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## Dancing for Distinction: Pierre Beauchamps and the Social Dynamics of Seventeenth-Century France

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**Dancing for Distinction:**  
Pierre Beauchamps and the Social Dynamics  
of Seventeenth-Century France

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement  
for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in French  
from the College of William and Mary

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### *Introduction*

Historians have long used the metaphor of choreography to explain seventeenth-century French court dynamics. For instance, according to Chandra Mukerji, “The gardens of Versailles [were]... a stage on which the court played and tried to glitter so brightly that the glory of France would be visible throughout Europe and beyond...the attention to detail and choreography... made possible the elegance and apparent ease of the court’s ritual life.”<sup>1</sup> Most moments of Louis XIV’s day were planned or orchestrated to depict his power and glory. Critics like Jean-Marie Apostolidès have therefore argued that nobles constantly watched spectacles and reenacted their subordination to the king.

In seventeenth-century France, Louis XIV set a precedent for the country by fashioning for himself an identity, iconography, and “mythistoire.”<sup>2</sup> While previous monarchs had attempted similar projects, none were as successful as the Sun King in their performances. To cast himself as an absolute monarch, the king constantly found ways to display his power and to ingrain his image in the minds of his French subjects. To this effect, Cardinal Richelieu was the first to encourage the young king to participate in ballets to signify his power as *le roi soleil*. The king’s performance in the ballets allowed him both to fashion an identity and to represent his power to the French people. Louis XIV and later his chief minister Colbert were both aware of the advantages of glorifying the king through art. In addition to dance, the fabrication of Louis

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<sup>1</sup> Chandra Mukerji, *Territorial ambitions and the gardens of Versailles* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 198.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: from More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 2, 7. See Stephen Greenblatt. Greenblatt defines fashioning as “the achievement of a less tangible shape: a distinctive personality, a characteristic address to the world, a consistent mode of perceiving and behaving.” Jean-Marie Apostolidès, *Le roi-machine: Spectacle et politique au temps de Louis XIV* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1981), 82-83. *Mythistoire* can be defined as “une totalité concrète, laïque et politique, dont l’existence est liée à la forme monarchique de l’Etat.” “A secular, concrete, political totality, of which the existence is linked to the form of the monarchic state”

XIV was a collective work of many different art forms.<sup>3</sup> The design of the gardens of Versailles, the paintings and sculptures commissioned by the king, and the music composed by Lully were just a few of the art forms used in the glorification of Louis XIV.

Critics such as Jean-Marie Apostolidès in *Le roi-machine: spectacle et politique au temps de Louis XIV* have reflected on how political power was organized and intrinsically linked to the expression of power in the seventeenth century. The king was at the same time the organizer and the hero of these performances and representations, thereby dazzling his subjects.<sup>4</sup> But it was not the spectacles themselves that were important, rather it was the ingraining of the performance in the minds of the spectators.<sup>5</sup> Nobles at court were not solely spectators; they were also made to participate in performances. This repeated performance further demonstrated and cemented their subordination to Louis XIV's power. The king thus successfully created a *mythistoire*.<sup>6</sup> In effect, Apostolidès argues that the king left behind war and conquest to create a system of social organization and regulation, choreography, both through the control of the court at Versailles and through the iconography that he projected to the rest of the country.<sup>7</sup>

The French scholar Louis Marin similarly argues that portraits of the king, including paintings, books, medals, and ballets, allowed Louis XIV to demonstrate and to impose his absolute power.<sup>8</sup> The mythical power of the king's represented body permitted him to be

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<sup>3</sup> See also Peter Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XIV* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

<sup>4</sup> Jean-Marie Apostolidès, *Le roi-machine: spectacle et politique au temps de Louis XIV* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1981), 7-8.

<sup>5</sup> Apostolidès, 51. "Mais le spectacle ne reste pas inscrit dans l'espace concret de Versailles, il s'incruste sur le corps et dans les têtes."

<sup>6</sup> Apostolidès, 82-83.

<sup>7</sup> Apostolidès, 156. Marin and Apostolidès both build upon Kantorowicz's theory of the king's two bodies (the physical and the symbolic). See Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1957), 171.

<sup>8</sup> Louis Marin, *Portrait of the King*, translated by Martha M. Houle (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 13. "Absolute order is incarnated in a body and becomes a *body in the historical narrative*."

remembered: “The effect of representation *makes the king*.”<sup>9</sup> It was through art and spectacles that Louis XIV showed the potentiality of his power.

It is against this backdrop of theatricality and representation at the court of Versailles that we must situate the figure of Pierre Beauchamps, the royal choreographer. No study of court culture is complete without an understanding of his life and work, particularly because his biography suggests that self-fashioning was not limited to Louis XIV and the French aristocracy. Artists who participated in the collective creation of Louis XIV’s identity were equally aware of their own identities. Although they portrayed their identities to a smaller audience (their stage was limited to the court or the city of Paris, rather than the entire country and Europe), they too mobilized their work, performances, and art collections to fashion their image in society. Artists used these elements to distinguish themselves from others in an attempt to assert their importance and possibly to rise in the social hierarchy.

While the accomplishments of many seventeenth-century artists (such as Molière and André Le Nôtre) are universally recognized, the choreographer Pierre Beauchamps has received little attention.<sup>10</sup> For most people today, Beauchamps is a completely unknown figure. However, by examining Beauchamps’s life and accomplishments, it becomes clear that he not only significantly contributed to the evolution of dance, but also to the creation of court culture at Versailles. As a choreographer, Beauchamps cast himself in positive and strategically chosen roles throughout his career. For Beauchamps, this fashioning was certainly an “artful process.”<sup>11</sup> Through the roles that he performed on stage, his title, and his art collection, Beauchamps successfully manipulated the French court’s “cultural system of meanings” to fashion a specific

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<sup>9</sup> Marin, 218.

<sup>10</sup> There were many people with the last name Beauchamps and many different spellings at this time, including Beauchamp, Beauchant and Bauchamp. Replications of his signature show that he spelled his name ‘Beauchamps.’

<sup>11</sup> Greenblatt, 2, 3, 7.

identity that allowed him to be in contact with “the powerful and great.”<sup>12</sup> Essentially, Beauchamps used the medium of dance to distinguish himself from other professional dancers. In my thesis, I will unearth Beauchamps’s biography to fill a gap in dance history and to contribute to a fuller understanding of the social dynamics of court culture.

Chapter One therefore examines the role of dance and choreography at Versailles as well as the emerging status of dance in the seventeenth century. Beauchamps’s life and career are reconstructed and analyzed in Chapter Two. The Epilogue puts Beauchamps’s career in perspective in order to aid the understanding of seventeenth-century social dynamics.

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<sup>12</sup> Greenblatt, 2, 3, 7.

## Chapter 1: Dance and Choreography at Versailles

### A. Background

The years 1648 to 1652 greatly influenced Louis XIV's reign. Commonly known as the Fronde, this rebellion of the French against royal power and tax collection impacted the young king. "For seventeenth-century Frenchmen the Fronde was an ever-widening and deepening support for an increasingly radical and willful violation of the king's laws."<sup>1</sup> The state officials (the Robe) were sympathetic to those who could not pay taxes and began to strike in 1648. As Louis XIII tried in vain to exercise his power through the Council of State, officials continued to block legislation. Therefore, according to Orest Ranum, "The Fronde began as a work-stoppage by government tax officers who refused to carry out their duties... Indeed, as the Council of State tried to intimidate its own officials, virtually the entire royal administration rallied to their striking colleagues or at least reserved judgment about the Council's abusive power."<sup>2</sup> The young Louis XIV lived through these strikes and riots, and never forgot those who revolted against his father. He also learned from his father's mistakes.

Louis XIV took personal control of the government in 1661, choosing officials who merited office. With the help of Cardinal Mazarin, Louis XIV also chose military officials for the standing army who would remain loyal to him alone. *Douceur* (gentleness) and discipline replaced large-scale armed force and became more effective for Louis XIV. By bringing the court to Versailles, Louis XIV was able to control the nobles without a direct application of physical force. According to Norbert Elias, this "civilizing process" was a result of the "advancing centralization of state power" which manifested itself in the court society.<sup>3</sup> This type of control was most evident at Versailles. "The mental space between Versailles, the Parlement,

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<sup>1</sup> Orest Ranum, *The Fronde: A French Revolution 1648-1652* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1993), 6.

<sup>2</sup> Ranum, 344.

<sup>3</sup> Norbert Elias, *The Court Society*, translated by Edmund Jephcott (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), 2.

and the Parisians proved far greater than the geographic distance that separated the state administration from the Hôtel de Ville of Paris. Throughout his long reign, the Sun King slighted the ex-Frondeurs in a very telling way: save for a few brief visits to the capital, he denied them the honor of his royal presence.”<sup>4</sup>

Under Louis XIII, Versailles had been a simple hunting lodge - a place for the king to escape the city. This changed dramatically once Louis XIV decided to make Versailles the cultural and social capital of France. When the king informed Colbert of the project, he protested “against the waste of money on ‘this house’ [*cette maison*, in contrast to the *palais* of the Louvre] because it ‘is much more concerned with Your Majesty’s pleasure and diversion than with your glory’ [*regarde bien plus le plaisir et le divertissement de Votre Majesté que sa gloire*].”<sup>5</sup> It is unclear whether the king had a mere affinity for the site of Versailles or if he really wanted to escape Paris, which he associated with the horrors of the Fronde. Regardless, the French invested large sums of money in order to renovate, add on to the building, and create its extensive gardens. By 1664, construction was completed, and *Les Plaisirs de l’île enchantée* was the first of many grand *fêtes* presented at Versailles.

C’est l’originalité essentielle des *Plaisirs de l’île enchantée* que d’être ainsi organisés autour d’un thème unique où se côtoient et se mêlent l’héroïsme, le Romanesque et la magie. La fête se déroule sur plusieurs jours (du 7 au 13 mai) et fait se succéder joute, course de bagues, carrousel, festin, bal : ce sont là des jeux traditionnels qui, depuis des siècles, accompagnent la vie de cour.<sup>6</sup>

The pure scale of this multi-day spectacle demonstrated the king’s power to the court spectators.

Philippe Beaussant argues that Versailles was the site of the apparition of the king’s glory,

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<sup>4</sup> Ranum, 347.

<sup>5</sup> Burke, 68.

<sup>6</sup> Philippe Beaussant and Patricia Bouchenot-Déchin, *Les plaisirs de Versailles, théâtre et musique* (Paris: Fayard, 1996), 31. “It is the essential originality of the *Pleasures of the Enchanted Island* that were organized around a unique theme, where heroism, fiction and magic mixed together. The party lasted days (from May 7 to 13) and included jousts, a *course de bague*, carrousel, feast, and ball: traditional games that, for centuries, have accompanied court life.” Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own. The seventeenth-century spellings have been modernized throughout the thesis.

“Certes, Versailles était le lieu de ‘divertissement’ - trois fêtes somptueuses et d’autres plus petites en témoignent. Mais c’était aussi le lieu d’apparition de la gloire du roi. C’est le lieu où le narcissisme royal a pu s’épanouir *et se transformer* : tout est là.”<sup>7</sup> This was just one of many *fêtes* that glorified Louis XIV. Geoffrey Treasure succinctly describes the role of Versailles, “At Versailles Louis practised the art of government by spectacle and through ritual.”<sup>8</sup> While Versailles may have been a place for the court to be diverted, Louis XIV also had a distinct political motive: to control and to impress the court with his grandeur and power.

In order to comprehend the creation of Versailles, it is necessary to examine Nicolas Fouquet’s château, Vaux-le-Vicomte. After the Fronde, Fouquet (the superintendant of finance) was one of the few ministers who consistently supported and cultivated the arts. The construction of Vaux-le-Vicomte, completed in 1661, displayed Fouquet’s power, prestige, and artistic taste. In that same year, Fouquet hosted an extravagant *fête*, and invited the nobility, including the king. This was a blatant display of what Fouquet had accomplished, and how much money he had spent. Three weeks afterwards, Louis XIV ordered Fouquet’s arrest for treason and embezzlement of money from the state. Fouquet may have discounted or underestimated Louis XIV’s growing desire to rule without a strong minister such as Cardinal Mazarin. In addition, Mazarin and others advised Louis XIV that Fouquet should not be trusted. The lengthy trial that ensued, with the king and Colbert vying together for Fouquet’s banishment, ended with Fouquet’s imprisonment for life. According to Geoffrey Treasure, “the destruction of Fouquet

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<sup>7</sup> Beaussant, 63. “Certainly Versailles was the place of entertainment- three sumptuous spectacles and other small ones show it. But it was also the place where the king’s glory appeared. It is the place where royal narcissism could blossom and transform: all is there.”

<sup>8</sup> Geoffrey Treasure, *Louis XIV* (New York: Longman, 2001), 180.

was ostensibly about financial management... [but] Louis was making a statement about power: where it lay and what it meant.”<sup>9</sup>

While there is much speculation about why Louis XIV arrested Fouquet, it is clear that Louis XIV was inspired by the Vaux project. Most of the artists and the materials involved at Vaux were appropriated by Louis XIV and put to work at Versailles. This list includes the most prestigious artists of the century: the playwright Molière, the landscape architect André Le Nôtre, the artist Charles Le Brun, the architect Louis Le Vau, and the choreographer Pierre Beauchamps. Claire Goldstein argues, “On material, symbolic, iconographical, technological, and design levels... Versailles remains more multiple, nuanced, and ambiguous, for the site and the project retain the traces of Vaux as a model and a source.”<sup>10</sup> Essentially, there was a relationship between the two châteaux as Versailles was built out of the human resources and the ruins of Vaux.

After Fouquet’s imprisonment, Jean-Baptiste Colbert was named finance minister and given control of the French government’s finances. Colbert was “canny enough” not to try to take on the role of Mazarin, and continued to serve Louis XIV loyally.<sup>11</sup> Colbert rose to power, becoming an extremely influential and powerful minister. Louis XIV supported Colbert throughout his career, and Colbert consequently introduced order and organization into a chaotic system.<sup>12</sup>

Part of Colbert’s work was the creation of the scientific and artistic *académies*, which effectively centralized government control of the arts and sciences. “Tightfisted as he might seem about the military budget, the minister begrudged Louis XIV nothing that art could provide

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<sup>9</sup> Treasure, 73.

<sup>10</sup> Claire Goldstein, *Vaux and Versailles: The appropriations, erasures, and accidents that made modern France* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 20.

<sup>11</sup> Andrew Trout, *Jean-Baptiste Colbert* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1978), 19, 47.

<sup>12</sup> Trout, 19, 47.

if he thought an expenditure compatible with the king's glory."<sup>13</sup> Artists and scientists were supported in hopes that France would become a cultural center, the envy of other countries. Peter Burke in *The Fabrication of Louis XIV* explains that "representations of Louis XIV were commissioned to add to his glory."<sup>14</sup> Magnificence had a political function: to impress the public and divert the French from politics. The king and his advisers were well aware of the "methods by which people can be manipulated by symbols."<sup>15</sup> Above all, Burke writes, "The royal image should be seen as a collective production. Painters, sculptors and engravers made their contribution to it. So did the king's tailors, his wigmaker and his dancing-master. So did the poets and choreographers of the court ballets, and the masters of ceremonies who supervised the coronation, the royal entries and other public rituals."<sup>16</sup> Louis XIV and Colbert successfully mobilized any art form that could contribute to the process of fabricating the king's identity.

This "collective production" was only possible with the support of the state. Part of the state's support was through the creation of Royal Academies which greatly changed the status of artists. "Les grands chantiers et les commandes royales assurent à ceux qui en bénéficient, une ascension sociale: des fils d'artisans... accèdent à la notoriété, voire à de hautes charges."<sup>17</sup> During the 1660s the king established *l'Académie de Peinture et Sculpture*, *l'Académie d'Architecture*, *l'Académie Française* in Rome for students, *l'Académie des Médailles et Estampes*, *l'Académie de Musique*, *l'Académie de Danse*, and *l'Académie Française*.<sup>18</sup> The state effectively controlled the arts through the pensions given to artists to encourage praise of the

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<sup>13</sup> Trout, 179.

<sup>14</sup> Burke, 5.

<sup>15</sup> Burke, 13.

<sup>16</sup> Burke, 45.

<sup>17</sup> Chantal Grell, *Histoire intellectuelle et culturelle de la France du Grand Siècle 1654-1715* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2005), 184-185. "The big building sites and the royal orders assure social ascension to those who benefit, children of artisans reach notoriety, ultimately high positions."

<sup>18</sup> Trout, 189.

king. At the same time, the flourishing of the arts during this century was unprecedented and established France as an artistic power.<sup>19</sup>

Through financial support, royal commissions, and the establishment of the academies, art flourished in the seventeenth century. Grell explains: “Avec la création des académies et le patronage officiel, on assiste à un changement du statut du savoir et de l’art.”<sup>20</sup> The Sun King supported any and all art forms that could be appropriated to represent himself to the country and world. In addition to employing artists at Versailles, Louis XIV had artists’ studios set up in the Louvre, and painters were allowed to work there and to teach the next generation of artists. Colbert expanded the Gobelins manufactory and put it under the supervision of the painter Charles Le Brun. The Gobelins employed some 200 workers, including many painters, and produced tapestry and furniture almost exclusively for the royal family.<sup>21</sup> The *Journal des Savants* spread news about this “world of learning” and advertised the king’s patronage.<sup>22</sup> Founded in 1665, it was published by the royal press and “printed obituaries of scholars, descriptions of experiments and especially reviews of books.”<sup>23</sup>

The field of dance, specifically ballet, received much attention from the young king, mostly as a result of the king’s affinity for dance. Louis XIV was a talented amateur dancer who frequently performed in ballets.<sup>24</sup> Starting in the 1650s, he began to use ballet performances as a political tool. The king’s presence on stage contributed to his identity and also spoke to the growing importance of dance in the seventeenth century.

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<sup>19</sup> Many art forms were also standardized during the seventeenth century as a result of the state’s involvement through the academies.

<sup>20</sup> Grell, 171. “With the creation of the academies and official patronage, we see a change in the status of knowledge and of art.”

<sup>21</sup> Burke, 51.

<sup>22</sup> Burke, 51.

<sup>23</sup> Burke, 51.

<sup>24</sup> An amateur dancer was someone who was not paid to perform which did not necessarily mean someone with less talent than a professional dancer. Louis XIV is the primary example of someone who had the talent and career of a professional dancer, but was technically only an amateur.

On February 15, 1651, the young king performed for the first time in *Le Ballet de Cassandre*, with verses written by Benserade and prologue written by the publisher. The first sentence rejoiced in the youthfulness of the new king who banished the old regime of censors and severe critics to create a bright future full of rejoicing and dancing, as represented by this particular ballet.<sup>25</sup>

Qu'il nous suffise donc, que [ce ballet] est le premier de notre Jeune Monarque, et duquel sa Majesté a voulu s'acheminer par degré à danser un jour contre ses ennemis, des Danses armées à la Pyrrichienne. Laissons la cependant jouir, parmi ses autres exercices Royaux, de ces Innocents délices de son âge autant que la paix de sa Couronne en un autre plus avancé, lui en empêche ou du moins lui en diminue les Plaisirs.<sup>26</sup>

The prologue defended the king's interest in dance as a symbol of his youth. More importantly, by comparing these ballets to *danses armées à la Pyrrichienne*, or military dances, the audience is reminded that all military men must know how to dance: he therefore legitimized ballet as the first step towards the armed movements that the king will later perform as a man. Little did the author know that these ballets would become standard in this time period and that Louis would continue to produce extravagant productions for years to come.

Ballets were not merely a way to pass time for the king. Louis was a trained dancer, and therefore performed in the majority of court ballets at the time. The king's performance transformed ballets from a mere form of entertainment to a propaganda machine for the French monarchy, embodied by the young king. The image of the king produced by ballet attempted to create iconic signs in order for the people to view the awe-inspiring presence of their new monarch. The publisher Fossard continued, "[Les ballets] y tiennent le spectateur en telle

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<sup>25</sup> *Ballet de Cassandre dansé au Palais Cardinal, le premier ou le Roy a dansé dans le mois de février 1651*(Paris: Fossard, 1651), 3.

<sup>26</sup> *Ballet de Cassandre dansé au Palais Cardinal, le premier ou le Roy a dansé dans le mois de février 1651*(Paris: Fossard, 1651), 4. "Let it suffice therefore that this [ballet] is the first of our Young Monarch, and which his Majesty wants to move towards, by degrees, dancing one day against his enemies, armed dances. Let us leave him then to enjoy, among his other Royal exercises, these Innocent delights of his age, before the peace of his Crown will keep him from or at least diminish these pleasures."

admiration, qu'il ne peut en même temps dignement considérer les merveilleuses dispositions et cadences régulières des acteurs: qui est la seule fin pour laquelle les Ballets ont été institués."<sup>27</sup>

According to this exaggerated description, the court was in such awe of the performance that it could not both watch the dancers and admire the excellence of the setting.

Historians express different views of the young king's first ballet performance.

According to Marie-Claude Canova-Green, these "brilliant débuts" in the *Ballet de Cassandre* served as a timely technique to win the hearts of the French people after the political turmoil of the Fronde. This performance also foreshadowed the future creations and *spectacles* of the Sun King.<sup>28</sup> Conversely, Ludovic Celler describes the performance as "un singulier mélange d'entrées bouffonnes. Nous n'avons pas à nous préoccuper de sa mise en scène et nous ne le citons que parce que le roi y fit ses premières armes."<sup>29</sup> For Celler, this ballet is only worth noting because it was the king's first performance.

Nonetheless, Louis XIV's continued performance seems to have further ingrained his power in the minds of the French people. The political and social choreography of court life at Versailles seemed to be an extension of that choreography of court *fêtes*.

These things [performances] were part of a politics of performance celebrated by the monarchy, signified submission to absolutism, kept the nobility under surveillance, and used the royal residencies and their gardens as sites for public display of state power. Nobles did not verbally claim loyalty to the French crown in this period as much as they expressed it through their attendance at court...and their loyal participation in any festivities the king wished to see.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> *Ballet de Cassandre dansé au Palais Cardinal, le premier ou le Roy a dansé dans le mois de février 1651* (Paris: Fossard, 1651). "The ballets keep the spectator in such admiration that he cannot at the same time consider the marvelous measures and regular cadences of the actors: which is the only end for which Ballets were instituted."

<sup>28</sup> Benserade, *Ballets pour Louis XIV: présentés et annotés par Marie-Claude Canova-Green*, edited by Marie-Claude Canova-Green (Toulouse: Société de Littératures Classiques, 1997).

<sup>29</sup> Ludovic Celler, *Les décors, les costumes et la mise en scène au XVIIe siècle, 1615-1680* (Paris: Liepmannsohn et Dufour, 1869), 81. "a mix of comedic entrances. We should not occupy ourselves with the staging, and we only cite it because the king performed his first steps in it."

<sup>30</sup> Mukerji, 198.

It is clear that dance, specifically ballet, was prevalent in the seventeenth century. For example, at least seventy ballets were performed at Versailles and other royal castles between 1652 and 1673.<sup>31</sup> Children were taught to dance at a young age for both grace and discipline. Young men were taught dance as an element of their military training. Balls were popular, so nobles needed to be able to dance with grace to demonstrate their gentility and *noblesse*. In addition, many nobles performed as amateurs in *fêtes* throughout Louis XIV's reign. Dance was an integral part of court culture, particularly because the king was such a gifted dancer himself and therefore promoted the art form. While dance was part of a person's physical education and social etiquette, it was also a developing art form.

### **B. Dance, an emerging art**

It is extremely difficult to reconstruct and understand seventeenth-century dance. Even with knowledge of all the elements that composed a ballet, there is no effective way to recreate a performance. First, there is no choreographic notation, so there is no evidence of the actual dancing. Second, primary descriptions of the performances are scarce, even among those courtiers who wrote extensive *mémoires*. Third, while costume sketches and engravings of the sets exist, their accuracy is doubtful as these images were used as propaganda and are most likely exaggerated and skewed depictions of the ballets. This bias is also applied to the *livrets* (ballet programs), all of which praise the king. Therefore, the scholar must base his or her understanding on clues and traces found in descriptions, *livrets*, engravings of set designs, and dance treatises. Because dance is an ephemeral art form, reliant on live performance, it is impossible to comprehend seventeenth-century ballet fully.

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<sup>31</sup> Grell, 189.

Ballet had been a part of French kingship in the fifteenth century when *les ballets de cour* were solely comic creations that blended poetry, music, and dance. Louis XIV brought dance to the forefront during his reign, and ballets thus started treating less comic subjects. Yet, the primary purpose of ballet remained to divert the audience. Therefore, ballet was not considered a serious form of art, like music or painting, even though it was appreciated by the amused court. While some believed that ballets were a frivolous waste of the state's money, it was under the rule of Louis XIV that these *divertissements* took on a political function. Under Louis XIV, ballet was appropriated for political means to portray the power of the king. Apostolidès argues, "Ouvert à des gens venus de différents milieux, le ballet de cour est un genre qui intègre une pluralité de thèmes. De ce point de vue, il est l'art le plus polymorphe du siècle, celui qui possède aussi la plus large ouverture sur le monde, celui qui intègre la totalité de la réalité perceptible par la nation."<sup>32</sup> According to Apostolidès, ballet possessed an exceptional potential to integrate a plurality of themes which the king both understood and mobilized.

In the time period in which Louis XIV performed, roughly 1650 to 1670, ballets were performed primarily at court. But many public performances of the *comédie-ballets* were held in Paris, and the students of the Jesuit colleges produced ballets as well. The larger public found out about court performances through descriptions in the *Gazette* and *La Muse Historique* as well as through the engravings of sets and costumes, sold as representations of the ballets. And with the establishment of the *Opéra*, the Parisian public could view the ballets, but with professionals substituted for the court nobles.

Although most people did not yet consider dance a legitimate art, Louis XIV established the *Académie Royale de Danse* in 1661, the first year of his personal reign. Little information

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<sup>32</sup> Apostolidès, 59. "Open to all people from different milieux, court ballet is a genre that integrates a plurality of themes. From this point of view, it is the most polymorphous art of the century, the one that also possesses the largest opening to the world, the one that integrates the totality of reality perceptible to the nation."

about this particular academy remains besides the *lettres patentes* which established it. The Academy of Dance was formed after the model of the Academy of Painting and Sculpture and was composed of thirteen “des plus anciens et plus expérimentés Maîtres à Danser, et plus experts au fait de la Danse.”<sup>33</sup> The first words of the *lettres patentes* are particularly suggestive of the status of dance in the seventeenth century.

L’Art de la Danse [a] toujours été reconnu l’un des plus honnêtes & plus nécessaires à former le corps, & lui donner les premières & plus naturelles dispositions à toute sorte d’exercices, et entre autres à ceux des armes; et par conséquent l’un des plus avantageux et plus utiles à notre Noblesse, et autres qui ont l’honneur de nous approcher, non seulement en temps de guerre dans nos armées, mais même en temps de paix dans les divertissements de nos Ballets.<sup>34</sup>

While dance was *honnête* and *nécessaire* for the formation of the body and natural dispositions, it is not described as a true art form. Although ballets were *divertissements*, dance was mostly a useful physical exercise for the army and nobles, according to this description. It is also apparent in the *lettres patentes* that the art of dance suffered as a result of the *ignorants* who had begun to teach and ruin the art form.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, the Academy attempted to reestablish “ledit Art dans sa première perfection, et l’augmenter autant que faire se pourra.”<sup>36</sup> The thirteen Dance Masters met monthly to advise and deliberate about the ways to perfect and correct the art of dance, thereby standardizing the art form. The king understood the potential of the art form as well as the political control that he could gain through this particular art. The establishment of dance as one of the first academies suggests that Louis XIV wanted to reaffirm and legitimize the status of

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<sup>33</sup> Mark Franko, *Dance as Text: Ideologies of the Baroque Body* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 168. “of the oldest and most experienced dance-masters, and the experts on the subject of Dance.”

<sup>34</sup> Franko, 166. His translation page 176. “Although the Art of the Dance has always been recognized as one of the most honorable and necessary for forming the body, and giving it the first and most natural dispositions for all sorts of exercises, and among others for the exercise of arms, and consequently has been considered one of the most advantageous and useful for our Nobility, and for other who have the honor of approaching us, not only in wartime in our armies, but even in peacetime in our Ballets.”

<sup>35</sup> Franko, 166.

<sup>36</sup> Franko, 166. “said art in the first perfection, and to augment it as much as we can.”

an art form that he favored. In addition, the establishment of the Academy of Dance suggests that dance was slowly becoming a liberal art, rather than a physical exercise.

### 1. Definition of Ballet

Although all seventeenth-century dictionaries defined dance and ballet, the terms seem to have been used lightly at the time. In addition to treatises about dance, definitions of dance are given in the first existing dictionaries, both of which contribute to a better sense of the status of ballet. Published in 1690, the *Dictionnaire de Musique d'après Antoine Furetière* defined ballet as a “Représentation harmonique et danse figurée et concertée qui se fait par plusieurs personnes masquées qui représentent par leurs pas et postures quelque chose naturelle, ou quelque action, ou qui contrefont quelques personnes.”<sup>37</sup> The first edition of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française dédié au Roy*, published in 1694, defined ballet as an “Espèce de danse de personnes masquées qui font certaines figures et postures en dansant et qui représentent quelque chose.”<sup>38</sup> In 1787, Charles Compan, author of *Dictionnaire de danse*, defined dance as an art of gests, the oldest of the performing arts. In particular he defined ballet as an “Action théâtrale qui se représente par la Danse, guidée par la Musique.”<sup>39</sup> These definitions focus on the mimetic function of dance, suggesting that the audience acknowledged the representational quality and power of dance.

The vagueness and variety of these definitions suggest the diversity of seventeenth-century ballets. There were few guidelines until the establishment of the *Académie Royale de*

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<sup>37</sup> Antoine Furetière, *Dictionnaire de Musique d'après Antoine Furetière* (Paris: 1690). “Harmonious representation and concerted and represented dance that is performed by their steps and postures something natural, or some action, or who imitate people.”

<sup>38</sup> *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française dédié au Roy*, Tome Premier (A-L) (Paris: Jean Baptiste Cognard, 1694). “A type of dance performed by masked people who create certain figures and airs while dancing, in order to represent something.”

<sup>39</sup> Charles Compan, *Dictionnaire de danse* (Genève: Minkoff Reprint, 1979). “A theatrical action represented through Dance, and guided by music.”

*Danse*. However, the fact that dance merited a definition in the dictionary demonstrates that it was recognized as an essential element of court society. While the *ballets du cour* are the logical precursors to modern day ballet, audiences today would not recognize seventeenth-century *spectacles* as ballet. The performances, known as *divertissements*, *spectacles*, *comédie-ballets*, and *ballets du cour*, jumbled together many elements in an effort to create something new to amuse the king. Playwrights sometimes used ballet *entrées* (entrances) as a sort of intermission for comedic plays. There are no examples of ballets that consisted solely of dancing and music at this time. Mark Franko aptly describes this art. “Court ballet accommodated a potentially chaotic mélange of music, décor, costumes, props, declamation, distributed librettos, and the audience’s active participation, as well as dancing, acting, improvisation, [and] miming.”<sup>40</sup> Franko believes that the court ballet more closely resembles modern “performance art” than ballets.

Some ballets consisted of a chain of *entrées* with no plot or theme. Others were based on mythical stories such as *Les Noces de Pelée et de Thétis*. Because of the rush to create commissioned performances to please the king, and the mélange of entertainment included, it is difficult to perceive a common thread among the plethora of ballets and spectacles. Ballets included whatever themes and elements might please and entertain the king and his court.

## 2. Dance Treatises

The few existing seventeenth-century treatises suggest the ambiguous, but developing status of dance. M. de Saint Hubert, author of *La manière de composer et faire réussir les ballets*, M. de Cahusac author of *La danse ancienne et moderne ou Traité historique de la danse*, Père Claude Ménéstrier author of *Des ballets anciens et modernes selon les règles du théâtre*, Michel de Marolles author of *Neuvième discours du ballet*, M. Bonnet author of *Histoire*

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<sup>40</sup> Franko, 1.

*générale de la danse sacrée et profane ; ses progrès et ses révolutions, depuis son origine jusqu'à présent* and Michel de Pure author of *Idée des spectacles anciens et nouveaux* were the few men who wrote treatises on dance during the seventeenth century.<sup>41</sup>

According to Saint-Hubert, Ménestrier and De Pure, the most important element of any ballet was the subject matter. Saint-Hubert argued that there were six necessary elements to make a beautiful ballet: subject, airs, dance, costumes, machines, and order. The subject was the most important and difficult element of the ballet, because so many subjects were repeated and overused.<sup>42</sup> Similarly, Ménestrier claimed five essential elements of ballets: invention, figures, movements, harmony, and decoration. Also in agreement with Saint-Hubert, Ménestrier emphasized the importance of the subject choice to the success of a ballet. However, Ménestrier distinguished between a ballet created with art and one created out of the necessity to please the king. Ménestrier believed that quality ballets were created with art, rather than out of necessity. Another contemporary, De Pure, supported Saint Hubert's and Ménestrier's claim that the subject was the *âme* of the ballet. If a solid subject had been chosen, the *entrées* would flow naturally, contributing to the representation of the subject.<sup>43</sup>

In addition to their consensus about the importance of the subject matter, each of these authors emphasized different elements of ballet in their treatises. Saint-Hubert believed that the dancers must be well rehearsed and that the dancing should flow from the dancer's character and the ballet's subject. He also called for a director, or *Maître d'Ordre*, who was charged with the organization and successful performance of the ballet. De Pure emphasized the importance of a

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<sup>41</sup> Cahusac's text was published in the eighteenth century. However, his views on dance are still useful to this study.

<sup>42</sup> M. de Saint-Hubert, *La manière de composer et faire réussir les ballets*, edited by Marie-Françoise Christout (Genève: Editions Minkoff, 1993), 7.

<sup>43</sup> Michel De Pure, *Idée des spectacles anciens et nouveaux* (Genève: Minkoff Reprint, 1972), 235-237.

title, because it contributed “infiniment au contour du Dessein et à la justesse de l’Idée.”<sup>44</sup> In addition, De Pure thought that the *entrées* formed the natural divisions of the ballet and that their diversity “en fait la perfection.”<sup>45</sup> Ménestrier argued that ballet deserved as much attention as poetry, music, or painting. He compared ballet to a painting because it is an imitation or representation. “Le ballet exprime les mouvements que la Peinture et la Sculpture ne sauraient exprimer, et par ces mouvements il va jusqu’à exprimer la Nature des choses et les habitudes de l’âme.”<sup>46</sup> These diverse views suggest that the notion of dance as a liberal art form was not yet universally accepted.

Cahusac wrote from a different point of view in *La danse ancienne et moderne ou Traité historique de la danse*, further demonstrating the ambiguous status of dance. The author did not believe in the excellence of dance, rather he doubted the importance of the performing arts.<sup>47</sup> Therefore, Cahusac conformed to the idea that dance was an inferior art form. However, he mentioned the importance of seventeenth-century ballets, claiming that everyone knew the greatness of the time period. “On sait, dans les Royaumes voisins comme en France, qu’il est l’époque de la grandeur de cet Etat, de la gloire des Arts et de la splendeur de l’Europe.”<sup>48</sup> This description suggests that the beauty of the diverting art form and the mimetic function of dance were accepted by many.

Overall, the authors of seventeenth-century dance treatises agreed on the importance of the choice of subject matter and the mimetic function of dance. Because there were no

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<sup>44</sup> De Pure, 223. “Contributes to the contours of the Design, and the justness of the Idea.”

<sup>45</sup> De Pure, 235-237. “Makes the perfection”

<sup>46</sup> Le Père Cl. Ménestrier, *Des ballets anciens et modernes selon les règles du théâtre* (Paris: Robert Pepie, 1682), 41. “Ballet expresses the movements that Painting and Sculpture do not know how to express, and by these movements ballet expresses the Nature of things and the tendencies of the soul.”

<sup>47</sup> M. de Cahusac, *La danse ancienne et moderne ou Traité historique de la danse* 3 Vol. (La Haye: Jean Neaulme, 1754), iv. “Je ne crois point la Danse la plus excellente chose qu’on puisse faire.”

<sup>48</sup> Cahusac, 35. “We know, in the neighboring kingdoms like in France, that it is the period of grandeur of this state, of the glory of the arts and of the splendor of Europe.”

restrictions to the number of *entrées* or the types of characters represented, the originality of this subject was necessary for the success of the ballet. In addition, because the court audience remained virtually the same, the subjects had to be innovative in order to continue to amuse the audience. While the authors may have disagreed about certain points because of artistic differences, it is clear that once the subject was established, each choreographer could choose whatever elements he desired to create the ballet. Granted, if commissioned by the king, the court choreographer was required to represent the glory of the king and to contribute to the collective creation of Louis XIV's image.

All of these texts demonstrate the emerging status of dance. While ballets were previously comedic and frivolous, with the rules set out by Ménéstrier and De Pure, the choreographer could create artful ballets that were both interesting and diverting. The Academy of Dance reinforced this attempt to emphasize the artistic qualities of ballets. While the king's financial support allowed dance to flourish, the artists involved had less artistic freedom to create artistic ballets. This, paradoxically, was a result of the king's support of an art form that was mobilized for political purposes.

In conclusion, dance developed as an art form in the seventeenth century. Dance was primarily a physical exercise, taught to all children for discipline, control, and poise. Knowledge of dance was necessary for all nobles who wanted to succeed in society and on the military field. In addition to extravagant balls, many nobles were expected to perform with the king in ballets. Those nobles who were not skilled dancers were excluded from distinction through performance. However, while nobles understood the necessity of dance, they did not all accept it as a legitimate art form. This may have resulted from the vagueness of its definition, and the large variation in the types of ballet performances. The establishment of the Academy of Dance was a

conscious act of affirmation and legitimization for the art of dance. Throughout the century, dance would remain an essential element of the civilizing process, the portrayal of power, the court culture at Versailles, and the collective creation of Louis XIV's image. However, the status of dance would remain ambiguous despite the recognition of the potential of ballet and the fact that society enjoyed and admired ballet performances both at court and in Paris. These texts, in addition to the establishment of the Academy of Dance and the prevalence of dance at court reflect the gradual emergence of dance as a liberal art form.

## *Chapter 2: Beauchamps's Biography*

### **A. Why Beauchamps?**

The study of seventeenth-century art and court culture is incomplete without recognition of the choreographer Pierre Beauchamps's work. Unfortunately, historians have largely overlooked the significance of Beauchamps's work and career, particularly in the context of seventeenth-century society and the history of Versailles. Because Louis XIV was a performer in the ballets that Beauchamps choreographed, the Sun King's reputation may have overshadowed Beauchamps's performance and choreography. While Beauchamps's name is mentioned in most major studies of seventeenth-century spectacles, no biography exists. This lack of information contrasts sharply with the histories of Jean-Baptiste Lully and Molière, the composer and playwright of the same time period. Scholars have studied and analyzed Lully and Molière for centuries, while Beauchamps remains a virtually unknown master with talents that rivaled the other artists of his time. The Duchesse d'Orléans, a noble at the court of Louis XIV, recognized Beauchamps's talents in her *mémoires*: "Quand je suis venue en France, j'y ai vu une réunion d'hommes de talent, comme on n'en trouvera plus dans beaucoup de siècles. C'étaient Lulli, pour la musique ; Beauchamp, pour les ballets ; Corneille et Racine pour la tragédie ; Molière pour la comédie."<sup>1</sup> Therefore, it is both interesting and necessary to fill this lacuna in our understanding of seventeenth-century art, and to reveal the accomplishments of the mysterious Beauchamps.

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in John S. Powell, "Pierre Beauchamps, Choreographer to Molière's Troupe du Roy," *Music & Letters* 76, No. 2 (May 1995): 186. "When I came to France, I saw a union of three talented men that we will not see again for many centuries. It was Lully, for the music; Beauchamps, for the ballets; Corneille and Racine for tragedy; Molière for the comedy."

## B. Argument

John S. Powell and Régine Astier (née Kunzle) are the only scholars who have written extensively about Beauchamps. Powell has written two articles which deal with Beauchamps's involvement with Molière's *Troupe du Roi*. Astier's first article gives a detailed summary of Beauchamps's life and the second examines his involvement in the *ballets de collège*. Both scholars recognize the need for further scholarship in this area. Astier explicitly states that the purpose of her article is to draw dance scholars' attention to the "gems" that are "neglected" in this field.<sup>2</sup> However, neither article analyzes the information gathered about Beauchamps. Astier and Powell both provide a wealth of essential information about Beauchamps, but do not come to conclusions about the significance of their research. And while Powell and Astier recognize Beauchamps's importance as a dancer, choreographer, and composer, they do not contextualize his accomplishments. Neither Astier nor Powell evaluates the listed names and the roles performed by Beauchamps as listed in the *livrets*.

In this chapter, therefore, I will analyze the significance of Beauchamps's art collection as well as works by contemporaries which reveal more about his career in the seventeenth-century context. After delving into the *livrets*, examining financial records, analyzing Beauchamps's art collection, and studying descriptions of Beauchamps by his contemporaries, I have come to the conclusion that Beauchamps was an exceptional individual. His whole work and career should be studied alongside that of other masters (such as Lully, Molière, Corneille, and Racine). Moreover, Beauchamps understood the importance of self-fashioning and attempted to follow Louis XIV's lead in order to distinguish himself from other artists. But while Louis

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<sup>2</sup> Régine Astier, "Pierre Beauchamps and the Ballets de College," translated by Dorothy Pearce, *Dance Chronicle* 6, No. 2 (1983): 149-150.

XIV had many art forms at his disposal in the process of fabrication, Beauchamps primarily relied on his dancing for distinction.<sup>3</sup>

### C. Who was Beauchamps?

Pierre Beauchamps was the leading choreographer, performer, and composer of seventeenth-century ballets. His fifty-year long dancing career spanned the evolution of ballet in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France. Beauchamps started his career as a *baladin*, a paid dancer on the court stage, and therefore learned the traditional style of court ballets. Moreover, as the *Intendant des Ballets du Roi*, he choreographed most of the court ballets of the 1650s and 60s. Once Louis XIV stopped dancing in 1670, Beauchamps moved to work in the public theatres of Paris. There, he created innovative *entrées* for Molière's many *comédie-ballets*, and contributed to the new mélange of comedy and dance. Furthermore, Beauchamps choreographed *ballets de collège* for the wealthy young men who attended the Parisian Jesuit colleges. At the same time, he developed a dance notation system that would later be published by Raoul Auger Feuillet. He continued to dance and to teach until the end of his life in 1705. Beauchamps was involved in all aspects of dance throughout his professional career.

#### 1. Younger Years - Baladin

Beauchamps came from a family of violinists and dancing masters, so it was not surprising for him to be artistically gifted and to go into the family business. The men in his family held the title of *violon* in the prestigious *Vingt-Quatre Violons du Roi*. This title was passed down through the generations. Pierre's father Louis, also a *violon du roi*, married Denise Heron, the granddaughter of another *violon du roi*. As Régine Astier notes, Beauchamps's

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<sup>3</sup> When Beauchamps's distinction is discussed, it is in reference to his distinction from other professional dancers, not to an attempt to attain nobility,

heritage included some of the best musicians and dancers in France.<sup>4</sup> Born in 1631, it is unclear from whom Pierre Beauchamps received his early training; however, the talented musicians who surrounded him must have taught him both dance and music. Musicians and dancers were routinely trained in both art forms at this time, which explains Beauchamps's proficiency as a dancer and composer.

His name first appears in the *livret* for the *Ballet du dérèglement des passions* in 1648, a lucky moment in the history of ballet: Louis XIV, Lully, and Molière would soon begin their illustrious careers on stage, and ballets would flourish for the next twenty years.<sup>5</sup> Two years after his court ballet debut, Beauchamps became the unofficial dance teacher to Louis XIV, according to the dancing master Pierre Rameau.<sup>6</sup> At this time, Henri Prévost, and later Jean Renaud, held the official title of *Maître à Danser du Roi* - a title that Beauchamps would never hold despite his other accomplishments.

Beauchamps appeared repeatedly on stage with his royal pupil. The first example of this dual performance was the highly acclaimed *Ballet Royal de la nuit* of 1653. This extremely long ballet, composed of fifty-four entrances, had four parts, each representing a different time of night. Marie-Françoise Christout explains the wide range of characters represented: "Le plan est judicieusement élaboré de façon à faire alterner les *entrées* poétiques et bouffonnes, l'incessant passage de la mythologie noble à la vie quotidienne, de l'exotisme à la magie, de la verve burlesque à l'allégorie."<sup>7</sup> The first part depicted the night itself from the hours of six to nine. Second, the diversions that reigned from nine until midnight were represented. Third, the moon,

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<sup>4</sup> Astier, 143.

<sup>5</sup> Powell, 168-169.

<sup>6</sup> Powell, 169.

<sup>7</sup> Marie-Françoise Christout, *Le ballet de cour de Louis XIV 1643-1672 Mises en scène* (Paris: A. et J. Picard, 2005), 68. "The plot was judiciously elaborated so that the entrances alternated between poetic and clownish, the incessant change between noble mythology and everyday life, from exoticism to magic, from burlesque eloquence to allegory."

love, demons, and werewolves portrayed the early hours of the morning. Finally, *le sommeil, le silence, les songes* danced the last part of the ballet. In the foreword, the author, Isaac de Benserade, mentioned Louis XIV's nobility and dignity: "Ce sujet est vaste et dans toute son étendue assez digne d'exercer les pas de notre jeune Monarque, sans le détourner du dessein qu'il a de n'aller à rien que de grand et de noble."<sup>8</sup> The roles that Louis XIV danced both supported and reinforced his inherent greatness and nobility through the choreography. The noble style of dancing portrayed grace and control through slow but regal movements. In the first *entrée*, Louis XIV, the Marquis de Genlis, and Sieurs Cabou and Beauchamps appeared as the *Heures* of the night. It was not until the third section of the ballet that the king and Beauchamps appeared together again, this time with six others as *Ardents* or *feux follets* (spirits that only appear at night). In the eleventh *entrée* of this section, Beauchamps, Louis XIV, and the *baladin* Mollier appeared as three *Curieux*, who expressed a "juvénile impatience."<sup>9</sup>

While it is logical that the king would dance roles to portray his magnificence, Beauchamps's representation in the group roles merits further reflection. Beauchamps's roles suggest that he was capable of performing in the king's noble style because the two performed together in the same group roles. For example, both danced the role of *Heures* in the *Ballet royal de la nuit*. The ability of a *baladin* to assume a noble dancing style might have surprised the court, who expected a paid dancer to perform in lower status roles. However, it seems that Beauchamps was successful in portraying the French *noblesse*, as he continued to perform similar roles throughout his career.

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<sup>8</sup> *Ballet royal de la nuit divisé en quatre parties, ou quatre veilles. Et dansé par sa majesté le 23 février 1653* (Paris: Robert Ballard, 1653), 4. "This subject is vast and in all its expanse, worthy enough to exert the steps of our young monarch, without diverting from his design to do nothing that is not grand or noble."

<sup>9</sup> Christout, 71. "Express juvenile impatience"

In the *Ballet des proverbes* in 1654, the king and Beauchamps danced all of the same roles except for one. Both men danced the group roles of *Maures*, *Attaqueurs*, and *Espagnols*, thereby appearing together on stage. There was no true plot; rather, each *entrée* depicted a different proverb. Beauchamps also danced the role of a *Fou* without the king, a comedic role to amuse the audience. It is not surprising that Louis XIV did not perform that role with Beauchamps, as the *fou*'s dancing would not have portrayed noble qualities. The two also appeared in the same *entrées* while dancing solo roles, as in the *Ballet d'Alcidiane* when both men were *Des Passions*, with Beauchamps as *Le Désespoir* and the king as *La Haine*. These similar, but separate roles allowed each dancer to showcase his specific abilities while still performing on stage together.

Beauchamps was chosen to dance on stage with the king even during his youth. The pure proximity to royalty elevated his status to some extent because of “the inherent sacredness of sovereign power.”<sup>10</sup> As a young dancer, Beauchamps would only have been chosen to perform with the king if he possessed comparable talent. Beauchamps's proximity to Louis XIV also suggests that the king appreciated his dancing ability. As Beauchamps gained experience, he continued to perform alongside Louis XIV and this cast him in a powerful and prestigious light. Although the two men danced together less frequently as time went on, they continued to perform together until Louis XIV stopped appearing in court ballets.

## **2. *Later Years - Choreographer, Composer and Dancing Master***

In 1656, Beauchamps choreographed his first *mascarade* with music by Lully.<sup>11</sup> In many instances, Beauchamps collaborated with Lully on the dances, as with *La Galanterie du temps* in 1656. As his reputation grew, Beauchamps began to choreograph ballets for the court. The first

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<sup>10</sup> Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge: further essays in interpretative anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 123.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in Powell, 171.

of these was the *Ballet des plaisirs troublés* in 1657. In 1659, the diplomat Hugues de Lionne asked Beauchamps to choreograph the dances for a ballet, *Chacun fait le métier d'autrui*, which was presented to the queen. In this ballet, the *bergers* are asked to present a ballet for the queen, and because they normally dance *les danses rustiques*, the goddess *Flore* asks them to imitate the *galants* of the court society. The refrain that is repeated in the preface stated that “ce Ballet explique comme chacun veut aujourd’hui se mêler du métier d’autrui.”<sup>12</sup>

The concept of this ballet curiously reflects Beauchamps’s work. While the audience expected Beauchamps to perform rustic or comic dances because of his social rank, he successfully made an effort to imitate the dancing of the court’s *galants*. He represented nobles in an attempt to further his identity. As a young *baladin*, it appears that Beauchamps attempted to establish himself as a versatile dancer. Furthermore, through his first choreographic projects Beauchamps displayed extensive knowledge of ballet and how to amuse and please the court. These ballets were creative enough to amuse the nobility and to please the king. Unlike Molière’s sometimes controversial comedies, Beauchamps’s ballets were never censored or debated, which suggests that his work fulfilled the desires of the public but was not shocking.

In 1661, Beauchamps choreographed the ballet and composed the music for Fouquet’s production of *Les Fâcheux*.<sup>13</sup> *Les Fâcheux*, written by Molière, was one of the works that Fouquet commissioned to portray the splendor of his château and the surrounding gardens at Vaux-le-Vicomte. The evening-long production included dinner and fireworks, in addition to the *comédie-ballet*. Molière created this new genre of ballet partially by chance and as a result of

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<sup>12</sup> *Ballet de chacun fait le metier d'autrui dansé à Berny pour le divertissement de la Reyne, l'an 1659* (Paris: Robert Ballard, 1659). “This ballet explains how everyone today wants to meddle in someone else’s work.”

<sup>13</sup> Quoted in Powell, 176. An inscription at the beginning of the Philidor manuscript for *Les Fâcheux* cites Beauchamps as the choreographer, “Ce ballet a été fait, les airs et la danse, par M. Beauchant.” “This ballet was made, the music and the dance, by Mr. Beauchamps.”

time constraints. In the preface to the play, Molière explained his decision to place the ballet *entrées* in between the acts of the play and to weave the narrative into the dance.<sup>14</sup>

In a letter to Monsieur de Maucroix in 1661, Jean de La Fontaine praised the performance of *Les Fâcheux*. La Fontaine wrote the letter in an informal tone and appeared to be writing to a friend, but he was still conscious of his patron, Nicolas Fouquet. Fouquet supported La Fontaine as a writer, and was also the host of the *fête* that La Fontaine described. Therefore, La Fontaine's description was necessarily in favor of Fouquet's *spectacle*. From the dinner to the comedy and fireworks, everything described was magnificent. Throughout the letter, La Fontaine repeatedly used the words for beauty, enchantment, pleasure and magnificence, continually emphasizing the success of the *fête* and therefore its originator, Fouquet.

La Fontaine also commented on the ballet *intermèdes* created by Beauchamps. La Fontaine writes, "On avait accommodé le ballet à la comédie autant qu'il était possible, et tous les danseurs y représentaient des fâcheux de plusieurs manières: en quoi certes ils ne parurent nullement fâcheux à notre égard; au contraire on les trouva fort divertissants, et ils se retirèrent trop tôt au gré de la compagnie."<sup>15</sup> While this may be a biased view of the performance, La Fontaine still appreciated the way in which the comedy and ballet were interwoven. La Fontaine

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<sup>14</sup> Molière, *œuvres complètes de Molière*, Tome Premier (Paris: Lahure, 1859), 306. "Comme il n'y avait qu'un petit nombre choisi de danseurs excellents, on fut contraint de séparer les entrées de ce ballet, et l'avis fut de les jeter dans les entr'actes de la comédie... pour ne point rompre aussi le fil de la pièce par ces manières d'intermèdes, on s'avisa de les coudre au sujet de mieux que l'on put." "The intention was to give a ballet as well; and as there were only a small number of excellent dancers, we were forced to separate the entrances of this ballet, and the idea was to throw them in between the acts of the comedy, so that these intervals would give the dancers time to return in different costumes. In order to keep from interrupting the flow of the play by these kinds of interludes, we decided to work them into the subject as much as possible, and to make one thing of the ballet and the comedy; but as there was not much time, and all of this was not done by one person, one will find certain places where the ballet does not fit into the comedy as naturally as others."

<sup>15</sup> Jean de La Fontaine, *Diverses œuvres de La Fontaine*, "Lettre à Maucroix, le 22 août 1661" (Paris: Ménard et Desenne fils, 1821), 32. "The ballet was fitted to the comedy as well as was possible, and all the dancers represented bores [*fâcheux*] of different varieties: in which they certainly did not appear at all boring from our point of view; on the contrary we found them very diverting, and they left the stage too early for the liking of the audience."

does not specifically praise Beauchamps's choreography, but it is evident that he appreciated how the movement depicted the different *fâcheux* characters.

Also in 1661, the king appointed Beauchamps as the *Intendant des Ballets du Roi*. With this position, he became the primary choreographer for the court ballets. It is possible that as a result of Beauchamps's involvement at Vaux the king gave Beauchamps the position. The king was most likely impressed with Beauchamps's choreography and wanted to have him as part of the artistic team to create the court culture at Versailles. After this point, Louis XIV and other nobles commissioned Beauchamps to produce ballets.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, Beauchamps's involvement at Vaux and his consequent royal appointment in 1661 were turning points in his career.

Molière and Beauchamps continued to collaborate after *Les Fâcheux*, and many of the *comédie-ballets* were presented both at court and at the public theatre in Paris. The *Théâtre du Palais Royal*, was the home of Molière's *Troupe du Roi*, where they presented the revival productions. For example, after the court performances at the châteaux of Vaux-le-Vicomte and Fontainebleau, Molière's troupe performed *Les Fâcheux* forty-four times for the public at the Palais Royal. Three years later, they performed *Le Mariage Forcé* at the Palais Royal twelve times after the premiere performance at the Louvre.<sup>17</sup>

Public performances gave Beauchamps another opportunity to construct his identity. Professional dancers replaced nobles, who did not appear in the public performances. Therefore, Beauchamps could no longer further his social standing by appearing with the king. At the same time, because the king did not perform in Paris, as the choreographer and *Intendant*, Beauchamps chose to cast himself in nobler and more powerful roles. In addition, Beauchamps performed a greater number of roles in Paris than at court, which allowed him to add new roles to his already

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<sup>16</sup> Powell, 171.

<sup>17</sup> Powell, 176-8.

extensive repertoire. This was partially a result of smaller budgets for the public performances which resulted in smaller casts of dancers. In 1672, Lully received a *privilège* from Louis XIV to establish the *Académie Royale de Musique*. The *privilège* stipulated that works with more than two singers and six instruments could not be performed. This affected the *comédie-ballets* in particular because it restricted even further the casts of dancers that could be hired for performances. Therefore, Beauchamps could not use other *baladins* and had to train non-dancers to learn his complex choreography.<sup>18</sup> But, the public performances allowed Beauchamps to expand his performance to even more noble roles.

Throughout the 1660s, Beauchamps became involved in many projects, including continued collaboration with Molière. According to the musicologist John S. Powell, it appears that Beauchamps and Molière may have collaborated on a ballet around 1667, although there is no record of Beauchamps working with Molière's Troupe du Roi between 1664 and 1671.<sup>19</sup> Perhaps Beauchamps was so engaged with creating *divertissements* for Louis XIV that he was unable to collaborate on public performances. Between 1671 and 1672, Beauchamps worked with Molière's troupe again. At the same time, he choreographed the production of *Pomone* produced by Perrin's *Académies d'Opéra* at the Jeu de Paume de la Bouteille.<sup>20</sup> Also in 1671, Beauchamps choreographed and danced in *Psyché* at the Tuileries, later performed for the public at the newly renovated Palais Royal theatre.<sup>21</sup>

Beauchamps's involvement in so many productions by different companies demonstrates his versatility and positive reputation. In 1672, Molière revived many of his *comédies-ballets*, including *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac*, *Le Mariage forcé*, *Les*

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<sup>18</sup> Caroline Wood and Graham Sadler. *French Baroque Opera: a reader* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2000), 7-8.

<sup>19</sup> Powell, 178.

<sup>20</sup> Powell, 179.

<sup>21</sup> Powell, 180. Royal records notes a payment for "ses peines et récompenses d'avoir servi audit ballet" ("his pains and recompensations for having served to this ballet")

*Fâcheux*, and *Psyché*. Beauchamps choreographed all of these revivals, but *Le Malade imaginaire* was his last collaboration with Molière because of the playwright's sudden death on stage. This performance was particularly extravagant and required many rehearsals, fifty-three for the ballet alone. Powell speculates that the amount of time devoted to rehearsing the ballet might suggest the complexity and elaborateness of the choreography or the inexperience of the dancers.<sup>22</sup> Even after Molière's death, Beauchamps remained with the troupe to finish the performances. Once the king granted Lully the use of the Palais Royal theatre, Beauchamps remained, thus becoming the principal choreographer for the *Académie Royale du Musique*.

In 1680, Beauchamps replaced Francois Galand du Désert as the head of the *Académie Royale de Danse*. During the next period of his life, Beauchamps collaborated with Des Brosses and d'Olivet to choreograph ballets, and he continued to perform in Lully's operas. After Lully's death in 1687, Beauchamps retired from the *Académie Royale du Musique*.

Throughout his career, nobles and officials hired Beauchamps as a choreographer for private ballets and as a dance teacher. He received acclaim for this work as well, which is demonstrated by the fact that Abraham du Pradel listed Beauchamps in the *Livre commode contenant les adresses de la ville de Paris* (1692). Du Pradel described Beauchamps as "le premier homme de l'Europe pour la composition [de ballets]."<sup>23</sup> Many Parisians viewed this listing, and thus du Pradel's praise of Beauchamps probably contributed to his prestige and reputation.

In the 1680s Beauchamps composed the music and choreographed the *ballets de collège* for the Jesuit colleges of Paris. Powell notes that Beauchamps was associated with these

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<sup>22</sup> Powell, 184.

<sup>23</sup> Quoted in Powell, 186. Abraham du Pradel, *Livre commode contenant les adresses de la ville de Paris, et le trésor des almanachs pour l'année Bissextile 1692* (Geneva: 1973), 73. "The first man in Europe for the composition of ballets."

educational establishments for a long time. Charles Nutter and Ernest Thoinan in *Les origines de l'opéra français* mention that at one of the *collèges*, “Le Sieur, le maître de danse de la maison, réglait les danses, assisté de Beauchamps, qui de plus composait la musique de ses intermèdes.”<sup>24</sup> Therefore, as early as 1673, Beauchamps began choreographing and composing for Parisian educational institutions.

The Collège d’Harcourt and Collège de Clermont (later Louis le Grand) were the two Jesuit educational centers that attracted French and foreign noble students. In August, the students presented a play, into which they inserted dance *intermèdes*. The audience at these performances resembled that of the court because many of the students came from noble families. Unlike court ballets, the *ballets de collège* followed the rules laid out by the Jesuit dance theoretician, Père Ménéstrier, in his treatise *Des Ballets anciens et modernes selon les règles du théâtre*.<sup>25</sup> According to Père Ménéstrier, the creation of ballet required a method and movement that expressed the human nature and soul. The production of a successful ballet required a unique subject and unity of design.<sup>26</sup> Because of these guidelines, which were most likely overlooked at court, Beauchamps’s work with the Jesuit colleges probably differed greatly from that of the court ballets.

In August 1679, the *Mercure* praised Beauchamps’s work with the Jesuit colleges: “The most skilled dancers there attempted to be worthy of such a great master [Beauchamps] who had for thirty years, both at court and in Paris, devised so many similar spectacles with the same unanimous acclaim and still found the means of winning more praise for the new and unexpected

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<sup>24</sup> Quoted in Powell, 186. “In 1673...Mr. Filz, who held an institution for young people of good family...made his students perform in tragedies with musical and dance interludes. Monsieur, the master of the house, ordered the dances, assisted by Beauchamps, who also composed the music of the interludes.”

<sup>25</sup> Astier, 138-40.

<sup>26</sup> Ménéstrier, 41.

charms with which he graced a subject in itself solemn and serious.”<sup>27</sup> Overall, Beauchamps’s involvement with the Jesuit colleges further augmented the recognition of his work.

## **D. Self-Fashioning**

### ***1. Dancing Roles***

Over his long career, Beauchamps chose to create and to perform many roles in many types of ballets. His versatility and virtuosity are clear through the examination of the hundreds of varied roles that he performed. Astier claims that Beauchamps should only be remembered as a character dancer who portrayed comic roles.<sup>28</sup> I believe that this assumption is false. While it is true that the primary purpose of ballet was to entertain the court, Beauchamps performed many serious and noble roles.<sup>29</sup> Beauchamps’s position as the *Intendant*, choreographer, and one of the most experienced dancers suggests that he created roles to cast himself in a powerful and positive light. John S. Powell offers a more moderate view of Beauchamps’s dancing roles, stating that he performed “a variety of colorful characters.”<sup>30</sup> However, Powell is only concerned with Beauchamps’s roles in the *comédie-ballets*. The examination of the roles that Beauchamps danced in a range of ballets suggests, rather, that Beauchamps was extremely capable of and interested in dancing in many different styles and roles. Moreover, contemporaries revered him for this virtuosity, and the plethora of roles that he danced established his identity as a skilled dancer and choreographer (See Appendix 1).

Between 1648 and 1670, Beauchamps performed in over 25 ballets, many of which he also choreographed. The large number of court productions and the king’s performance

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<sup>27</sup> Quoted in Régine Kunzle, “Pierre Beauchamp: The Illustrious Unknown Choreographer Part II,” *Dance Scope* 9, No. 1 (Fall/Winter 1974/1975), 38.

<sup>28</sup> Kunzle, 31-32.

<sup>29</sup> Roles such as Pluto and Alexander were inherently noble roles that Beauchamps danced.

<sup>30</sup> Powell, 173.

characterized this period.<sup>31</sup> As was common with the *ballets de cour*, Beauchamps danced a variety of roles in each ballet. He would perform anywhere from two to seven roles per ballet, but from 1653 until 1658, Beauchamps appeared primarily in group roles. These were roles danced by a group of dancers, similar to an ensemble. The *Ballet royal de la nuit* represents an example of this type of role as the king and Beauchamps both appeared as *Heures*.<sup>32</sup>

As a choreographer in the 1660s, Beauchamps began to perform more powerful solo roles such as *Alexandre*, *Pluton*, and *Roger*. In contrast with noble roles, comedic roles, such as *Fou* or *Scaramouche*, required exaggerated gestures and buffoonish movements. Only the most accomplished and talented dancers were chosen to perform in the more dignified noble roles. Beauchamps's experience and position as the *Intendant* suggest that he chose to give himself these new powerful and dignified solo roles. The roles listed above were kings or gods, which allowed Beauchamps to display power and prestige through both carriage and movement. Beauchamps's role as *Roger*, the king in the *Ballet d'Alcidiane*, originally intended for Louis XIV to perform, suggests that he wanted to and was capable of dancing in a noble style that rivaled that of the king.

The similarities in Beauchamps's roles during this period reflect both the lack of variety in characters between ballets, and the roles in which Beauchamps excelled. It appears that he was a versatile dancer; his roles ranged from noble to comedic to exotic. While he frequently performed minor roles such as a *Paysan*, Beauchamps also danced noble ones such as a *Galant*, comedic roles such as *Scaramouche*, and exotic roles such as a *Maure*. Beauchamps did repeat

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<sup>31</sup> 1648 to 1653 was the only gap in Beauchamps's career. Because the king's career did not commence until 1651, there may have been a lack of performance opportunities, perhaps caused by the political turmoil of the Fronde. At the young age of seventeen, perhaps Beauchamps was still being trained as a *baladin*.

<sup>32</sup> *Ballet royal de la nuit divisé en quatre parties, ou quatre veilles. Et dansé par sa majesté le 23 février 1653* (Paris: Robert Ballard, 1653), 2.

certain roles, although he performed them in different ballets. These roles included an *Espagnol*, *Pluton*, *Démon*, and *Paysan*.

As the choreographer, Beauchamps chose to perform only those roles in which he excelled more than once. Therefore, the repetition of roles may also reflect Beauchamps's preference for certain characters. While the characteristics of many roles required the same type of dancing, the range in character-types that Beauchamps portrayed also demonstrates his versatility. Overall, an analysis of the wide array of roles clearly suggests both Beauchamps's exceptional versatility as a performer and the diverse subject matter included in the ballets (See Appendix 1).

## 2. *Listed Name*

*Livrets* served as a program to explain the ballet to the audience, and accompanied each royal ballet performed during Louis XIV's reign. The *livrets* contained pictures, and verses that described the action of the ballet, similar to a modern day program. Reading the *livret* is similar to reading a script for a play. *Première entrée* is the first scene of the first act, although ballets were not formally distinguished into acts until Molière's invention of the *comédie-ballet*. Then there is a short description of the *mise-en-scène*, which prepares the reader for the scene or entrance that will follow. The short verses or poems resemble an actor's lines as they are noted by character. These verses served various purposes depending on the ballet. For example, some were *vers chantés*, with singers performing the poems. Others were *écits*, or monologues either recited by a narrator or even the dancers on stage. Furthermore, some were simply *vers à lire*, for the spectator to read to have an understanding of the subject before the ballet started. Philippe Hourcade notes that the verses published in the *livrets* served a purpose, namely to assure "une fonction dramatique, conformément aux tendances fondamentales du ballet" or to underline "les

articulations majeures à la tête de chaque partie.”<sup>33</sup> Because many ballets were performed *en plein air*, it was often difficult to see the dancers and to hear the accompaniment. Therefore, the *livrets* helped the audience to follow the action and to identify the dancers on stage.

The *livrets* also listed the names of the performers, a fact which is particularly important as it allows us to view Beauchamps’s changing status: indeed his listed name in the *livret* changed over time. In each *livret*, the *entrées* listed which dancers performed each role. These lists were not alphabetical. They began with the highest ranked dancer, Louis XIV for example, and proceeded down the social ladder. Before 1661, Beauchamps was listed as *Sieur Beauchamp* in the *livrets*, and was lower down on the list than other *baladins*. However, as he continued to perform, Beauchamps’s name began to head that of the other “*Sieur*” *baladins*. In 1661, the same year of Beauchamps’s appointment as the *Intendant des Ballets du Roi*, his name appears as *Monsieur Beauchamp* in the *Ballet Royal de l’Impatience*. Therefore, it appears that when Beauchamps received the appointment from the king he rose in the hierarchy, thereby surpassing other *baladins* not only in the *livrets*, but also in society. Overall, it appears that as Beauchamps’s dancing career progressed, so did his social status. This progression can be seen not only through the change of his prefix, but also through the increasingly powerful and noble solo roles that he performed.

### 3. *Finances*

Financial independence was another essential element of a person’s social status. Financial records provide insight into Beauchamps’s economic situation. In general, Beauchamps received 1,100 *livres* for choreographing a ballet, as well as 11 *livres* to maintain

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<sup>33</sup> Philippe Hourcade, *Mascarades et ballets au grand siècle (1643-1715)* (Paris: Desjonquères, 2002), 124-125. “To assure a dramatic function, conforming to the fundamental tendencies of ballet”; “to underline the major articulations at the head of each part.”

the ballet and to conduct daily and another 11 *livres* to dance.<sup>34</sup> Considering that Beauchamps performed frequently and choreographed multiple ballets each year, he probably made at least 2,000 *livres* annually, most likely more. It is also possible that Beauchamps received a pension as the *Intendant des Ballets du Roi*, although no record of payment exists. This pension could have ranged from 1,000 to 3,000 *livres* annually. In order to put these numbers into context, one might compare Beauchamps's estimated salary to those of authors in the same period. An unknown author received between 50 and 300 *livres* per book, while already established authors received 300 to 1,000 *livres* for a book. This would have been enough to survive, but not more than an actor earned. Only famous writers, such as Molière, would receive more than 1,000 *livres* for their work.<sup>35</sup> Even assuming that Beauchamps received 2,000 *livres* yearly, he had much more financial stability than contemporary authors and comedians. Most likely, his income rivaled that of famous authors, which allowed him to gain financial independence and wealth. This financial stability provided autonomy and the possibility to invest in an art collection. As a professional dancer, this financial stability was unusual, and it contributed to his exceptional reputation and prestige.

#### 4. *Art Collection*

In addition to demonstrating his financial independence, Beauchamps's art collection allowed him to cultivate his image in society. Unfortunately, while it is clear that Beauchamps possessed an art collection, it passed to his sister at the time of his death, and no inventory was ever taken. Travelers came to his house to visit the collection and the Louvre, National Gallery in London and the Metropolitan Museum of Art now possess some of his pieces.<sup>36</sup> What is known

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<sup>34</sup> Kunzle, 40.

<sup>35</sup> Henri-Jean Martin and Roger Chartier, *Histoire de l'édition française, Tome II, Le livre triomphant, 1660-1830* (Paris: Promodis, 1984), 387, 395.

<sup>36</sup> Astier, 149.

of this collection is found in a description by a traveler, Germain Brice, in 1687: “Here can be seen a collection of the rarest paintings to be found in Paris. There one encounters the greatest masterpieces.”<sup>37</sup> The fact that people came to visit Beauchamps’s collection demonstrates its importance and reputation. While art collecting was popular at this time, most average citizens possessed replicas or imitations of paintings.<sup>38</sup> However, Beauchamps’s collection included renowned Renaissance painters such as Raphael, Giulio Romano (Raphael’s student), Jacopo Bassano, as well as Baroque painters Annibale Carracci, Guido Reni and Nicolas Poussin. Germain Brice added in a different description from 1698 that “On remarquera aussi quantité de porcelaines ancienne très rares à présent, des cabinets de vernis du Japon, des bronzes et d’autres choses curieuses disposées avec beaucoup de jugement et de connaissance.”<sup>39</sup>

Beauchamps’s possession of original paintings and rare objects may have further displayed his status. While paintings from both the Baroque and Renaissance periods were part of his collection, all of the painters were considered to be classical and non-controversial in their work. The majority of paintings listed in Brice’s description were religious in nature. Many nobles owned religious paintings at this time, but they also collected historic, genre or landscape paintings. In general, religious paintings were favored by the lower classes.<sup>40</sup> Beauchamps’s taste for religious paintings may suggest his artistic preferences or his lower social status. However, because these were paintings by artistic masters, it appears that the paintings garnered the viewer’s appreciation. Beauchamps’s choice of paintings clearly demonstrated both his *bon goût* and *connaissance* of art, both of which were essential elements to a person’s success in society.

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<sup>37</sup> Quoted in Astier, 138-163.

<sup>38</sup> Philip Benedict, “Towards the Comparative Study of the Popular Market for Art: The Ownership of Paintings in Seventeenth-Century Metz,” *Past & Present* 109 (Nov. 1985): 100-117.

<sup>39</sup> Quoted in Antoine Schnapper, *Curieux du grand siècle: collections et collectionneurs dans la France du XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Flammarion, 1994), 396. “We will also remark a number of very rare ancient porcelains, cabinets of vernis from Japan, bronzes, and other curiosities displayed with much judgment and taste.”

<sup>40</sup> Benedict, 114.

In addition, his choice of porcelains and bronzes followed the popular trend of the time. In fact, he sold two pendants to the king in 1685. Antoine Schnapper states that Beauchamps's possession of these objects is "une nouvelle preuve de la grande vogue des porcelaines, notamment anciennes, en France entre 1680 et 1710."<sup>41</sup> As a descendant from an artistic family, it appears that the aesthetic value of the art itself interested Beauchamps. However, it is also possible that Beauchamps attempted to portray himself as part of the nobility, rather than simply as a person who danced to make a living. The people who came to visit him, perhaps some of his dance students, were probably impressed that a mere *baladin* appreciated and invested in such an impressive collection. Therefore, by choosing classical paintings, Beauchamps seems to have tried to elevate his social status through others' appreciation of his art.

### 5. *Dance Notation System*

In addition to his performances and choreography, Beauchamps also developed the first dance notation system, a method to record dance movement. It allowed those who learned the symbols to document their dances (See Appendix 2). The notation listed music at the top of the page, and the patterns and steps of the dancers were drawn below. When Raoul-Auger Feuillet published this famous system in 1700, it was a huge success, including the notation of many social dances. However, Beauchamps along with three others filed a lawsuit claiming to have invented the system. Beauchamps argued that Louis XIV has entrusted him with the creation of the notation system, and produced five volumes of his work. As many as twenty-five other dance masters testified to having seen Beauchamps's notation before Feuillet's publication.<sup>42</sup> Although the system is now recognized as the Beauchamps-Feuillet notation, Beauchamps lost his case, thereby losing both the financial benefits and the prestige of its creation. This loss must have

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<sup>41</sup> Schnapper, 395-396. "A new proof the great popularity of porcelains, notably ancient, in France between 1680 and 1710"

<sup>42</sup> Kunzle, 41.

been a disappointment for Beauchamps as recognition of his creation would have given him even more distinction.

### 6. *Descriptions by Contemporaries*

Descriptions of Beauchamps by contemporaries illustrate how society viewed him. As already mentioned, the Duchesse d'Orléans praised Beauchamps in her memoirs, "Quand je suis venue en France, j'y ai vu une réunion d'hommes de talent, comme on n'en trouvera plus dans beaucoup de siècles. C'étaient Lully, pour la musique ; Beauchamp, pour les ballets ; Corneille et Racine pour la tragédie ; Molière pour la comédie."<sup>43</sup> The listing of Beauchamps alongside the other great masters of his time, illustrates that his contemporaries appreciated his talent and accomplishments. Yet, while contemporaries across the board praised Beauchamps's dancing skills, none of them seem to have interacted with Beauchamps personally. This fact suggests that while nobles appreciated his dancing talent, he never completely became part of the noble society despite his interactions with nobles and his distinction from other *baladins*. Régine Astier speculates that Beauchamps was a "quieter man," who was not as flamboyant as either Molière or Lully. She supports this assumption with a quote from De Tralage, who lists Beauchamps as a performer of "regular habits."<sup>44</sup> I believe that this in itself says a fair amount about Beauchamps. Perhaps he was a reserved man devoted to his art. Rather than getting caught up in the court politics, Beauchamps focused on the professional creation of roles on stage to further his career.

Jean Loret, author of *La Muse historique*, mentioned Beauchamps several times near the beginning of his professional career. *La Muse historique* was a weekly gazette, in the form of a

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<sup>43</sup> Quoted in Powell, 186. "When I came to France, I saw a union of three talented men, that we will not see again for many centuries. It was Lully, for the music; Beauchamps, for the ballets; Corneille and Racine for tragedy; Molière for the comedy."

<sup>44</sup> Kunzle, 40.

collection of letters about society and culture that the majority of Louis XIV's court read. Loret's opinion of Beauchamps influenced how members of the nobility thought of Beauchamps. On February 17, 1657, Loret described a performance, "Enfin, ce Ballet est un champs/ où l'incomparable Beauchamp/ par des merveilleuses souplesses, / élévations et justesses, / si hautement cabriola,/ qu'il fut proclamé ce jour-là/ par toute la noble Assistance, / pour le meilleur Danseur de France."<sup>45</sup> This proclamation could have been problematic at a time when the king was also performing and theoretically should have been considered the best dancer in France. A year later in 1658, *La Muse historique* described, "In the *Ballet d'Alcidiane*, he [Beauchamps] surpasses all other dancers."<sup>46</sup> In 1661, the same paper praised Beauchamps's performance in the *Ballet de l'Impatience*: he was "spirited, one of the most capable dancers, without peer, in short out of the ordinary."<sup>47</sup> It is clear that Beauchamps had a positive reputation throughout his career. In August of 1672, the *Mercure galant* advertised for the revival of *Psyché*: "We will see at the beginning of winter the grand spectacle of *Psyché* triumph again on the stage of the Palais Royal; and, for Carnaval, a new spectacular play, entirely comic, will be performed; and as this play will be by the famous Molière and the ballets for it will be composed by Monsieur de Beauchamps, we may expect nothing but the best."<sup>48</sup> After twenty years as a professional, Beauchamps had firmly established his reputation as a choreographer in France, and society expected the best from his ballets.

Yet after his death, the Parfaict brothers described Beauchamps in *Histoire de l'Opéra*:

"S'il faut appeler Beauchamps un grand homme... je le veux bien, quoi que *ce ne fut pas un*

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<sup>45</sup> Quoted in Powell, 169. "Finally, this ballet/ where the incomparable Beauchamp/ by some marvelous suppleness/ elevations and accuracy/ jumped so high/ that day he was proclaimed/ by all of the noble audience/ as the best dancer in France."

<sup>46</sup> Quoted in Kunzle, 32.

<sup>47</sup> Quoted in Kunzle, 32.

<sup>48</sup> John S. Powell, "Pierre Beauchamps and the Public Theater." In *Dance, Spectacle and the Body Politick, 1250-1750*, edited by Jennifer Nevile, 127. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008.

*danseur de très bon air* : il était plein de *vigueur* et de *feu*, personne n'a mieux dansé en tourbillon, et personne n'a mieux su que lui faire danser."<sup>49</sup> While the Parfaict brothers recognized Beauchamps dancing talent, they did not think he danced with a noble air. According to the authors, Beauchamps's vigor and fire were not entirely desirable qualities, even if the energetic dancing was impressive. The use of the word *tourbillon* to describe Beauchamps's dancing is particularly interesting because *tourbillon* had different connotations during the seventeenth century. *Tourbillon* had a scientific definition, "Une quantité de matière qui tourne autour d'un Astre ou d'une Planète."<sup>50</sup> Fontenelle, for instance, described these scientific *tourbillons* in *Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes*. *Tourbillon* was also literally a whirlwind, but could be used in reference to a person's emotional state, "On appelle figurément *Tourbillon*, Tout ce qui entraîne les hommes. *C'est un homme emporté par le tourbillon des plaisirs*."<sup>51</sup> This less literal definition may also speak to the connotations associated with Beauchamps's dancing in the Parfaict brothers' description. The use of *tourbillon* in the memoirs of the Duc de Saint-Simon and Madame de Sévigné demonstrates how contemporaries regarded *tourbillons*. Both authors referenced *tourbillon* in negative ways, often in relation to the court. Saint-Simon mentioned the "abandon au tourbillon du jeu et des plaisirs."<sup>52</sup> For Madame de Sévigné, *tourbillon* is described as *violent* and *horrible*, the opposite of tranquility.<sup>53</sup> The Parfaict brothers described Beauchamps as vigorous and full of fire, and

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<sup>49</sup> Quoted in *Revue d'art dramatique*, Volumes 39-40 (California: University of California, 1900), 216, 217. "If one must call Beauchamps a great man... I would like to, although this was not a dancer of noble carriage: he was full of vigor and fire, no one had danced the *tourbillon* better, and no one knew how to dance better than him." My italics.

<sup>50</sup> *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française*, 1st Edition (Paris: 1694) from the ARTFL database. "a quantity of material that turns around a star or a planet"

<sup>51</sup> *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française*, 4th Edition (Paris: 1762) from the ARTFL database. "We call a *tourbillon* figuratively, all that moves men. It's a man moved by the whirlwind of pleasures."

<sup>52</sup> Louis de Rouvroy, duc de Saint-Simon, *Mémoires Tome 19* (Paris: Chérueil, 1791), 4. From the ARTFL database. "abandon to the whirlwind of games and pleasures"

<sup>53</sup> Marie de Rabutin-Chantal, marquise de Sévigné, *Correspondance. T. 3, 1680-1696* (Paris: Gallimard, 1978), 978. From the ARTFL database.

these violent and horrible connotations of the *tourbillon* appear to apply to his dancing.

Considering these descriptions in relation to Beauchamps suggests that while the audience may have been impressed by the speed and virtuosity of his whirlwind dancing, they may not have found Beauchamps's rambunctious style very dignified.

More posthumous praise for the choreographer can be found in Giambattista Dufort's *Trattato de Balo Nobile* of 1728, "In short, these two and most illustrious teachers [Beauchamps and Pécour] have so effectively improved the Dance and elevated it to such a degree that they have, in a very short time, not only driven all other dances into disuse, but they have caused a great many countries, among them the most cultured of all the world, to think of no more honorable way to dance than in the French style."<sup>54</sup> Jean Etienne Despréaux in *L'art de la danse* writes, "Beauchamps fut le premier, en divisant les temps, / Débrouiller l'art confus, mesurer les instants, / Et son crayon, utile à l'art chorégraphique, / Nous montra tous les pas tracés sous la musique."<sup>55</sup> The hyperbolic praise of Beauchamps's work suggests the respect that society had for Beauchamps's talent as a dancer and choreographer. However, while the change in his title and the roles that he performed reveal the rise in his professional standing, these descriptions do not indicate that nobles saw him as an equal.

## E. Conclusion

Even at an old age, Beauchamps continued to perform, which demonstrates his dedication to and love for the art of dance. In 1692, when the *comédie-ballet La Princess d'Élide* was revived, Beauchamps performed a solo *chaconne* at the age of sixty-one.<sup>56</sup> In 1701, the *Mercure* described a foreigner's reaction to Beauchamps's performance, "the Spanish ambassador was

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<sup>54</sup> Quoted in Kunzle, 40-1.

<sup>55</sup> Astier, 146-7. "Beauchamps was the first, in dividing the music, / to organize the confusing art, to measure the moments, / and his pencil, useful to the choreographic art, / shows us all the steps traced under the music."

<sup>56</sup> Powell, *Dance, Spectacle and the Body Politick*, 130.

astonished to see Mr. de Beauchamp dance without a mask and to learn his great age.”<sup>57</sup> On January 12, 1705, the year of Beauchamps’s death, the Comte de Pontchartrain stated that “Vous ne pouvez mieux faire que de vous servir de B[eauchamps] pour les danses.”<sup>58</sup>

The name Beauchamps is still known today because of his creation of the five feet positions. These same positions still remain the basis of any movement in ballet today. Pierre Rameau, dance teacher, author of *Le Maître à danser*, and student of Beauchamps, wrote a dance manual in 1725 to teach people the correct ways to dance. Rameau continually praised Beauchamps’s accomplishments, and therefore provided useful information about the creation of the five feet positions and Beauchamps’s choreographic prowess. Rameau explained that,

What is termed a position is nothing more than a separation or bringing together of the feet according to a fixed distance, while the body is maintained upright and in equilibrium without any appearance of constraint, whether one walks, dances, or comes to a stop. These positions were discovered through the application of the late Monsieur Beauchamps, who wished to give a definite foundation to the art. Before his time these positions were unknown, which proves his deep knowledge of this art. They must be regarded as indispensable and unbreakable rules.<sup>59</sup>

As a contemporary of Beauchamps, Rameau provided insight into the way other dance teachers viewed Beauchamps: “I cannot speak too highly of the reputation he has justly acquired... He was skilled and refined in his composition, and had need of capable dancers to execute what he had devised.”<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, in contrast with the Parfaict brothers, Rameau noted the refinement of Beauchamps’s choreography. Rameau’s appreciation of Beauchamps suggests that contemporaries recognized Beauchamps for more than the five feet positions.

While Beauchamps has been frequently ignored as an important contributor to the history of ballet, his impressive career as a performer, choreographer, and composer demonstrates his

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<sup>57</sup> Kunzle, 32.

<sup>58</sup> Quoted in Powell, *Dance, Spectacle and the Body Politick*, 130. “You cannot do better than to hire Beauchamps for the dances.”

<sup>59</sup> Pierre Rameau, *The Dancing Master*, translated by Cyril W. Beaumont (London: C. W. Beaumont, 1931), 5.

<sup>60</sup> Rameau, xiii.

significance to both dance history and the social and cultural history of the seventeenth century. Although notation of his ballets is missing, it is still possible to determine the important role that Beauchamps played in creating performances for the court and Parisian society. His reserved personality meant that he did not receive as much attention as other performing artists, such as Lully or Molière. However, this should not diminish the recognition of his many accomplishments and contributions to ballet. Beauchamps separated himself from other *baladins* by establishing a reputation based on his exceptional talent and virtuosity. In addition to his artistic achievements, Beauchamps danced for distinction throughout his career and garnered positions in the royal administration (*Intendant des Ballets du Roi* and *Directeur de l'Académie Royale de Danse*) as well as exceptional respect for his dancing and choreographic abilities. He also fashioned an identity for himself within the court society through the dancing roles that he performed. While he did not have complete artistic freedom, Beauchamps found ways to distinguish himself from other dancers. He moved to the top of his social sphere and into contact with the great men of his time. This fashioning was continued in his personal life through the collection of art. Overall, a study of art, court culture, and the social dynamics of the seventeenth century seems incomplete without the recognition of Beauchamps's successes.

### ***Epilogue: Evaluating Beauchamps's Career***

While it is clear after examining Beauchamps's biography that he distinguished himself from other dancers, he does not seem to have achieved real social mobility. It is difficult to explain this fact, but there are many possibilities upon which we can reflect. Pierre Bourdieu's twentieth-century sociological models aid in attempting to understand the social dynamics among seventeenth-century artists. Bourdieu discusses the process of distinction and the difference between occupational and social mobility which are essential to an understanding of Beauchamps's career. The historian Alain Viala offers a similar model for analyzing the field of literature, and this too can be used to understand better the life and career of Beauchamps. Furthermore, it is possible that a study of other artists of this same period may reveal clues pertaining to Beauchamps's case. A comparative approach allows the scholar to analyze better the context and social dynamics of seventeenth-century artists.

While early modern artists had the ability to fashion identities and to distinguish themselves, social mobility was not guaranteed. Many artists received pensions from Louis XIV as well as positions in the royal administration and even, as in the case of André Le Nôtre, coats of arms. In addition, many artists' professions increased in both power and prestige throughout their careers. However, these royal distinctions and occupational mobility did not necessarily translate into social mobility. While artists fashioned identities in an attempt to distinguish themselves and were rewarded and respected for their talents, they were not always able to radically change their position in society. Beauchamps's case appears to fit this description particularly well.

Artistic professionals in the seventeenth century were situated in between social ranks. Men like the sculptor François Girardon, the landscape architect André Le Nôtre, the

choreographer Pierre Beauchamps, and the playwright Molière came from non-noble artistic families, but rose to fame because of their capabilities during Louis XIV's reign. All of these men were able to increase their status as artists, through the creation of art which pleased the king and allowed for their distinction from other artists. All four men successfully created their own identities. However, the specificity of each artistic field seems to have played a role in influencing how successful each artist was in achieving mobility, whether it be social or occupational.

Art flourished in seventeenth-century France as a result of the king's support and mobilization of artists. Artists, like the king, recognized how images and portraits can portray power and greatness. However, performance-based art forms were at a disadvantage because of the hierarchy of art forms. Society, particularly the Church, viewed performance as immodest and potentially immoral. Beauchamps and Molière may have been unable to attain social mobility because they exposed themselves on stage. Despite Beauchamps's efforts to increase his status through the roles that he danced, changes in his printed name, and his art collection, he only attained occupational mobility.

### **A. Sociological Theories**

Key terms from Pierre Bourdieu's twentieth-century sociological texts, *Distinction* and *Les Règles de l'Art*, can aid in understanding the artists of seventeenth-century France.

Bourdieu's theories have been termed as the "sociology of symbolic power."<sup>1</sup> According to Bourdieu, a person's taste contributes to the cultural capital one chooses in order to distinguish oneself. "Tastes (i.e. manifested preferences) are the practical affirmation of an inevitable

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<sup>1</sup> David Swartz, *Culture and Power: the Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 6.

difference.”<sup>2</sup> This demonstrated knowledge and taste through collections helped the society to perceive an individual in a certain light. “The competence of the ‘connoisseur’, an unconscious mastery of the instruments of appropriation which derives from slow familiarization and is the basis of familiarity with works, is an ‘art’, a practical mastery which, like an art of thinking or an art of living, cannot be transmitted solely by precept or prescription.”<sup>3</sup>

Bourdieu studies cultural capital, a non-financial asset that can be used for social distinction and which nobles and artistic professionals alike valued in the seventeenth century. Bourdieu argues that individuals in society constantly struggle to maintain or enhance their position within the social hierarchy through various cultural practices - a point that is confirmed by my analysis of Beauchamps’s life. Indeed, the social hierarchy that existed during Louis XIV’s reign did permit distinction. Bourdieu’s concept of field is also important to my study, because the specificity of each artistic field seems to have affected the effectiveness of an artist’s self-fashioning.

Moreover, Bourdieu’s ideas about the difference between occupational mobility and social mobility are essential to my argument. Bourdieu claims that vertical movements, upwards or downwards within the same sector, are much more common than transverse movements, between fields.<sup>4</sup> For example, seventeenth-century artists were able to move upwards within their field, but not transversely into a higher social class. Indeed, occupational mobility seems to have been possible in the seventeenth century, but social mobility was rarer.

My work is also informed by that of Alain Viala, who in *Naissance de l’écrivain* uses Bourdieu’s concept of artistic field to analyze the birth of an autonomous literary field in the

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<sup>2</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, translated by Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1984), 56.

<sup>3</sup> Bourdieu, 66.

<sup>4</sup> Bourdieu, 131.

seventeenth century. Viala argues that during this time, writers began to acquire a certain financial and political independence. In my work it is evident that other artists, like Beauchamps, did in fact reach similar forms of success. Viala's use of key sociological concepts to reevaluate the dynamics of the literary field inspires my evaluation of choreographers and the slowly developing field of dance in the seventeenth century.<sup>5</sup> The king's legitimization of the art form through the establishment of the Academy of Dance in addition to the prevalence of dance in court life contributed to the developing field.

## **B. Case Studies**

Through a series of case studies, I will analyze the lives of artists in the seventeenth century to give a context for understanding the specificity of the field of dance. Ultimately, it is clear that many seventeenth-century artists fashioned identities and distinguished themselves in society. However, despite their upward occupational mobility, artists were not necessarily transversely mobile. The specificity of the art form seems to have played a role in determining the success of each artist. In particular, the field of dance may have inhibited Beauchamps's social mobility because of a cultural resistance to bodily exposure, mimesis, and seemingly undignified movement.

### ***1. Molière (1622-1673)***

Molière, born Jean-Baptiste Poquelin, was the son of a *tapissier du roi*. He was educated at the Jesuit Collège de Clermont, where many nobles were also educated. Molière initially took the position handed down to him by his father to gain access to the royal household, even though he was not trained as a *tapissier*. However, in 1643 at the age of 21, Molière gave up his father's title and left to tour the provinces after joining the theatre troupe *L'Illustre Théâtre*. It was during

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<sup>5</sup> Alain Viala, *Naissance de l'écrivain: sociologie de la littérature à l'âge classique* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1985), 7, 9, 293, 299.

this time that Molière began to write plays and to integrate *commedia dell'arte* elements into his farcical comedies. In 1658, Molière's troupe performed for Louis XIV at the Louvre. After this performance, the troupe was granted the title of *Troupe de Monsieur*, (Monsieur being *le frère du roi Gaston d'Orléans*) and was allowed to share the theatre at the Petit-Bourbon.<sup>6</sup> The troupe gained a reputation through the performance of Molière's comedies, which mirrored and mocked the society in a comedic way. Molière's comedies continued to be successful, and the troupe was often invited to perform for the court at Versailles. In 1662 they moved to the Palais Royal theatre, one of the few buildings intended to be a theatre. Molière's troupe was renamed again in 1665, as *La Troupe du Roi*. While the troupe collectively gained prestige, Molière did not necessarily receive credit for his art. However, when the troupe became *La Troupe du Roi* the king granted Molière a yearly pension of 6,000 *livres*.

While Molière was famous at the time mostly for his comedic acting abilities, he was not socially mobile. Unlike other artists, he was not given any appointments by the king. Even though Molière became financially independent and popular both at court and with the Parisian public, his social status did not change. Unlike Beauchamps who became the *Intendant des Ballets du Roi*, Molière did not receive similar accolades despite the popularity of his work. At the same time, he did not fashion an identity in the way that other artists did. There is no record of an art collection or other types of collected cultural capital that might have helped Molière to distinguish himself. In addition, Molière's comedies, such as *Les Fâcheux* or *Tartuffe*, mocked members of society and caused much debate and criticism. To a greater extent than Beauchamps, Molière faced criticism from the Church and censorship of his work. Furthermore, because of his exposure as an actor who imitated different characters, it appears that society appreciated the art

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<sup>6</sup> Virginia Scott, *Molière, A Theatrical Life* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 27-59.

but not the man with mimetic abilities. Overall, Molière did not capitalize on the possibility of distinction and was thus unable to be socially mobile, despite his success and popularity. Similar to Beauchamps, Molière's performance and imitation seem to have excluded him from joining a more noble social class.

## 2. *Girardon (1628-1715)*

Like Beauchamps, François Girardon was an artist who was also aware of the possibility of distinction in society. Born in Troyes in 1628, as a young sculptor *le chancelier de Séguier* protected Girardon and financed a trip to Italy as well as his apprenticeship. By 1654 Girardon had moved to Paris and participated in the decoration of the king's room at the Louvre. In 1657, Royal Academy of Sculpture admitted Girardon. Another sign of his increasing status was his housing and studio at the Louvre in 1667, where he worked and trained young artists. From this time until 1699, Girardon played a key role in the decoration of the royal houses.<sup>7</sup>

At the time of his death, Girardon possessed a fortune of 220,000 *livres*, and 38,000 *livres* in his art collection. This collection consisted of models, statuettes, bronze and marble busts, Egyptian treasures, and paintings. Eight hundred sculptures were included in the collection, many of which came from Girardon's workshop.<sup>8</sup> The artist had engravings made of his collection for posterity. This suggests a great amount of self-worth, self-glorification, and a desire to be remembered.

Similar to Beauchamps, Girardon received honors that validated his artistic abilities. In addition, Girardon was even more aware of fashioning his identity through collecting, as is apparent from the engravings that he ordered. Similar to other artists of non-performing arts, because of the distance between Girardon and his art form, he had a greater potential to gain

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<sup>7</sup> Grell, 187.

<sup>8</sup> Grell, 187.

respect for his artistic talents and was more likely to contribute to his social status as a result. However, apart from the recognition of his talent, it does not appear that Girardon was socially mobile.

### 3. *Le Nôtre (1613-1700)*

André Le Nôtre was the preeminent landscape architect of the seventeenth century. “Seventeenth-century French landscape gardening emerges as an art form vital to the life of ceremony and display that marked this period of absolutism.”<sup>9</sup> At the time, society recognized the creation of gardens as an art similar to that of painting. Landscape architects studied art as well as architecture and geometry. “French gardens, products of the rational thought of the age, are in their formality and symmetry the outdoor counterparts of the structures they are so carefully calculated to embellish.”<sup>10</sup> Because the gardens were viewed as an extension of the châteaux, nobles understood their importance to court life. Similar to a set designer, Le Nôtre was responsible for creating the décor and *mise en scène* of the gardens. He was also responsible for portraying the grandeur and triumph of Louis XIV through the layout of the gardens. In addition to creating the gardens of Versailles, Vaux-le-Vicomte, Tuileries, Chantilly, and Saint-Germain, Le Nôtre was a prolific collector of art.

#### a. *Biographical Info*

André Le Nôtre was born on May 12, 1613 to a family of gardeners. However, his father was no ordinary gardener, he was the *premier jardinier de Monsieur*, in charge of the Tuileries gardens. Similar to other artistic professionals at the time, the gardening families frequently intermarried and the father passed down his position to the eldest son. This was the case with Le Nôtre’s family as well, and by 1635 Le Nôtre had taken over his father’s role. Le Nôtre did not

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<sup>9</sup> F. Hamilton Hazlehurst, *Gardens of Illusion: The Genius of André Le Nostre* (Tennessee: Vanderbilt University Press, 1980), 373.

<sup>10</sup> Hazlehurst, VII.

acquire his fame all at once, rather he rose through the ranks, similar to the other artists I have examined. In 1643, Louis XIII charged Le Nôtre with the care of the royal gardens.<sup>11</sup> By 1648 the king named Le Nôtre the Designer of the King's Plantations and Gardens and in 1656 he became the Superintendant of Buildings.<sup>12</sup>

Both Le Nôtre and Beauchamps were involved in the theatricality of life in the seventeenth century. Beauchamps, more obviously, choreographed ballets in such a way as to portray the king in the best light. Le Nôtre was concerned with the *mise en scène* of society in the gardens. The list of gardens that Le Nôtre designed rivals the number of ballets that Beauchamps either choreographed or performed in.

Like Beauchamps, Le Nôtre helped to create Vaux-le-Vicomte. It was Le Nôtre's design of Vaux's gardens that drew Louis XIV's attention, and led to his appropriation to work at Versailles. It is important to note that while both Beauchamps and Le Nôtre refined their craft before 1661, it was their involvement in the Vaux project that led to greater success at Versailles. For Le Nôtre, success came in the form of commissions to design other nobles' châteaux, while Beauchamps began choreographing more frequently and taught more pupils. Le Nôtre's non-performative art form seems to have allowed him to portray himself in a different way than Beauchamps did. It appears that Le Nôtre's garden architecture distinguished him while Beauchamps's performance excluded him from social mobility. A question for future analysis might be whether this difference was a result of the distance between the artist and his art form.

#### *b. Praise by Contemporaries*

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<sup>11</sup> Bernard Jeannel, *Le Nôtre* (Paris: Fernand Hazan, 1985), 22-28.

<sup>12</sup> Erik Orsenna, *André Le Nôtre: Gardener to the Sun King* (Paris: George Braziller, 2001), 25. Little is known of his education, but it seems clear that he would have been educated by his father and other gardeners. Le Nôtre did also study for a time at the Louvre with the artist Simon Vouet. While studying there, he met fellow artist Le Brun, who became a lifelong friend.

Indeed, the Duc de Saint-Simon, “who was vitriolic about most of his contemporaries, had nothing but praise for Le Nostre.”<sup>13</sup> Saint-Simon wrote, “Le Nostre had an integrity, a correctness, and an uprightness which made him esteemed by all. Never did he overstep his position nor forget himself; he was always completely unselfish...he had a charming naïveté and directness.”<sup>14</sup> This description could not be more different than that of Beauchamps by the Parfaict Brothers. Saint-Simon’s quote suggests that Le Nôtre knew his place in society and never attempted to overstep his position. This contrasts with Beauchamps who displayed himself as a noble on stage, which might have been viewed as forgetting himself.

Le Nôtre was also much closer to Louis XIV than most other artists. In addition to the many positions that he held throughout his life, Louis XIV provided Le Nôtre with a generous pension. The king also had a new home built in the Tuileries garden and awarded Le Nôtre with the Order of Saint Michel. Louis XIV also awarded Le Nôtre with a coat of arms, a sign of his gained nobility that consisted of “a gold chevron accompanied by three silver snails, the two principal ones back to back and the one toward the point turned to the left.”<sup>15</sup> These distinctions demonstrate Le Nôtre’s social mobility, in addition to his occupational mobility.

### *c. Art Collection*

Le Nôtre’s art collection was more extensive than Beauchamps’s and was inventoried at the time of his death. This inventory, in addition to descriptions by visitors of Le Nôtre’s collection, allows us to understand better the importance of his collection. The collection represented eighteen percent of Le Nôtre’s fortune, and a portion of his collection was donated to Louis XIV in 1693. Le Nôtre’s medal collection alone totaled 1,500 modern medals from all over Europe that filled four armoires. He also possessed a hundred or so porcelains that filled

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<sup>13</sup> Hazlehurst, 6.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Hazlehurst, 6.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in Hazlehurst, 7.

two cabinets. The English man Lister admired “des urnes (*jars*) ‘d’une dimension extraordinaire’ et des recipients (*vessels*) ‘fort rares de vieille porcelaine de Chine.’”<sup>16</sup> In addition, Le Nôtre collected bronzes and possessed two sarcophagi. At Le Nôtre’s death, he owned 130 paintings, which he displayed in one cabinet. According to the inventory, the paintings included an equal number of Italian and Nordic painters, but were predominantly landscapes (*selon l’usage*). Le Nôtre also appears to have had some taste for modern paintings, as well as for Poussin.<sup>17</sup> As with the other artists, Le Nôtre’s art collection displayed his *goût* and *connaissance*, thereby contributing to the fashioning of his identity.

Of the artists that I have examined, Le Nôtre was the most successful in fashioning identity and increasing his social status. Part of this success was probably a result of his personality, and as Saint-Simon suggests, his understanding of his status. Another element may have been the nature of his art form. Because Le Nôtre was physically separate from the gardens he created, he did not risk exposing himself to the accusations of frivolity and immorality to which Beauchamps and Molière were subject. In addition, because the gardens were concrete objects, they left a lasting impression that did not disappear after a performance. Of course, as with all of these artists, Le Nôtre’s success probably also resulted from a variety of factors caused by chance.

### **C. Conclusions and Questions**

It is evident that Pierre Bourdieu’s analysis of culture as power can be applied to seventeenth-century society. Molière, Le Nôtre, Girardon and Beauchamps, among others, collected cultural capital. This cultural capital was in the form of their art collections and *cabinets* which portrayed their *goût* and *connaissance* to others. Because of their exposure to the

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<sup>16</sup> Schnapper, 398-400. “Jars of an extraordinary dimension and extremely rare vessels of old Chinese porcelain.”

<sup>17</sup> Schnapper, 398-400.

world of the court, these artists mastered the “instruments of appropriation”<sup>18</sup> of the time period through their familiarity with court culture. These instruments included both works of art and mannerisms that allowed these men to blend in with higher social classes. Collections also permitted individuals to establish their own aesthetic sense or taste, which allowed for social distinction. For example, Beauchamps distinguished himself from other *baladins* through his choreography and art collection, both of which demonstrated his taste.

In particular, I believe that the field of dance may have posed problems for Pierre Beauchamps. Because Beauchamps embodied the art that he created through performance, he may have been unable to achieve social mobility. Moreover, Beauchamps’s attempt to portray nobility could have been viewed as arrogance. While he was able to represent or embody a noble figure, the Parfaict brothers remind us that this did not translate to nobility in reality.<sup>19</sup> Another issue with the field of dance may have been Beauchamps’s exposure on stage. Unlike other artists who were not a part of their productions, Beauchamps embodied and represented his art. He could have been considered immoral, similar to actors, because of the mimetic aspect of dance. In addition, because Beauchamps was physically mobile on stage, he could have been considered undignified. If I had more time to develop this thesis, I would further investigate whether this combination of embodiment, representation of roles above his social position, exposure, and mobility on stage meant that Beauchamps could not move horizontally out of his field.

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<sup>18</sup> Bourdieu, 66.

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in *Revue d’art dramatique*, Volumes 39-40, (University of California, 1900), 216-217. “*Ce ne fut pas un danseur de très bon air... personne n’a mieux su que lui faire danser.*”

Chantal Grell notes that there were two different “worlds” of artists, “celui des créateurs, adulés, choyés, souvent collectionneurs et celui des exécutants, qui sont restés obscurs.”<sup>20</sup> What is interesting about this description is that Molière and Beauchamps fit into both categories. Unlike Le Nôtre, who designed the gardens and allowed others to execute the work, Molière both wrote his comedies and performed in them and Beauchamps choreographed and performed in his ballets. This combination of creator and executor of a mobile and exposing art form might have limited both men’s social mobility.

In conclusion, it is clear that there are many unanswered questions about the social status of artists in the seventeenth century. Many factors influenced how successful each artist was, including the type of art, the artist’s talent, the artist’s self-fashioning, and his relationship to the king. In fact, it is practically impossible to understand the dynamics completely, and success was probably partially a result of luck and chance. It would be interesting to analyze further different artists and their art forms in an attempt to better understand the complex social dynamics of this time period, especially since so much attention has been focused on Louis XIV and his court. The artists who created the images and representations of the king are equally important for a fuller understanding of art, artists, and their social dynamics under the Sun King’s rule. It is my hope that understanding Beauchamps’s accomplishments and contributions to seventeenth-century court culture helps to start solve this puzzle. Even though Beauchamps was unable to attain social mobility, he was well recognized for his talent as a choreographer and a dancer. The examination of the roles that Beauchamps danced in a range of ballets suggests, rather, that Beauchamps was extremely capable of dancing in many different styles and roles. Moreover, he was revered by his contemporaries for this virtuosity, and the plethora of roles that he danced

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<sup>20</sup> Grell, 184. “That of the creators, adulated, pampered, often collectors and that of the executors, who have remained obscure.”

established his image and identity within society. In addition, he was aware of the importance of self-fashioning, and was able to distinguish himself from other *baladins* at the time. As the Duchesse d'Orléans noted, he too merits a spot among the Pantheon of classical masters - alongside Molière, Lully, Corneille, and Racine.

## Appendix 1

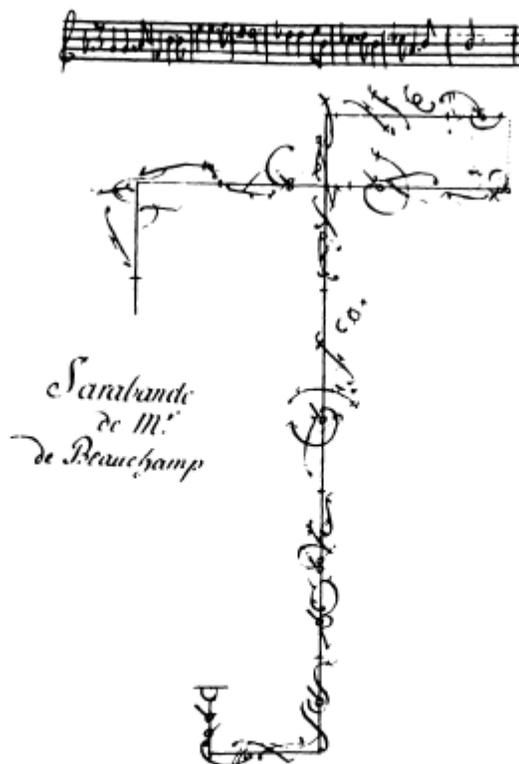
<b>Year</b>	<b>Ballet</b>	<b>Roles danced by Beauchamps</b>
1648	<i>Ballet du dérèglement des passions</i>	Statue Marin Nymphe
1653	<i>Ballet royal de la nuit</i>	Heure Marchand Gueux Ardent Magicienne Curieux Faux-monnaieur
1654	<i>Ballet des proverbes</i>	Fou Maure Attaqueur Espagnol
1654	<i>Ballet du temps</i>	Moment Le Siècle d'Or Le Printemps Zéphires
1654	<i>Les Noces de Pelée et de Thétis</i>	Furie Dryade Académiste habillé en Indien La Peinture
1655	<i>Ballet des bienvenus</i>	Les quatres practices du monde Dom Guichot
1656	<i>Ballet de Psyché</i>	Vent Parfumeur Bouffon Esclave
1657	<i>Ballet royal de l'amour malade</i>	Chercheur de trésor Alchimiste Ami des Maries
1658	<i>Ballet d'Alcidiane</i>	Le désespoir Femme Soldat Démon Polexandre
1659	<i>Ballet de la Raillerie</i>	Paysan Ivrogne La Raison

1660	<i>Xerse</i>	Basquer Français Paysan Espagnol Esclave Suivant de Bacchus
1661	<i>Les Fâcheux (Vaux-le-Vicomte)</i>	Unknown
1661	<i>Ballet royal de l'impatience</i>	Suivant Plaideur Créancier Démon
1662	<i>Les Fâcheux (Palais Royal)</i>	Unknown
1663	<i>Les Noces de village</i>	Le Mari Valet de fête Officier
1664	<i>Le mariage forcé</i>	Plaisant Magicien Galant
1664	<i>Ballet d'Alcine (Les Plaisirs de l'Île Enchantée)</i>	Roger
1665	<i>Ballet royal de la naissance de Venus</i>	Pollux Berger Philosophe Pluton
1666	<i>Ballet des muses</i>	Alexandre Theagene Nymphe
1667	<i>Le Sicilien</i>	Maure Nu
1667	<i>La Pastorale Comique</i>	Egyptien
1668	<i>Georges Dandin</i>	Berger Suivant de Bacchus
1669	<i>Monsieur de Pourceaugnac</i>	Page Matassin Procureur Biscayen
1669	<i>La princesse d'Elide</i>	Valet de chien Valet de fête Luteur
1669	<i>Ballet royal de Flore</i>	L'Eau Jardinier Le Mari Pluton Africain
1670	<i>Les amants magnifiques</i>	Dieu Marin

		Pantomime Faune Jeune Gen
1670	<i>Le Bourgeois gentilhomme</i>	Turc Espagnol Scaramouche

Compiled from seventeenth-century *livrets* as well as some of the comedy-ballets from Powell, “Pierre Beauchamps, Choreographer to Molière’s Troupe du Roy,” 173.

## Appendix 2



The first page of Beauchamps’ Sarabande (c. 1700), the only extant notation in his own hand. Reproduced from *Derra de Moroda Dance Archives, The Dance Library: A Catalogue*, 1982.

From Régine Astier, “Beauchamps and the Ballets de College,” 145.

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