



Le  
**MARY sans FEMME**  
*Comédie par*  
**M. Montfleury.**

c. l.

## INTRODUCTION

### The Musical Background

During the early 1660s, the Troupe Royale of the Hôtel de Bourgogne increased the number of plays given with incidental music, dance, and spectacle. Montfleury provided them with *Le Mariage de rien* (1661), while Poisson wrote *Lubin, ou le Sot vengé* (1661), followed by the ever-popular *Le Baron de la Crasse* (1662). The company then premiered Poisson's *Le Fou raisonnable*, De Visé's *La Vengeance des Marquis*, and Gilbert's *Les Amours d'Ovide*—for which the gazetteer Jean Loret praised the elegant verse, the "doux concerts," and the machine effects. Most likely, Montfleury's musical comedy *Le Mary sans femme* premiered sometime during the 1663-64 season.

Not to be left behind, Molière and the Troupe du Roy made preparations to increase the musical component in their productions at the Palais-Royal. For the 1663-64 season, an ensemble of strings is listed among the *frais ordinaires* (daily expenses) budgeted for each performance. Moreover, the company bought its own harpsichord during the Lenten break. Then on 29 January 1664, Molière's comedy ballet *Le Mariage forcé* premiered at the Louvre. This was only Molière's second work in the newly invented genre, and marked the first of a dozen musical collaborations between the playwright and Jean-Baptiste Lully. Consequently, Montfleury's musical comedy, *Le Mary sans femme*, appeared at a critical point in the evolution of comedy ballet.

Molière's *Le Mariage forcé* essentially was conceived along the lines of a ballet (in fact it was billed as a "Ballet du Roy" in the court *livret*). Its musical interludes, organized as "entrées" and inserted at the end of acts, introduce new characters drawn from the world of *ballet de cour* (allegorical figures, a magician, demons, gypsies, Spaniards). In contrast, Montfleury's musical interludes (*intermèdes*) occur during the course of the main action, where they contribute directly to the unfolding of the plot. In this they follow the procedure of other musical dramas of the time—Boisrobert's *La Folle Gageure* (1653), Quinault's *La Généreuse ingratitude* (1654), Thomas Corneille's *Le Charme de la voix* (1657), and Lambert's *Les Sœurs jalouses* (1658)—which introduced musical "set-pieces" within the acts of the play and performed both for and by the play's characters. For instance, the First Intermède of *Le Mary sans femme* is presented as Fatiman's musical offering to his betrothed Célimé, and has the unexpected effect of causing her to fall in love with Carlos, one of the two singing lovers. The Second Intermède represents another musical performance, which is used by Fatiman to force Célimé to reveal her criminal intent (and ends abruptly when she does so). The Third Intermède is a concluding musical celebration occasioned by Fatiman's having freed his European captives and having granted Julie a divorce from Dom Brusquin, her unwanted husband.

The thematic similarities between *Le Mary sans femme* and *Le Mariage forcé* reinforce the connection between these two musical comedies. Both plots concern the consequences resulting from mismatched spouses; both introduce exotic elements within the context of musical interludes (Turkish singers and

dancers in *Le Mary sans femme*, Spanish/Gypsy singers and dancers in *Le Mariage forcé*); and both conclude with musical festivities, including songs tinged with dramatic irony on the themes of marriage and divorce. But even more striking is the similarity of the Turkish music of *Le Mary sans femme* to that in two later *comédies-ballets* of Molière and Lully. In Montfleury's play the musical setting of the *lingua franca* songs of the Final Intermède strives to achieve an "exotic" effect through monotonous repetitions, extended sequential progressions, hemiola rhythms, repeated-note patten, and disjunct vocal leaps—all devices that Lully used in his Turkish music for *Le Sicilien* (1667) and in the Mamamouchi ceremony in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* (1670).

### The Sources

The survival of two musical sources makes possible a reconstruction of the music for Montfleury's play. A twelve-page printed score found in the Paris Bibliothèque Nationale, *Airs de la comédie du Mary sans femme* (n.p., n.d.), preserves the vocal parts without *basse continue*. This source may well be contemporaneous with the first production of the play. An eighteenth-century manuscript found in the archives of the Comédie-Française (entitled *Théâtre François, Tome II*) preserves the same vocal numbers with *basse-continüe* and obligato instrumental parts, as well as the dances of the Final Intermède. The Comédie-Française manuscript copy appears to be a revision of the music preserved in part by the undated printed source. This revision may have been undertaken for a revival of Montfleury's play in October of 1695 at the Comédie-Française. Some of the vocal music in this manuscript copy has been rearranged: i.e., the tenor part is set in a lower tessitura, while the soprano part contains more elaborate vocal embellishments. Furthermore, the inclusion of a *contredanse* suggests that some material may have been added at a later time.<sup>1</sup>

While the identity of Montfleury's musical collaborator remains a mystery, circumstantial evidence points to Robert Cambert (ca. 1627-1677). We know from the *Second Registre de La Thorillière* that the Troupe Du Roy engaged Cambert during the fall of 1664 for the public performances of *La Princesse d'Elide*, perhaps as music director.<sup>2</sup> Two years later Cambert composed a "trio burlesque" for Brécourt's farce, *Le Jaloux invisible*, performed at the Hôtel de Bourgogne in August of 1666. Edward Forman points out the linguistic similarities (vocables, laughter, nonsense syllables arranged in short, irregular verses) between the Italianate musical incantation scene of *Le Jaloux invisible* and the *lingua franca* song "O Giornata fortunata" from *Le Mary sans femme*.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, he states that: "It seems very probable that Brécourt invented this episodic scene at the instigation of the actors in order to profit from this resource that they had already put to the test—and therefore which would have probably succeeded the first time. It is also at least possible that before taking up again an

<sup>1</sup>Contredanse was an imported word for "country dance," an English dance that enjoyed great popularity at the court of Louis XIV. The *countredanse* was first introduced into France around 1684; see Marie-Françoise Bouchon, "Contredanse" in *Dictionnaire de la musique en France aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles*, ed. Marcelle Benoit (Paris: Fayard, 1992), 178.

<sup>2</sup>*Second Registre de La Thorillière*, (Archives of the Comédie-Française), entry for 9 December 1664.

<sup>3</sup>Montfleury, *Le Mary sans femme*, ed. Edward Forman (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1985), xviii.

idea that depended on musical setting, they would have taken care to engage the composer who had already collaborated on a similar enterprise.” For reasons discussed earlier, the original score seems to have been revised and expanded for the revival of *Le Mary sans femme* at the Comédie-Française in 1695. For lack of further details on this production, I propose that the Comédie-Française manuscript score was the work of Jean-Claude Gillier (1667-1737), a composer and contrabass player in the orchestra of the Comédie-Française who composed incidental music for various productions in the period 1694-1717.<sup>4</sup>

The question of exactly who is to sing in the *intermèdes* of *Le Mary sans femme* remains ambiguous, as neither musical score bears the names of the singers. The 1698 and 1705 printed editions of the play carry the rubric "on chante" for each of the songs. In later editions (1739 and 1775) the sung verses of the first two *intermèdes* have been assigned to Julie and Carlos—although the rubric "on chante" remains unchanged for the final Turkish *intermède*. The first song ("O Giornata fortunata") is scored for bass. Since its text grants the lovers freedom to return home, a decree which Fatiman has the sole authority to give, we have presumed here that Fatiman himself sang this number. As the *haute-contre* clef (in the printed score, tenor clef in the ms. copy) and soprano clef appear in the subsequent songs (which were used for the vocal numbers sung by Carlos and Julie), I have concluded that the captive Spanish lovers performed in the finale. The lyrics of these songs refer to new-found freedom and crossing the ocean between Europe and Algeria, and therefore would seem to bear this out.<sup>5</sup>

Whether the actors themselves or professional singers sang in the *intermèdes* remains unknown. These singing roles could conceivably have been created by members of the Troupe Royale, for at least one member of the company, Noël le Breton (*dit* Hauteroche), was a singing actor whose vocal range was that of a high tenor (*haute-contre*). The soprano part (as it appears in the undated printed score) is not technically demanding, while the bass role features music of a *buffo* character that could have been sung by a *farceur*.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, we know from the *Registre de La Grange* that it was customary before 1671 for professional singers to perform from the wings while the actors mimed their performances on-stage.<sup>7</sup> Lully's later restrictions on theater music forbade professional singers from appearing on the public stage, and so the

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<sup>4</sup>Edmond LeMaître, "Gillier, Pierre" in *Dictionnaire de la musique en France aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles*, ed. Marcelle Benoit (Paris: Fayard, 1992), 320.

<sup>5</sup>Oddly, Forman speculates that these numbers were sung by a chorus of Algerians; see *op. cit.*, 118-19, notes to line 1620.

<sup>6</sup>Evidently, a number of actors in the company were capable of performing singing roles. For example, the serenade scene of Lambert's *Les Sœurs jalouses* (1658) calls for no less than four singing characters.

<sup>7</sup>This appears to have been the practice at the Palais-Royal during this time, as attested by the *Registre de La Grange*: "Until now [1671] the male and female singers had not wished to appear before the public. They sang in the theater from latticed boxes. But this impediment was overcome, and with some minor expense individuals were found to sing on-stage, unmasked, and in costume dressed like the actors." (*Le Registre de La Grange, 1659-1685*, facsimile ed. Bert Edward Young and Grace Philputt Young, 2 vols. [Paris: E. Droz, 1947], I:124-26.)

revisions to the vocal parts preserved in the Comédie-Française manuscript were most likely made to accommodate singing actors for the 1695 revival.<sup>8</sup>

### Synopsis of the Plot<sup>9</sup>

Much action has occurred before the start of Act I. Two young Spanish aristocrats, Julie and Carlos, are in love, but Julie's mother compels her to wed the foolish Don Brusquin, who is a wealthier suitor. Carlos arranges to abduct Julie and take her to Cadiz, where his family has its estate, but two major things go wrong. Carlos, who had presumably hoped to arrive prior to the wedding ceremony, instead arrives after it is finished, though before the consummation of the match; Julie is thus legally married to Don Brusquin. Secondly, Carlos has decided to flee by ship, rather than by land, but their vessel is captured by pirates, and they are taken to Algiers and sold into slavery. Fortunately, the lovers and their servants are all bought by the same person, Fatiman, the governor of the city who is a wealthy ex-corsair. Learning that Carlos and Julie are excellent singers, he employs them to give concerts to his beautiful, and apparently much younger, fiancée, Celime. However, Celime, who has agreed to marry Fatiman solely for his money, falls in love with Carlos. Six months into their captivity, Carlos expects that they will soon be freed, since, when he first arrived in Algiers, he managed to send a plea for help to his wealthy uncle in Spain. As it turns out, Marine, Julie's maid, also succeeded in sending a message back to Spain; fearing that Carlos's family would ransom only him, she informed Don Brusquin of their whereabouts and urged him to come and ransom them.

As the play begins, two new developments simultaneously propel the action forward. Celime, unable to restrain herself any longer, decides to reveal her passion to the horrified Carlos; and Don Brusquin arrives in Algiers with the ransom money for Julie and Marine. Each of the lovers is now the unwilling, and basically powerless, center of a love triangle. The deadlock is broken when Carlos decides to tell Fatiman the whole truth about his love for Julie, Julie's hatred for her husband, and Celime's betrayal of her fiancé. The second half of the play largely consists of a series of humiliations imposed upon the clownish Don Brusquin, who agrees, though only after a sound thrashing and threats of being sent to the galleys, to give up his wife, let her marry the man of her choice, use the ransom money to celebrate this second wedding, and return to Spain alone. Meanwhile, Fatiman lets Celime continue her schemes to seduce and flee with Carlos (who is told to pretend to return her love, in order to see how far she will go); when she learns that her beloved will wed Julie instead, she refuses to reconcile with Fatiman and chooses to leave Algiers at once. Carlos benefits from an additional stroke of luck when he learns that his uncle has died and made him sole heir to a huge fortune. The play ends with a scene of singing and dancing.

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<sup>8</sup>For further discussion, see John S. Powell, "Musical Practices in the Theater of Molière," *Revue de musicologie* 82:1 (1996), 5-37.

<sup>9</sup> Plot synopsis by Perry Gethner. For a full verse translation and an essay on Montfleury's *Le Mary sans femme*, both by Perry Gethner, see our full-text edition of the comédie-ballet at <<http://www.personal.utulsa.edu/~john-powell/LeMarySansFemme>>.



## Editorial Methods

### *French Text*

The original seventeenth-century spellings and orthography of the original texts have been retained in this edition, and any editorial additions have been placed in square brackets. Hyphenation has been added to the lyrics, but no attempt has been made to show word elision.

### *Music*

All full-size notes indicate those found in the original sources, while smaller notes signal editorial additions. The source reading of *Théâtre François, Tome II* has been chosen as the basis for all numbers in the edition except for No. 1 ("Dans ce vaste Univers"). In this manuscript the music is arranged for three singers (soprano, tenor, and bass), as represented (without text underlay) in mm. 1-9 of the prelude. However, as the play makes clear, only two characters (Julie and Carlos) are singing in the First Intermède. Therefore the vocal duet in mm. 10-18 and repeated in mm. 98-106 is based on the unaccompanied vocal parts preserved in the printed score, with the basso-continuo added editorially.

All dance numbers have been expanded to a four-part texture in the present edition, with the editorial addition of inner viola parts (shown in small notes). Some of the *ritournelles* have also been expanded to a trio texture by adding a second violin part (also shown in small notes).

### *Headings*

The "intermède" headings derive from the printed score, whereas the instrumental headings (prelude, ritournelle, and dance titles) derive from *Théâtre François, Tome II*. The heading "Les Turcs" in No. 5 is found in the 1698 edition of the play. All other headings that appear in square brackets are editorial.

## Musical Performance Practices

### *Instrumentation*

The vocal numbers would undoubtedly have been accompanied by *basse continue*: harpsichord, lute or theorbo, with the bass line doubled by a bass viol. The Maître de Musique in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* recommends such an instrumental ensemble in II,1, where he advises Monsieur Jourdain to have weekly chamber-music concerts in his home ("You would need three singers: a soprano, an *haute-contre*, and a bass, who will be accompanied by a *basse de viole*, a theorbo, and a harpsichord for the *basse-continue*, along with two treble violins to play the *ritournelles*"). The instrumental ritournelles appear in the Comédie-Française manuscript notated either in two parts (treble and *basse continue*) or in three parts (two treble parts, and *basse continue*). For the two-part ritournelles a second treble part has been editorially supplied to conform to the typical "trio texture" of this period. These treble parts could be played by two violins, two recorders/flutes, or two oboes for exotic color.

Most likely an ensemble of strings of different sizes would have been used for performing the dance music of the Final Intermède. The Comédie-Française manuscript preserves these dance numbers in a reduced score of treble and bass parts; no doubt the inner parts would have been added in performance.

Following the model of the four-part instrumental scoring preserved in various theatrical works composed for the public theater—the Perrin/Cambert opera *Pomone* (1671), the Gilbert/Cambert opera *Les Peines et les Plaisirs de l'Amour* (1672), and Charpentier's scores to Molière's *La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas/Le Mariage forcé* (1672) and *Le Malade imaginaire* (1673)—the two-part texture of these dances has been expanded to four parts by the addition of two inner viola parts supplied by the editor. To this ensemble various "exotic" instruments might be added to evoke an "oriental" sound-color—oboes, guitars, drums, tambourines, finger cymbals.

#### *Continuo Realization*

A simple continuo realization has been provided for the vocal numbers. It remains uncertain whether keyboard accompaniment would have been used in the purely instrumental movements. Typically continuo figures are absent from dance numbers—which might imply that these numbers were to be played by the string band alone. For more on keyboard realization in the 17<sup>th</sup>-century French style, see my edition of *A New Treatise on Accompaniment with the Harpsichord, the Organ, and with Other Instruments*, by Monsieur de Saint Lambert (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991).

#### *Ornamentation*

The only notated ornament is "+", which is a generic sign for any ornament. Other ornaments (trills, mordents, *ports de voix*, appoggiaturas, divisions) may also be added in performance.

#### *Rhythmic alteration*

The application of rhythmic *inégalité* (the playing of even eighth-notes as long-short triplets) would be effective in the following numbers: No. 1, Ritournelle (mm. 32-36 and 79-83); No. 2, Prélude to "En vain l'on conspire" (mm. 1-7); No. 9, Prélude to "S'il falloit que passer la mer" (mm. 1-5) and mm. 15-20; and No. 10, Contredanse. Double-dotting would also be appropriate in the prelude to No. 1, and perhaps the gigue of No. 5 ("Les Turcs").

#### *Articulation and Phrasing*

To recreate the sound of the original seventeenth-century orchestra, instrumentalists may wish to adopt the bowing techniques used in French ensembles of the time. Some basic principles set down by Georg Muffat in his introduction to *Suavioris Harmoniae Instrumentalis Hyporchematicae Florilegium Secundum* (1698) are summarized in Mary Cyr's *Performing Baroque Music* (Portland: Amadeus Press, 1992), pp. 89-93 and in Herbert W. Myers's "Orchestral Bowing Technique" (found in George Houle, ed., *Le Ballet des Fâcheux: Beauchamp's Music for Molière's Comedy* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991], pp. 11-24).

#### *Meter and Tempo*

In general, metrical symbols in Baroque scores embody certain implications of tempo. The symbols C and 2 usually imply a slow to moderate duple meter, 6/8 a moderate compound duple meter, 3/2 a slow triple meter, 3 a moderate triple meter, and 3/8 a fast triple meter. In the case of dances, dance-steps govern the tempo, which is further tied to the rhythm, phrasing, and character of each dance. The metronome markings included in the edition are merely general editorial

suggestions—although they are informed by theoretical writings of the period and the editor's experience with a wider range of 17<sup>th</sup>-century French theatrical music.

*The Dance*

The *gigue* (No. 5, "Les Turcs") is a fast dance of English origin, first introduced into France in the mid-17th century by the lutenist Jacques Gaultier. The French *gigue* usually is in duple meter (simple or compound) beginning with an upbeat, and is characterized by dotted rhythms and irregular phrases. The *gavotte* (No. 7) is a sprightly dance of popular origin that is usually notated in duple meter (cut-C or 2), and begins on the second half of the measure. Unlike the *gigue*, the phrase structure of the *gavotte* is periodic (usually in four-bar phrases). The *pantalon* (No. 8) is a dance that takes its name from the masked clown of French theater, who would often perform grotesque dances, make violent gestures, and strike extravagant poses. Whereas the music of the "Entrée de Pantalons" is periodic in structure, its dotted rhythms suggest a pantomimic character. The *contredanse* (No. 10; here a *contredanse en rondeau*) is a gay dance in duple meter that is constructed of a series of repeated eight-measure phrases. Derived from the English country dance, the *contredanse* enjoyed a great vogue at the French court and in the theater at the end of the 17th century. Unlike the traditional English dance, which was performed in "longways" (with the men forming one line and the women another), the French version was more often performed by four, six, or eight dancers in a square set, and used the formal steps of the noble style (the *gavotte*, *bourrée*, etc.).<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> For more specifics on these dance-steps, see Wendy Hilton, *Dance of Court & Theater: The French Noble Style 1690-1725* (Princeton: Princeton Book Company, 1981).