



EDITIONS

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DENIS DIDEROT (1713–1784), ED. MARIAN HOBSON, TRANS. KATE E. TUNSTALL AND CAROLINE WARMAN

DENIS DIDEROT'S 'RAMEAU'S NEPHEW': A MULTI-MEDIA EDITION

Cambridge: Open Book, 2014

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Denis Diderot's 'Rameau's Nephew': A Multi-Media Edition brings to life Diderot's posthumous work, a conversational dialogue that has a unique history in print culture. Kate Tunstall and Caroline Warman's clever and vibrant translation begins a new chapter for a work whose first published edition appeared in a German translation by Goethe. Lost during most of the nineteenth century, the complete French manuscript did not resurface until the late 1800s. *Rameau's Nephew's* material history resembles in many respects the text's rich layers of historical references. This new multimedia edition offers readers a chance to hear and see the lesser-known and forgotten figures who either play chess at the Café de la Régence or become fodder for the conversation between the two main characters: HIM (Jean-François Rameau, nephew of Jean-Philippe Rameau) and ME (the narrator).

Tunstall and Warman's translation captures the virtuosic energy of Diderot's prose, from the frenetic movement of HIM to the sceptical and at times disgusted tone of ME. Previous reviewers have eloquently praised the strengths of their translation without speaking to the challenges presented by Diderot's work. *Rameau's Nephew* is known for its parataxis – that is, short, simple sentences that use coordinating, rather than subordinating, conjunctions. Their translation perfectly seizes upon the paratactical structure to recreate the French version's conversational tone.

This new edition includes a number of strengths that could serve both as an introduction to eighteenth-century Parisian culture for undergraduate students and as a reference for scholars. Among the many endnotes – containing 100 illustrations, 18 musical pieces and 262 annotations – there are gems of information such as the drawing of Polish-style dresses and the pictures of popular ceramic *pagodes*. The accompanying figures for these objects bring clarity to a conversation that jostles the reader from high-minded aesthetic contemplation to gossipy tales of vulgarity, vengeance and promiscuity.

In terms of music scholarship, the editors illustrate adeptly through musical examples how *Rameau's Nephew* argues for a 'new style' of French music, which modifies Italian vocal lines and instrumental music into a new form of French opera. The accompanying musical recordings bring to life lesser-known composers whose work Diderot and his contemporaries would have known. These recordings will also animate Daniel Hertz's contextualization of Diderot's dialogue (see Hertz, *Music in European Capitals: The Galant Style, 1720–1780* (New York: Norton, 2003); also Hertz, *From Garrick to Gluck: Essays on Opera in the Age of Enlightenment*, ed. John Rice (New York: Pendragon, 2004)).

While this *Rameau's Nephew* is, on the whole, an invaluable resource for students of Diderot and the eighteenth century, there are nevertheless a few areas where the editors could enhance and improve their already strong edition. In particular, the translators could alert English readers when the French dialogue quickly shifts pronouns. English lacks the pronouns, the informal you (*tu*) and the gender-neutral we (*on*), that create these wild transitions. This dizzying pronominal dance is one of many strategies that the narrator deploys to represent the Nephew as a chameleon character; thus a very simple annotative comment could further enhance Tunstall and Warman's brilliant translation.

This multimedia edition provides a concise Preface that offers readers a preview of scholarly interpretations, from Hegel's attention to *Rameau's Nephew* in his *Phenomenology* to Jean Starobinski's analysis of the chiasmatic structure of Diderot's dialogue ("Sur l'emploi du chiasme dans "Le neveu de Rameau", *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* 89/2 (1984), 182–196). However, the editors present only one specific narrative



on music, moving from French baroque opera through Italian comic opera to a 'new style' of French opera. In both the Preface and annotations the editors privilege this specific narrative to the detriment of a number of intriguing analyses of music in *Rameau's Nephew*. There is no mention, for example, of Cynthia Verba's seminal work on the *querelle des bouffons* (*Music and the French Enlightenment: Reconstruction of a Dialogue 1750–1764* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993)) and her analysis of Diderot's contribution. Also absent are a handful of ground-breaking works such as Wilda Anderson's comment on the dialogue's fugal pattern (*Diderot's Dream* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990)), Andrew Clark's insight into the figure of dissonance in Diderot's aesthetics (*Diderot's Parts* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2008)), John Hamilton's comparison of the Nephew to the mythological character Marsyas (*Music, Madness and the Unworking of Language* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008)), Downing Thomas's analysis of enharmonicism in Jean-Philippe Rameau's operas (*Aesthetics of Opera in the Ancien Régime, 1647–1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)) and Béatrice Didier's many articles on Diderot's adaptation of music into prose.

The editors' perspective seems to have informed their selection of musical passages, further reinforcing their specific narrative of music history. While the recordings for this edition provide useful context for the Nephew's discussion on music and even guide the musically versed reader through each performance, the recorded and hyperlinked pieces are exclusively instrumental and operatic works. The editors could draw more attention to the popular tunes that fade in and out of the dialogue. The Nephew is a street performer who combines high and low art. In the multimedia edition, the popular sides of the Nephew's music culture only appear as hyperlinks to twentieth- and twenty-first-century musical performers. The editors could certainly offer readers a wider range of scholarly approaches. For instance, gossip and calumny in eighteenth-century Paris often circulated through popular song (see Robert Darnton, *Poetry and the Police: Communication Networks in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010)). To be fair, though, it must be acknowledged that the above-mentioned critiques reflect more on the immense scope of Diderot's work, and less on this accomplished multimedia edition.

In terms of the reading experience, the e-book format is a new and evolving medium, and as such, comes with both strengths and weaknesses. Open Book have opted for maximum flexibility: depending on each reader's tastes, one can navigate the dialogue online, as an e-book or as a PDF. The annotations and hyperlinks are helpful tools, and encourage a sort of chiasmatic reading whereby the reader jumps back and forth from the text to endnotes. However, recent digital projects have presented a new style of reader interface. A digital archive might be better suited for a second iteration of *Rameau's Nephew*. For instance, Robert Darnton's *A Literary Tour de France* (<www.robertdarnton.org/literarytour>) integrates a vast archive of material from the Société typographique de Neuchâtel in an accessible web format.

Darnton's archive also organizes material around rubrics, and includes a brief description of each collection. A new version of the multimedia edition could follow a similar concept and borrow the helpful appendices from Marian Hobson's French edition (*Satyre seconde/Le Neveu de Rameau* (Geneva: Droz, 2013)). In terms of the music, a page dedicated to the Nephew's musical performance would enhance the reader's experience. Since the editors already provide rich musical analysis, musically literate readers would enjoy seeing the scores of the music concerned. In addition to a page dedicated to music, there could also be a page on dance and pantomime, with images of eighteenth-century performers and pantomime positions.

A digital archive would be useful for readers of Diderot's dialogue in so far as it would allow the reader to immerse herself in the visual and sonic culture of *Rameau's Nephew*. To a large extent, Tunstall's and Warman's multimedia edition succeeds in offering the reader a portal into eighteenth-century French intellectual, political and artistic culture. However, the aural contextualization in this version does not fully engage with the sonic environment presented in *Rameau's Nephew*. Diderot's dialogue occurs at the Café de la Régence, a famous hangout for chess players. A newer version of this edition could include a page on the soundscape of the Café de la Régence similar to a recent website on the sounds of eighteenth-century Paris (<<http://enfilade18thc.com/2015/07/14/the-sound-of-paris-june-1739-1000am>>). The dialogue itself



contains clues as to the sonic qualities of the Nephew's voice, which rattles the café windows. Whereas scholars often mention the lively musical debates that occurred in the Café de la Régence, we often ignore the sound of chess playing: the sporadic staccato of chess pieces hitting wood, as well as the silent contemplation of its practitioners. Indeed, in a novel by Jean-Baptiste Louvey de Couvray, the narrator speaks of the silence that reigned over the Café de la Régence, and the admonition he received from a player: 'In the *Café de la Régence*, we should not shout, we should not speak' (*Une année de la vie du Chevalier Faublas* (Paris, 1787), reprinted in René Étiemble, ed., *Romanciers du XVIIIe siècle*, volume 2 (Paris: Gallimard, 1965), 556; my translation). A multimedia edition could invite readers to imagine the Nephew singing within the resonant and possibly quiet space of the café, and then reflect on the effect of his performance. In short, then, we might expect much more imaginative use of the online platform in future comparable editions. In the meantime, the present work provides eighteenth-century scholars, students and enthusiasts with an accomplished, relevant and virtuosic translation of Diderot's famously difficult dialogue.

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SEBASTIAN KNÜPFER (1633–1676), JOHANN SCHELLE (1648–1701) AND JOHANN KUHNÄU (1660–1722), ED.
STEPHEN ROSE

*LEIPZIG CHURCH MUSIC FROM THE SHERARD COLLECTION: EIGHT WORKS BY SEBASTIAN
KNÜPFER, JOHANN SCHELLE, AND JOHANN KUHNÄU*

Collegium Musicum Yale University 20

Middleton: A-R Editions, 2014

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Held in the Bodleian libraries at Oxford University, the Sherard collection includes a substantial amount of music of German origin brought together around the start of the eighteenth century by the apothecary, amateur composer and botanist James Sherard (1666–1738). This volume of eight sacred pieces from the collection is one of the most important volumes of seventeenth-century sacred music to have been published for some time. Edited by Stephen Rose, it offers a valuable insight into the music performed at the Leipzig Thomaskirche at the end of the seventeenth century and the performing traditions later inherited by J. S. Bach. As Rose points out in his Introduction, the pieces 'document the final flowering of a liturgical and musical tradition in Leipzig' (xiv) and provide a valuable context not only for Bach's Latin-texted church music, but for other parts of his sacred output as well.

Even if he declined to purchase the contents of Kuhnau's musical estate, apparently rejecting his Leipzig forebears' music, Bach must have had at least partial knowledge of the late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century repertoire of the Thomaskirche. It is telling that his own BWV 243 setting of the Magnificat has an almost identical use of the chorus to the one by Johann Schelle published here, and thematic similarities further link the two settings. As Rose says, 'Schelle's work allows Bach's Magnificat to be viewed not in isolation but in the context of Leipzig conventions for setting this canticle' (xviii). Perhaps even more important in this respect is Schelle's 'Durch Adams Fall' that Rose rightly describes as 'a landmark in the history of the Lutheran sacred concerto' (xvi). The work is amongst the first to combine a Lutheran chorale with settings of Biblical texts and it may well have provided a model for Bach's own chorale cantatas from the cycle of 1724–1725.

All but three of the pieces in this volume are taken from *unicum* sources, and five of the eight are settings of Latin texts. The instrumental and vocal requirements vary; Knüpfer's 'De profundis', Schelle's 'Salve solis