

Kapp, Volker, ed. *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme: Problèmes de la comédie-ballet*. (Paris, Seattle, Tübingen: Bilio 17 (67)-PFSCCL, 1991). 223 pp. Music examples. FF 150/\$26/DM 35.

Given that *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* "intègre parfaitement la danse et la musique dans le texte," in Volker Kapp's words, critical analysis can only benefit from interdisciplinary collaboration. It is therefore highly laudable that the editor of the volume under review invited contributions from an eminent musicologist, the Lully scholar Herbert Schneider, a specialist in musical theater and dance, Margaret McGowan, as well as the *comédie-ballet* authority Louis Auld. The results are well worthwhile.

Hartmut Stenzel's contribution, "Projet critique et divertissement de cour. Sur la place de la comédie-ballet et du *Bourgeois gentilhomme* dans le théâtre de Molière," opts for a perspective based on social history. In his view, the *Bourgeois gentilhomme*, the culminating point of Molière's esthetic evolution, also implied "l'abandon provisoire du projet critique" which had constituted "l'originalité de ce théâtre;" perfection of staging neutralized Molière as a social critic. Against Robert Garapon's and Gérard Defaux's views of an internal artistic evolution in Molière's work, the author stresses the historical and social constraints on its production. Whether or not one agrees with the author's contention that "la réalisation de la fête, du divertissement total, rend nécessaire l'éviction de toute problématique sociale," the argument is lucidly stated.

In "Circulation monétaire et mobilité sociale dans le *Bourgeois gentilhomme*," Gerhard C. Gerhards proposes "une thèse à première vue bizarre." Placing the circulation of money alongside ballets, songs, and masquerades in the work, he believes that the first of these "mouvements" informs all the others; that Jourdain introduces the unstable, dynamic force of money into a hierarchically frozen society; that social mobility, in other words, is the true subject--even the "metteur en scène invisible"--of the

Bourgeois. In an analysis as ingenious and elegantly stated as it is also occasionally strained in the service of its thesis, Gerhardi notes Jourdain's *largesse* as opposed first to typical bourgeois possessiveness, and second to Dorante's inability to "tenir son rang." He also appropriately notices that the *Bourgeois* can itself be seen as a *mise en abyme* of its surroundings, since Jourdain offers himself a *spectacle* just as does Molière's patron. Incorporating reflections on Molière's position at court which are based on Montesquieu's defense of luxurious expenditure, his article is highly thought-provoking.

Françoise Karro's article, "La cérémonie turque du *Bourgeois gentilhomme*: mouvance temporelle et spirituelle de la foi," impresses by its length (sixty pages) and its evident erudition. It situates the *Bourgeois* between two pamphlets, one counting Antoine Arnauld among its authors and the Triple Alliance as its target, the other in reply. The *Bourgeois* is viewed here through the optic of the "coeur mystérieux de l'oeuvre," the *cérémonie turque*; a novel approach to say the least!

Volker Kapp contributes an analysis of "Langage verbal et langage non-verbal dans le *Bourgeois gentilhomme*." He conceives the nonverbal as a "surplus" added to the verbal text, and corresponding thus to the pragmatic dimension in linguistics. The analogy is open to question on more than one count, but leads nonetheless to a good discussion of the nonverbal dimension of civility at court, fully equal to its verbal dimension. The author persuasively recalls the necessity of minute conformity in both dimensions. He convincingly discusses ways in which nonverbal language advances the action within the *Bourgeois*.

Herbert Schneider considers the place of "Die Serenade im *Bourgeois gentilhomme*." Questioning Dietmar Fricke's assertion of the great importance of the "dialogue en musique" as a model in the *Bourgeois*, Schneider offers a survey of seventeenth-century serenades in which he points out Lully's previously neglected importance. Especially relevant in this connection is a tradition of comic and grotesque serenades in *ballets de cour*, for

instance in *Les Noces de Vaugirard* (1638). The author follows Lully's serenades from the *Ballet des Plaisirs* (1655, to a livret of Benserade) through *Le Sicilien* and *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac* and into the *Bourgeois*. Stating that a "passion motif" ("Leidensmotiv") reflects the main feeling of the *air de sérénade* "Je languis nuit et jour," Schneider reviews Bacilly's beliefs on the proper text-setting of emotional qualities. He then adduces the use of this "passion motif" in the "dialogue en musique," in the *Ballet des Nations*, and elsewhere in the score of the *Bourgeois*. It is a rare reader who will not learn from this article, even if there remains room for discussion.

In discussing "La danse: son rôle multiple," Margaret McGowan observes that the dance, always ready to invade the comedy, gives the *Bourgeois* "une flexibilité étonnante," even acting like a "maître de cérémonie." She recalls that not just the greatest choreographer, Beauchamps, but also the finest dancers of the period were chosen to participate in the original *Bourgeois*; and that the presence of Beauchamps's choreography, well known for its demanding nature, enjoins us to take the dance seriously as an indispensable component of the *spectacle*. This article is an excellent treatment of its topic.

In a brief *compte-rendu*, Dietmar Fricke considers two recent filmed productions of the *Bourgeois*, one by Roger Coggio and one by Jérôme Savary. The author vividly evokes two very different *mises en scène*, and lamenting the influence of Comédie-Française productions, expresses hope for Lully's score to be truly respected.

In "Une rivalité sournoise: Molière contre Pierre Perrin," Louis Auld relates the history of Perrin's fortunes, and undertakes to rehabilitate the author often remembered for the words to the song of "Janneton" used in Act I of the *Bourgeois*. In addition to identifying an allusion to Perrin in *Le Malade imaginaire* (the missing words to the music, II, 5), Auld advances the argument that the words for "Janneton" sin more by conforming to an outdated, pre-Lullian esthetic than by simple *gaucherie*. Perhaps not every reader will be convinced, but Auld certainly makes a

case for interest in the poet to whom he has devoted a massive study.

In a final article, "Vom *Ballet de Cour* zum *Ballet d'Action*. Über den Wandel des Tanzverständnisses im ausgehenden 17. und beginnenden 18. Jahrhundert," Claudia Jeschke reviews dance theories in Menestrier and de Pure, then in John Weaver, the translator of Feuillet's *Chorégraphie*. Based on her careful review of esthetic ideas, the author situates the *comédie-ballet's* use of dance squarely within the evolution of characterization and action from the *ballet de cour* to the *ballet d'action*. One looks forward to promised future work by the author with more specific consideration of *comédies-ballets* than is presented here.

In short, this collection of articles deserves to find its way into the study of every Molière specialist.

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