Auger Feuillet, *Recueil de dances*, Paris, 1700, pp. 67–84,

44 Little and Marsh wrote that these dances possibly 'were intended for use at schools for young ladies.' Meredith Ellis Little and Carol G. Marsh, *La danse noble. An inventory of dances and sources*, Williamstown, New York, Nabburg, 1992, p. 106. The structure of the choreographies suggests that they were less intended for social dancing than for performances.

the choreographies of the Pemberton collection all dancers are treated equally. Feuillet's *Balet de neuf dancers* is completely written in Beauchamp-Feuillet notation and is choreographed for a male soloist and four couples. In contrast to Olivier's choreography, they do not dance together. A clear division of a solo couple part and a group part, written in mixed notation, is only given by Olivier.

Despite some similarities to other contemporary dances, both the disposition and notation of *La princesse de Darmstadt* are a peculiarity amongst the extant sources. Olivier's choreography is another missing link for the reconstruction of eighteenth century stage dancing.

PROOF

Report on the EADH Conference held in Prague

Held at the Academy of Dance, Prague

4 – 6 November 2016

Delegates and Speakers met together on the evening of Friday 4th November for a very sociable reception which was held at the Academy of Dance and enabled old friends to meet and new friends to be made. Two of the students gave a charming demonstration of baroque dances.

On Saturday morning the conference was opened with a discussion of aspects of Noverre's work given by Beatrice Pfister and Marie-Helène Delavaud-Roux. Pfister compared the pantomime ballets of Noverre and Angiolini. Both used a variety of comic, dramatic, historic and tragic plots but their interpretations varied and, perhaps reflecting the national character of the two men, Angiolini with a more emotional approach and Noverre by developing beautiful scenic ballets. Delavaud-Roux discussed Noverre's knowledge of ancient Greek and his use of this in his ballet subjects. She demonstrated elements of ancient Greek gesture and movement and compared them with some of the gestures described by Noverre.

Petra Dotlacilova followed this with illustrations of the costumes designed by Boquet for Noverre's many ballets. Dotlacilova showed many of the designs preserved in a Warsaw manuscript and showed how France set the model for the rest of Europe. Noverre's name came up again as Michael Malkiewicz spoke about the work of a friend and colleague of Noverre, Etienne Lauchery. Lauchery came with his family to Mannheim where he succeeded his father as dancing master to the court. He later moved to Berlin and Malkiewicz showed how mythological and heroic subjects were gradually replaced by more naturalistic and rustic plots under Lauchery's direction.

The afternoon moved away from Noverre and began with an interesting paper given by Alexandra Kajdanska on the ballets performed by the Royal Ballet Company at the court of the Polish King Stanislaw August Poniatowski in the late 18th century. Kajdenska showed how under the King's influence ballets presented by the Royal Ballet Company, whilst following the French style, developed a national character which was particularly popular with the general public. Lisa Fusillo's paper brought us up to the 20th century but showed how Massine used the 18th century comedy of Carlo Goldoni 'Le Donne di Buon Umore' to create a modern ballet echoing the 18th century style in gestures and poses while not attempting to incorporate 18th century dance notation.

We moved into the 19th century for the next paper by Zuzana Rafajová. This was a discussion of the ballet Giselle first performed in Paris in 1841 and posed the question 'Why is Albert from Giselle the true romantic hero?' She analysed the difference between the characters of Hilarion and Albert, which man was a true romantic hero, and what was the relationship between Giselle and Albert. Flavia Pappacena took us firmly back into the 18th century with a discussion of the mythological stories favoured by choreographers and directors in most Italian theatres at that time. Most of these ballets adapted the mythological story to the political requirements of the ruler at the time as well as to public taste.

Saturday concluded with the Annual General Meeting of EADH after which many of the members ended their evening with a most enjoyable dinner together.

On Sunday morning the conference opened with a paper by Nika Tomasevic on the fondness for 'exotic' themes in the 18th century. Italian audiences seem to have been particularly fond of these types of ballets which appear to have resulted from the many books of voyages to exotic countries. Tomasevic analysed several ballets and ballet libretti performed in Italian theatres at the end of the 18th century which were modelled on the exotic rhythms, dress and movements of the Asiatic, Arabic and American colonies. By contrast Annamaria Corea spoke about the Italian dance libretti from the late 18th or early 19th century which chose Shakespeare plays for their theme, mainly the tragedies of Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth. The stories of these ballets were taken from a French translation of Shakespeare and were sometimes adapted to suit the tastes of the audience, for example given a happy ending. It was pointed out that at a time when the prima ballerina was becoming the star of the stage, Romeo and Juliet became Giulietta e Romeo.

Ricardo Barros gave an interesting paper demonstrating how the myth of Apollo became an important theme for ballets probably encouraged by Louis XIV's association of himself with this god. The ballets associated with the god represented his vanity, nobility and glory but also his susceptibility and sensitivity. Barros illustrated, musically and in dance, how the composers and choreographers worked together to reflect these various characteristics, with particular reference to the three 'Entre d'Apollon' by Feuillet, Pecour and L'Abbe. The final paper was given by Tiziana Leucci and Christine Bayle celebrating the French presence in India in the late 17th and early 18th century. Leucci explained how Indian dress and gestures were reflected in the ballet 'Le Tromphe de l'Amour' created to celebrate the marriage of the Dauphin, and showing the power and presence of French commerce in India. Bayle, giving her paper in French, analysed the musical score of this ballet and showed how in it, Louis XIV was linked closely with another conqueror of India, Alexander the Great.

The conference ended with two very contrasting workshops. First Christine Bayle taught part of 'La Bourrée Dauphine'. Copies of the notation were handed out and delegates who were able to read this enjoyed following it and learning the first part of the dance. To finish the day Irène Feste and Pierre-François Dollé gave an enjoyable demonstration of some of the comic and grotesque 18th century dances including the 'Chaconne d'Harlequin' and the 'Turkish Dance'. Dollé talked about the possibility of varying the interpretation of these dances. They then invited delegates to learn excerpts from the dances and add their own interpretations. This provided a very hilarious ending to our conference.

Madeleine Inglehearn

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CHOREOLOGICA

The refereed journal of the European Association of Dance Historians aims to provide a forum for historical and theoretical explorations of dance histories and practices. Articles for submission are welcomed. These may include analyses of individual works or investigations, whether they be monographic, contextual or interdisciplinary. Submissions may address topics ranging from the past dance practices to contemporary themes. The editorial board particularly welcomes essays rethinking current approaches and theoretical understanding of dance practice, history or crossovers into other disciplines.

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