

MARIE-JUSTINE FAVART, NÉE DURONCERAY: SOME NEW BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

DAVID CHARLTON



INTRODUCTION

Marie-Justine-Benoîte Duronceray was an extraordinary, multi-talented artist, described by Bruce Alan Brown as a singer, actor, dancer and dramatist.¹ Her performances on the Paris stage between 1745 and 1771 met with general enthusiasm,² and her pioneering of realistic stage costume was influential.³ Her mastery of the modern Italian aria, linked with Italianate acting style, was crucial to the development of modern opéra comique.⁴ Biographers and others have recounted her life,⁵ creatively linked with that of her husband, the dramatist Charles-Simon Favart,⁶ and images, sometimes capturing a role that she played, have been

<d.charlton@rhul.ac.uk>

I should like to thank Michael O’Dea and Anne-Marie Mercier-Faivre for their hospitality in Lyons, and Michel Noiray for clarifying linguistic details.

- 1 Bruce Alan Brown, ‘Marie-Justine-Benoîte Favart’, in *Grove Music Online* <www.oxfordmusiconline.com> (6 June 2015). Brown confirms her authorial involvement in the following works: *Les Amours de Bastien et Bastienne* (collaborating with C.-S. Favart and Harny de Guerville), 4 August 1753; *La Fête d’amour, ou Lucas et Colinette* (with C.-S. Favart and Chevalier), 5 December 1754; *Les Ensorcelées, ou Jeannot et Jeannette* (with C.-S. Favart, J. N. Guérin de Frémicourt and Harny de Guerville), 1 September 1757; *La Fille mal gardée, ou Le pédant amoureux* (with C.-S. Favart and Lourdet de Santerre), music by Egidio Duni, 4 March 1758; *La Fortune au village* (with C.-S. Favart and Bertrand), music by Paul-César Gibert, 8 October 1760; *Annette et Lubin* (with C.-S. Favart and Lourdet de Santerre), music by Adolphe-Benoît Blaise, 15 February 1762. Further information on these is found in Nicole Wild and David Charlton, *Théâtre de l’Opéra-Comique, Paris: Répertoire 1762–1972* (Sprimont: Mardaga, 2005).
- 2 She died on 21 April 1772, but had continued to perform until the end of 1771 (*Les Spectacles de Paris 1772*, cited in Arthur Pougin, *Madame Favart, Étude théâtrale 1727–1772* (Paris: Fischbacher, 1912), 55). Thus her last performances would have been in her own *Annette et Lubin* (role of Annette, 28 November), in the *parodie* by Charles-Simon Favart of Mondonville’s *Titon et l’Aurore* entitled *Raton et Rosette* (role of Rosette, 14 December) and in Favart’s *comédie mêlée d’ariettes, Isabelle et Gertrude* (role of Mme Gertrude, 15 December). These dates derive from Clarence D. Brenner, *The Theatre Italien: Its Repertory, 1716–1793. With a Historical Introduction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961).
- 3 Otto Kurz, ‘Pictorial Records of Favart’s Comedy *Les trois Sultanes*’, in *Études d’art français offertes à Charles Sterling*, ed. Albert Châtelet and Nicole Reynaud (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1975), 311–317.
- 4 David Charlton, ‘Sodi’s Opera for Mme Favart: *Baiocco et Serpilla*’, in *La ‘Querelle des Bouffons’ dans la vie culturelle française du XVIIIe siècle*, ed. Andrea Fabiano (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2005), 205–218.
- 5 See, for example, Gabriel-Jules Letainturier-Fradin, *Les amours de Madame Favart* (Paris: Flammarion, 1906). For an acidulous report that the public merely tolerated her at the end of her life see *Mémoires secrets pour servir à l’histoire de la République des Lettres en France*, ed. Christophe Cave and others, volume 4 (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2010), 59 (15 January 1772).
- 6 Maurice Dumoulin, *Favart et Madame Favart: un ménage d’artistes au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Louis-Michaud[, 1902]). The *Anecdotes dramatiques* by Joseph de La Porte and Jean-Marie Clément (Paris: Veuve Duchesne, 1775), volume 3, 187–188, noted the creative role she played in C.-S. Favart’s *opéras comiques*: in deciding the subject matter, general outline, choice of melodies, the new words to these, ‘& différens Vaudevilles dont elle faisoit la Musique’ (various songs whose music she composed), though her modesty determined that few people knew of this: ‘sa modestie l’empêchoit d’en tirer avantage. Isolée, retirée dans le sein de la famille . . . elle s’occupoit de sa profession’ (her modesty would not



reproduced; a sculpted likeness can be found in the Louvre.⁷ Figure 1 celebrates Marie-Justine in 1753, an eventful year during which she even appeared at Fontainebleau opposite Marie Fel and Pierre Jélyotte, in *La Coquette trompée* (with music by Antoine Dauvergne and text by C.-S. Favart). Two overlooked librettos discussed in this article give the first known indication that she was working and travelling even before the events recorded in a memoir by her husband, written shortly after her death. These events launched her Parisian career early in 1745. The memoir states:

Marie-Justine-Benoîte Duronceray naquit à Avignon le 15 juin 1727 sur la paroisse Saint-Agricole. Elle étoit fille d'André-René Duronceray, ancien musicien de la chapelle de S. M., et depuis musicien du feu roi Stanislas, et de Perrette-Claudine Bied, aussi musicienne de la chapelle du roi de Pologne. Ce prince . . . eut la bonté de contribuer lui-même à l'éducation de la petite Duronceray, qui s'annonçoit déjà par des talens prématurés. Les plus habiles maîtres la formèrent pour la danse, la musique, les différens instrumens et les élémens de la langue. En 1744, sa mère obtint un congé du roi Stanislas pour venir à Paris. Mademoiselle Duronceray parut à l'Opéra-Comique à la Foire Saint-Germain sous le nom de mademoiselle Chantilly, première danseuse du roi de Pologne.⁸

Marie-Justine-Benoîte Duronceray was born at Avignon, on 15 June 1727, in the parish of Saint-Agricole. She was a daughter of André-René Duronceray, formerly a musician in the chapel of His Majesty, subsequently a musician to the late King Stanislas himself [of Poland, 1677–1766]; and of Perrette-Claudine Bied, also a musician in the chapel of the king of Poland. This prince . . . had the kindness to contribute personally to the education of young Duronceray, whose talents marked her out early. The most skilled teachers trained her in dance, in musical skills, on various instruments and in the elements of language. In 1744 her mother obtained a leave from King Stanislas to come to Paris. Mlle Duronceray appeared at the Opéra Comique, Saint-Germain Fair, as Mlle Chantilly, *première danseuse* of the King of Poland.

Biographers have supposed that André-René, whose authentic family name was 'Cabaret', substituted 'Duronceray' (a place name) by reason of this being his place of birth. But Duronceray was also a known musical name in the south of France. Another musician called Duronceray is referred to in Léon Vallas's history of music and theatre in Lyons. He was employed there in 1729 and once sang a duet in company with the young Rousseau: 'Duronceray est Duroncel, "fameux haute-contre de l'ancien Opéra de Lyon" que Jean-Jacques Rousseau entendit à Besançon et cita dans une de ses lettres du 29 juin 1733' (Duronceray was the 'Duroncel', 'famous *haute-contre* of the old Lyons Opéra', whom Jean-Jacques Rousseau had heard at Besançon and named in a letter dated 29 June 1733).⁹

allow her to gain any further advantage from [these activities]. Hers was a professional life, lived privately within the family circle).

7 Paris, Musée du Louvre, no. RF 1555: Jean-Jacques Caffieri, *Monument à la mémoire de Madame Favart*, marble, dated 1774. An excellent pastel by Jean-Étienne Liotard is less well known (Winterthur, Museum Stiftung Oskar Reinhart).

8 Antoine-Pierre-Charles Favart, ed., *Mémoires et correspondance littéraires, dramatiques et anecdotiques de C. S. Favart, publiés par A. P. C. Favart, son Petit-Fils; et précédés d'une notice historique, rédigée sur pièces authentiques et originales, par H[enri] F[rançois] Dumolard*, three volumes (Paris: Léopold Collin, 1808), volume 1, lxxiv–lxxv. A convenient biographical website for King Stanislas, with sources and bibliography, is available at <stanislas.pagesperso-orange.fr>.

9 Léon Vallas, *Un siècle de musique et de théâtre à Lyon, 1688–1789* (Lyons: P. Masson, 1932), 205. Rousseau's text is: 'M. l'Abbé Blanchard m'a prié d'y chanter un Récit de Basse-taille, que ces Messieurs ont eu la complaisance d'applaudir; aussi bien qu'un Duo de Pyrame et Thisbé, que j'ai chanté avec M. Duroncel, fameux Haute-Contre de l'ancien Opéra de Lyon' (The abbé Blanchard urged me to sing a bass solo, which the company kindly applauded; then a duet from *Pyrame et Thisbé*, which I sang with Mr Duroncel, at that time a celebrated *haute-contre* at the Lyons opera-house): letter to Françoise Louise Eléonor, baronne de Warens, *Correspondance de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, ed. R. A. Leigh (Geneva: Institut et Musée Voltaire, 1965), consulted on *Electronic Enlightenment* <www.e-enlightenment.com> (1 February 2015). Avignon, Marie-Justine's city of origin, lies 230 kilometres due south of Lyons.



M^{me} FAVART EN 1753.
Dessin de C. N. Cochin, gravé par Flipart.

Figure 1 Marie-Justine Favart, drawn in 1753 by Charles-Nicolas Cochin le fils, and engraved in 1762 by J. J. Flipart for the fifth volume of *Théâtre, ou, Recueil des Comédies . . . de M. Favart* (Paris: Duchesne, 1763–1772)

In the Introduction to his edition of C.-S. Favart's letters, Henri Dumolard explained the existence of Marie-Justine's stage-name 'Chantilly' by paraphrasing a letter, preserved within the Favart papers, in which



the young singer's mother imposed it 'out of respect for her family living in Paris'.¹⁰ Dumolard also provides a useful date, just before this, which helps us to infer the rapid arrival of Marie-Justine in Paris, the subsequent rehearsal period and the initial performance schedule:

En effet, le 21 janvier 1745, madame Duronceray, femme d'un musicien du roi Stanislas, écrit de Lunéville pour offrir à M. Favart ses talens et ceux de sa fille comme actrices et comme danseuses. . . . Bientôt après, mademoiselle Duronceray vint à Paris.¹¹

Indeed, on 21 January 1745 Mme Duronceray, wife of a musician to King Stanislas, wrote from Lunéville to M. Favart to present her own talents, and those of her daughter, as actresses and dancers. . . . Soon after that, Mlle Duronceray came to Paris.

All biographical narratives, to date, have adopted this account as their starting-point. However, the proposed journey by mother and daughter was actually prepared for by another joint trip, one year before, to the city of Lyons. Indirectly, this sheds light on the family's southern origins and connections.

THE ENGAGEMENTS OF 1744

As must have been known to the family, the Lyons opera had been going through a highly productive period since 1739 under the directorship of Nicolas Bergiron, himself a musician. Unfortunately, the books proved impossible to balance, and the final performances of his tenure took place in August 1744. The company then decamped to the court at Chambéry of Don Felipe (Spanish Infante, later the Duke of Parma, known in France as Don Philippe) and his wife Louise-Elisabeth of France.¹² Chambéry is 108 kilometres east of Lyons. Subsequently, the impresario Jean Monnet was invited to organize the Lyons opera in 1745, after the *directeur* of the Paris Opéra had terminated his *privilege* of the Opéra Comique on 30 May 1744.¹³

Bergiron, or else his public, favoured the *tragédie en musique*; nevertheless, in 1741 he presented Favart's opéra comique *La Chercheuse d'esprit*. Its libretto, published in Lyons specially for the occasion, still survives there. But not all such local librettos have been preserved, at least for 1744 (if indeed they were ever published). Léon Vallas also noted that the feeble incidence of press sources further hinders a full understanding of these lyric seasons: for example, the *Affiches de Lyon, annonces et avis divers* was founded only in January 1750.¹⁴

Modelled in appearance and design on librettos for the Académie Royale de Musique, Paris, the Lyons librettos give act-by-act names of participants in the *divertissements*. Their title-pages identify these operas merely by reference to their year of first performance and each revival year, to date, when they had been seen in Paris. No composer or librettist is named. For only two operas given in Lyons in 1743 are there surviving librettos: *Hippolyte et Aricie* of Jean-Philippe Rameau, given in February, and André Cardinal Destouches's *Télémaque* (1714), given in May, both showing a dance troupe numbering either six or seven

10 'Elle le prévint que, dans le cas où il accepteroit sa proposition, elle prendra le nom de Chantilly, par respect pour sa famille qui habite Paris': Henri Dumolard, in *Mémoires et correspondance*, ed. Favart, volume 1, xix. But it is unclear what this really means. The same information appears in Auguste Font, *Favart, l'Opéra-Comique et la comédie-vaudeville aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris: Fischbacher, 1894), 126.

11 Dumolard, in *Mémoires et correspondance*, ed. Favart, volume 1, xix: the mother is not mentioned at this point, or later, but the new evidence brought forward below corroborates the fact that Perrette-Claudine was a dancer of professional standard.

12 Vallas, *Un siècle de musique et de théâtre*, 223–237.

13 *Mémoires de Jean Monnet, Directeur du Théâtre de la Foire*, ed. with Introduction by Henri d'Almèras (Paris: Louis-Michaud[, 1908]), 37–39, 88, 93–95. François Berger, the Paris Opéra's new *directeur*, decided to run the Opéra Comique himself together with its intendant, C.-S. Favart, and save the money he should have owed to Monnet. The Lyons winter season, Monnet's first, opened on 15 December 1745, as he reports.

14 Vallas, *Un siècle de musique et de théâtre*, vi, 247. See also Bibliothèque Nationale de France, online *Catalogue général*: the *Affiches de Lyon* ran until 1801.



members.¹⁵ No sign of ‘Duronceray’ occurs in these, or indeed in the Lyons edition issued in 1742 of the libretto for *Ajax* (1716), with music by Bertin de La Doué.¹⁶ It is in 1744 that we first find the names ‘Mlle Duronzeray fille’ and ‘Duronzeray mère’ among those of the dance troupe. (They may of course refer to another pair of dancers than Marie-Justine and Perrette-Claudine: I currently assume that these were the pair who had travelled from Lunéville.) These names occur in the only two Lyons librettos for 1744 that have been preserved: *Les Caractères de La Folie*, seen from 17 January, and *Médée et Jason*, on unknown dates during March.¹⁷ The two women might well also have danced in *Ajax*, seen on 17 February in the presence of the visiting Infante, Don Felipe, and in *Thésée* two days later: Vallas (without supplying exact references) discovered these performances through records in the *Almanach de la ville Lyon* for 1745. They seem to have been staged.¹⁸ Until a Lyons edition of these librettos is found, or some other document, we cannot know who danced in the *divertissements*.¹⁹

There is a further intriguing possibility: that the Duronceray mother and daughter were in Chambéry even earlier in 1744, prior to the Lyons opening on 17 January. Henri Bédarida noticed this further link between Lyons and Chambéry: ‘À sa cour de Chambéry, [Don Philippe] offrait à ses vassaux provisoires comédies, concerts et opéras, faisant venir de Lyon des acteurs et des décors. La troupe débutait le 1^{er} janvier 1744’ (At his Chambéry court, Don Philippe offered plays, concerts and operas to his provisional subjects, summoning actors and theatre sets from Lyons. The troupe commenced on New Year’s Day, 1744).²⁰ Bédarida’s subsequent sentences, which do mention ‘Mme Favart’, refer, though, to later events, prior to the battle of Rocourt (or Raucoux, as he calls it) on 11 October 1746, north of Liège.

Les Caractères de La Folie was what we now call an opéra-ballet, consisting of a Prologue and three *entrées*: *L’Astrologie*, *L’Ambition* and *Les Caprices de l’Amour*. It has an interesting text by Rousseau’s friend Charles

15 Lyons, Bibliothèque Municipale (hereafter F-Lbm) Rés. 360177 and Rés. 360178: *Hippolyte et Aricie, tragédie Représentée . . . Par l’Académie royale de Musique de Lyon en Février 1743* (Lyons: Aimé Delaroche, 1743); *Télémaque, tragédie Représentée . . . par l’Académie royale de Musique de Lyon, en Mai 1743* (Lyons: Delaroche, 1743).

16 F-Lbm, Rés. 360176. Jérôme de La Gorce has drawn attention to the great popularity of *Ajax* in Lyons, Nantes and Bordeaux: ‘Bertin de La Doué, Toussaint’, in Marcelle Benoit, *Dictionnaire de la musique en France aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris: Fayard, 1992), 69. A copy of this Lyons edition found its way to Washington, D. C.: Oscar George Theodore Sonneck, *Library of Congress: Catalogue of Opera Librettos Printed before 1800*, two volumes (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1914), volume 1, 45.

17 F-Lbm, Rés. 373148: *Les Caractères de La Folie, Ballet représenté par l’Académie royale de musique de Paris . . . et par celle de Lyon, le Vendredi 17 Janvier 1744* (Lyons: Aymé Delaroche, 1744); F-Lbm, Rés. 360179, *Médée et Jason, tragédie représentée par l’Académie royale de musique de Paris . . . et par celle de Lyon en Mars 1744* (Lyons: Aymé Delaroche, 1744). Another copy of the former libretto is also in GB-Lbl, 11736.k.6 (3).

18 ‘Ce prince [Don Philippe] pendant les trois jours qu’il passa dans cette ville, assista aux représentations de l’Opéra, ainsi que le rapporte l’*Almanach [astronomique et historique de la ville]* de Lyon pour 1745’ (During the three days that he spent in this city, [Don Philippe] was present at performances by the Opéra, as reported in the *Almanach* of Lyons, 1745): Vallas, *Un siècle de musique et de théâtre*, 236. Between *Ajax* on 17 February and *Thésée* on 19 February, ‘actes tirés de différents opéras’ (separate acts drawn from various operas) were shown on 18 February. The wording of the report, reproduced by Vallas, suggests stage performances by reason of the five o’clock starting-time of *Ajax*, and the fact that *Thésée* came after a separate concert: with his accompanying grandees the prince then returned to the Opéra, ‘où l’on représenta celui de *Thésée* avec beaucoup de succès’ (where *Thésée* was given with great success).

19 Numerous searches within online library catalogues of various countries have proved fruitless. In a bound set of librettos at F-Lbm shelf-marked A.496028, 1744 examples of these two works prove to be of exclusively Parisian provenance. F-Lbm Rés. FM.133579 is a manuscript in two volumes of excerpts from *Ajax* bearing the date ‘1744’.

20 Henri Bédarida, *Parme et la France de 1748 à 1789* (Paris: Honoré Champion and Edouard Champion, 1928), 451. The sources he gives are: (1) ‘Santa Cruz, majordome major de d. Philippe, à Villarias, premier ministre d’Espagne, 1er janv. 1744’, at Simancas: Archivio general, Est. 5149; (2) ‘Les comptes de la Comédie de l’Infant à Chambéry’, at Parma, Archivio di Stato, *Teatri*, I. ‘Provisional subjects’ refers to the fact that the prince’s Chambéry court was a provisional one, while he waited on events that should eventually see him installed as Duke of Parma.



Duclos, with inventive music by Bernard de Bury.²¹ The particular type of evidence offered below has been discussed and illustrated in dance research; and it must be for others to attempt to match ‘combinations of personnel’ recorded in Lyons with ‘the available music’ in printed scores.²² In Lyons the leading couple in the Prologue’s ballet were Monsieur Denis and ‘Mademoiselle Duronzeray la fille’, forming part of the ‘Suite de l’Amour et de La Folie’. Thus Marie-Justine was shown off before her associate dancers in this *divertissement*, Mlles Hyacinte, Texier and Lebert, who had all been seen in *Ajax* two years before. In the *entrée* entitled *L’Astrologie*, where dancers represented shepherds and shepherdesses, Marie-Justine again led the solo group with two male dancers, while her mother (‘Duronzeray la mère’) performed in the accompanying group with Mlles Hyacinte, Texier and Desiré. In the second-act *divertissement*, which takes place on Lesbos, Marie-Justine was one of three solo dancers alongside M. Dubois and Mlle Lebert (representing ‘Lesbiens’): her mother did not dance. And in the final *entrée*, where ‘Habitans de Cythère’ were represented, mother and daughter Duronceray both appeared as members of the entire group, consisting of twelve dancers.

Médée et Jason, as we can discern from the Paris performance dates on its title page, was the *tragédie* in five acts by Simon Joseph (abbé) Pellegrin, with music by Joseph François Salomon. The Act 1 ballet (no Prologue was included) featured all twelve dancers as ‘Guerriers et Guerrières’, including mother and daughter Duronceray as part of the main group. In the second-act *divertissement*, where *Magiciennes*, *Magiciens* and *Démons* all appeared, Perrette-Claudine performed, but not her daughter. Then Marie-Justine led the Act 3 dancers together with M. Denis, in the guise of ‘Bergers et Bergères’; her mother was part of the general group. ‘Duronzeray mère’, but not her daughter, then danced in Act 4 (the group representing ‘Matelots et Matelotes’) and Act 5 (appearing as ‘Corinthiens et Corinthiennes’).

AFTER LYONS

In 1743 the Lyons opera season had extended as late as May, when *Télémaque* was given, but for 1744 we are not in a position to assess when the Duronceray couple might have returned to the north. By June 1744, Marie-Justine had reached seventeen years of age. However, it was a moment of turmoil in Lorraine. Stanislas Leszczyński, King of Poland, father-in-law of Louis XV, had received the Duchy of Lorraine in 1737. In his Lunéville palace stood a theatre, built in 1733 by the previous incumbent. During 1743 and 1744 Lorraine became a potential region of conflict in the later complexities of the War of the Austrian Succession, and in August 1744 the Austrian army of Prince Charles of Lorraine threatened invasion: Stanislas fled to La Malgrange castle in Nancy and his wife to Meudon.²³ Louis XV’s own army advanced successfully; by 28–29 September he and his wife Marie (daughter of Stanislas) were received ceremonially at Lunéville.²⁴ Perhaps the Duronceray family performed for the court on this occasion. We know that Marie Leszczyńska liked opéra comique, not just traditional French opera, since she had invited that unofficial company from the Foire Saint-Laurent to perform at Meudon in 1736; Stanislas had also been there, to sign a secret document renouncing all future claims to Bar and Lorraine.²⁵ Stanislas and his family would travel to Paris in time for 23 February 1745, the day of the wedding of the Dauphin of France to Maria-Teresa of Spain.

21 Premiere, Paris, 20 August 1743; Rousseau had, incidentally, lived in Lyons from spring 1740 until the end of 1741, but was engaged in Venice between September 1743 and August 1744. Some notes on this opéra-ballet can be found in Charlton, *Opera in the Age of Rousseau* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 106–107, 119–121, 339–340.

22 Sarah McCleave, ‘English and French Theatrical Sources: The Repertoire of Marie Sallé’, in *Dance and Music in French Baroque Theatre: Sources and Interpretations*, ed. McCleave (London: Institute of Advanced Musical Studies, King’s College, 1998), 20.

23 Michel Antoine, *Louis XV* (Paris: Fayard, 1989), 372.

24 Antoine, *Louis XV*, 372–379. Pougin thought that Marie-Justine ‘s’est fait une renommée à Nancy, à la cour de Stanislas’ (had made a reputation in Nancy, at the court of Stanislas): *Madame Favart*, 9.

25 Claude and François Parfaict, *Mémoires pour servir à l’histoire des spectacles de la Foire*, two volumes (Paris: Briasson, 1743), volume 2, 115–116; Antoine, *Louis XV*, 295.



From Charles-Simon Favart's memoir of his wife, quoted earlier, unique details are given which suggest that mother and daughter arrived in Paris within a month of Mme Duronceray's letter to him, referred to earlier, dated 21 January 1745. The memoir reveals that Marie-Justine acted, sang and danced in a piece by Favart designed to celebrate the dauphin's wedding in February: *Les Fêtes publiques*. Its exact date is unknown and all but one authority deem it as a missing source; nonetheless, it must have been premiered on or soon after 23 February.²⁶ But Favart's memoir also referred to his future wife's standing in the Lunéville court; and to judge by her readiness to undertake a professional trip to Lyons at the age of sixteen, she must have been active as a dance performer at Lunéville significantly earlier than the winter of 1743–1744. Favart writes:

Mademoiselle Duronceray parut à l'Opéra-Comique à la Foire Saint-Germain sous le nom de mademoiselle Chantilly, première danseuse du roi de Pologne. Elle débuta par le rôle de Laurence, qu'elle joua d'original dans une pièce intitulée *les Fêtes publiques*, faite à l'occasion du premier mariage de feu monseigneur le dauphin. Elle eut beaucoup de succès, tant dans la danse que dans le chant et le dialogue.²⁷

Mlle Duronceray appeared at the Opéra Comique, Saint-Germain Fair, as Mlle Chantilly, *première danseuse* of the King of Poland. Her debut was in the role of Laurence, which she created in *Les Fêtes publiques*, written on the occasion of the late dauphin's first wedding. She had much success, as much in the dances as in the sung music and the spoken dialogue.

Why did Favart draw back from all mention of Justine's earliest artistic engagements? Does it connect with his apparent lack of any invitation to Duronceray *mère* to perform in Paris? Neither André-René Duronceray nor his wife subsequently attended the Favarts' wedding in December 1745, although both testified their assent to it via legal representatives.²⁸

EPILOGUE

Arthur Pougin's monograph *Madame Favart, Étude théâtrale 1727–1772*, followed by later authorities, listed only two works involving Marie-Justine's performance skills during 1745: *Les Fêtes publiques* in February, then *Les Vendanges de Tempé* on 28 August.²⁹ By rights, her Parisian career ought to have burgeoned immediately thereafter; but this same year saw the final phase of long-standing internecine battles between the main Parisian theatres, including the Opéra. Their perennial struggle for audiences was rekindled as the Foire Saint-Germain season began on 3 February 1745:

on se porta de même en foule au Spectacle de l'Opéra Comique, de manière que les Théâtres des Comédies française et Italienne parurent entièrement déserts, ce qui porta les premières à présenter une Requête au Roy, tendante à demander la suppression de l'Opéra Comique. Par décision verbale du Conseil ce Spectacle fût seulement suspendu, et n'a été rétabli qu'en 1752.³⁰

People again came to the Opéra Comique in droves, to such an extent that the Comédie-Française and Comédie-Italienne theatres appeared completely deserted, which led the former to present a

26 No source was listed in Paul Salvatore, *Favart's Unpublished Plays: The Rise of the Popular Comic Opera* (New York: Institute of French Studies, 1935), or in Flora Mele, *Le théâtre de Charles-Simon Favart: histoire et inventaire des manuscrits* (Paris: H. Champion, 2010). Clarence D. Brenner, *A Bibliographical List of Plays in the French Language, 1700–1789* (Berkeley, 1947; reprinted with new material by Michael A. Keller and Neal Zaslaw, New York: AMS Press, 1979), 66, suggests F-Po, Cartons Favart I. But Auguste Font found there only 'three fragments': *Favart*, 344.

27 Favart, ed., *Mémoires et correspondance*, volume 1, lxxiv–lxxv.

28 Dumoulin, *Favart et Madame Favart*, 27–28.

29 Pougin, *Madame Favart*, 9, 61.

30 F-Po MS Rés. 516, 'Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de l'Académie Royale de Musique' (the 'Manuscrit Amelot'), f. 257, paragraph 503.



request to the king with the aim of suppressing the Opéra Comique. The latter, by verbal decree of the Conseil [du Roi], was instead suspended, not to be restored until 1752.

The Opéra Comique's success of this winter season was a lively *parodie* of Lully's *Thésée* premiered on 17 February, which generated strong disapproval in some quarters because this opera was particularly associated with monarchy: since foreign visitors were in town for the royal wedding, it gave a poor impression.³¹ In March 1745 the Crown apparently invited the Opéra's *directeur*, Berger (who was managing the Opéra Comique: see note 13), to respond to the Comédie-Française's case. His planning had begun for the Saint-Laurent summer season, but on 6 June, about three weeks before its opening night, the lieutenant-general of police informed the duc de Richelieu (who would inform Berger) that the Opéra Comique was to receive an order suspending it for three years.³² This order was later renewed. The Comédie-Française had claimed unfair financial losses, and it would be for them to prove their case over a fixed period.³³

Favart was, however, able to persuade the authorities to allow him to promote one final season, presented under the aegis of the English dancer 'Mr Mathews'; no practical details of the collaboration are known.³⁴ Marie-Justine's contribution was a *pantomime* that centred on her talents as a movement artist: *Les Vendanges de Tempé*. Its only surviving source consists of an introductory essay and a scenario transcribed from manuscript, published in the *Dictionnaire des théâtres* by the brothers Parfaict.³⁵ As the 'little shepherd' in love with Lisette, Marie-Justine was required to carry the whole drama through gestural action across eight scenes, but not to sing; only later (25 February 1752) were two songs added when it was revised for the Comédie-Italienne as *La Vallée de Montmorency*, when new music was composed for it by Adolphe-Benoît Blaise. In 1745 time was short: thus Charles-Simon, or perhaps Marie-Justine, had the idea of giving the orchestra mainly *vaudevilles* to play – that is, familiar melodies whose remembered words were enough to tell the audience, or give it confirmation, of what was happening silently on stage. The orchestra's key role pointed towards the future, even to romantic ballet, but it is only now, with awareness of Marie-Justine's 1744 experience in professional dance, that her role as 'Un petit berger' can be placed in its proper perspective. Her skills surely facilitated this non-texted entertainment using talents that were to hand – one which, in the event, was so successful that it solved various immediate problems before being taken up elsewhere:

Le Directeur de l'Opéra eut tout lieu de se louer des *Vendanges de Tempé*, dont la réussite aida à le tirer d'affaire vis à vis plusieurs sujets qu'il avoit engagés pour l'année entière, & dont il mit en

31 *Lettre de Madame* *** [Anne-Marie Du Bocage] à une de ses amies sur les spectacles, & principalement sur l'Opéra Comique (no place or publisher, 1745).

32 Not six, as is usually assumed: 'La décision verbale du Conseil qui a suspendu la représentation de l'opéra-comique': Paris, Archives Nationales, AJ³³/3, Doss. III, 'Extrait des moyens employés... pour le rétablissement de l'opéra-comique', f. 1r.

33 '[le] tort que les Comédiens prétendent que leur fait l'Opéra Comique... a engagé à décider que les représentations de ce spectacle seroient sursises pendant trois ans, afin d'examiner si en effet les recettes des Comédiens seront plus considérables' (the harm which the Comédie-Française claims has been done to it by the [success of the] Opéra Comique... has persuaded [the government] that the latter's performances should be suspended for three years, in order to determine whether indeed the receipts of the Comédie-Française shall have risen [accordingly]): A. de Boislisle, ed., *Lettres de M. de Marville, lieutenant général de police, au Ministre Maurepas (1742–1747)* three volumes (Paris: H. Champion, 1896–1905), volume 2, 90.

34 La Porte and Clément, *Anecdotes dramatiques*, volume 3, 185. 'Mr Mathews' was active between 1739 and 1771 as 'dancer, tumbler, manager': Philip H. Highfill, Jr, Kalman A. Burnim and Edward A. Langhans, eds, *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers and Other Stage Personnel in London, 1660–1800*, sixteen volumes (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984), volume 10, 135, giving the titles of Mathews's other pantomimes during this Paris season.

35 Claude and François Parfaict, *Dictionnaire des théâtres de Paris*, second edition, seven volumes (Paris: Rozet, 1767), volume 6, 69–82.



œuvre les talens. . . . Jamais *Pantomime* n'a été plus célébrée; les provinces s'en emparèrent, & en firent imprimer différents Programmes³⁶

The *directeur* of the Opéra had every reason to be pleased with *Les Vendanges de Tempé*, whose success helped him to extricate himself regarding several employees whom he had hired for the year, and whose talents he could put to use. . . . Never was a *pantomime* more highly praised; the provinces instantly took it up and had different programmes printed for it

The new evidence also provides proof that Marie-Justine's early training at the Lunéville court included classical French ballet, which she had obviously taken to a very high level of skill.

³⁶ Claude and François Parfait, *Dictionnaire*, volume 6, 70.