

Patrons and Pirates: Publishing Dance in the Eighteenth Century

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Century***

Jennifer Thorp

**EDC Lecture, London
2020**

'I have infinite cause of being perfectly satisfy'd with my Patron': so wrote John Weaver in dedicating his *Orchesography* to the dancing-master Mr Isaac in 1706.¹ 'Patron', in the sense of a distinguished person who accepted the dedication of a particular work as a personal compliment and in return gave it implicit approval and protection from rivals. So different to a 'Pirate', someone who deliberately took over other people's work and issued it as his or her own, purely for personal gain or to put the original author out of business. These are the two themes I'd like to share with you this evening, with examples taken mostly from England, plus a few from France, and mostly from the first half of the eighteenth century. I know that there are people here who know a lot about this subject, but there may also be others for whom it is new, so please bear with me if I say things that some of you already know.

Patrons

The reasons for seeking a distinguished patron have not changed very much over time. Top of the list of most sought-after patrons for dance publications tended to be either the royal

¹ John Weaver, *Orchesography* (London, 1706), p. [iii].

family (and here we see one example, the former dancing-master John Ogilby presenting his Survey of London to King Charles II) or, as John Weaver indicated, highly respected practitioners of dance. Such patrons had status and prestige and, if they did not necessarily help to fund the publication, their name certainly gave the author and the work considerable kudos. The surviving evidence suggests, however, that French and English practice differed in its preferences for patrons, at least for bound volumes of dance treatises and collections of dances.

***Dedication pages in French dance treatises and collections of
six or more dances, 1700-1750***

Raoul-Auger Feuillet, *Chorégraphie* (1700, 1701, 1709; Jacques Dezais 1713#): **Guillaume-Louis Pécour**

Raoul-Auger Feuillet, *Recueil de Dances... de ballet* (1704): **Philippe duc d'Orléans** (future Regent)

Raoul-Auger Feuillet, *Recueil de contredances* (1706): **Anne-Louise de Bourbon, duchesse du Maine**

Michel Gaudrau, *Novueau Recüeil de Danse ... de Mr. Pecour* (1713#): **Louis XIV**

Pierre Rameau, *Abbrégé de la nouvelle méthode*, part1 (1725, c.1728, c.1732): **Mlle de Beaujolais** (daughter of Philippe duc d'Orléans)

Pierre Rameau, *Le Maître à danser* (1725): **François de Neufville, duc de Retz** (captain of the royal Body Guard)

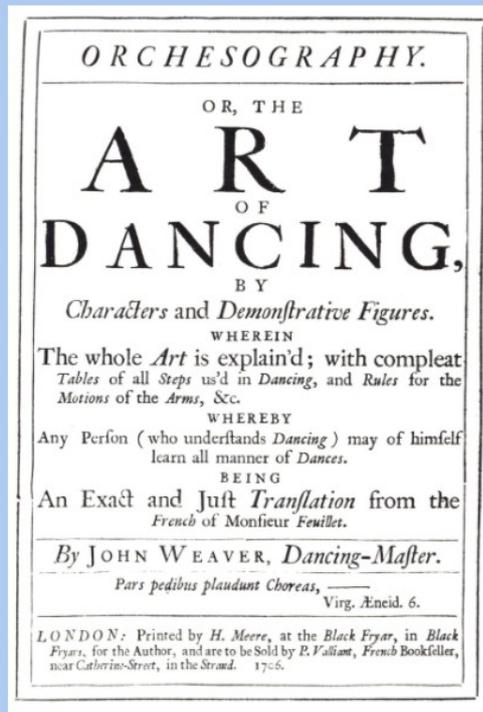
Feuillet and Pecour transferred their *privilèges* in these publications to Dezais

**Members of the royal family and ducal peerage of France
Named dancing-masters**

In France, we see that most of the surviving volumes, at least during the reign of Louis XIV, were dedicated to high-ranking members of the royal court: for instance, all but one of Feuillet's published volumes, dedicated to various members of the royal family;² Gaudrau's *Nouveau Receuil de Danses* (c. 1713), dedicated to king Louis XIV himself. Rameau's *Maître à danser* (1725) was dedicated to François duc de Retz, a peer of the realm in his own right; and three editions of Rameau's *Abbrégé de la nouvelle méthode* were dedicated to the young daughter of the Regent, Mlle de Beaujolais, who was eleven when the book first came out in 1725. Moreover these French publications were each protected by a royal *privilège*, which gave the author the sole right to publish the volume through licensed printers such as Ballard, and to sell it throughout the realm for a set number of years – often

² To the king's nephew Philippe d'Orléans (1704), the insomniac duchesse de Maine, wife of the King's illegitimate son and later to be the mastermind of the famously innovatory ballets at her chateau of Sceaux (1706), and the duchesse de Bourgogne, mother of the future Louis XV (1709).

six or ten years – and also the right to prosecute anyone else who tried to publish in direct competition.³ What is unusual in France is how few of those publications were dedicated to leading professional dancers of the day; the massive exception being Feuillet’s *Chorégraphie* which was dedicated to the dancer Louis-Guillaume Pécour in all its editions.⁴



**John Weaver’s
Orchesography (1706),
his translation of
Feuillet’s
Orchésographie.**

**London: printed by H.
Meere for the Author,
and sold at Paul Vaillant’s
shop in Katherine Street
off the Strand**



In England the setup worked differently, as it was commercially-driven rather than monarchy-controlled. Most dance treatises and bound collections of notated dances in London were published by commercial printers who acted as proprietors underwriting the cost of publication. The author wrote the text for the printer if the book was going to be in letterpress, and either drafted relevant music and dance notation for an engraver or else did his own engraving. At this stage he might approach a likely patron and/or advertise for subscribers, or he might leave that to his publisher-cum-proprietor to do it for him and to organise sales of the finished product. We can see this on the title page of *Orchesography* (1706): Weaver the author, Henry Meere the printer ‘for the Author’, and Paul Vaillant the bookseller who sold copies of the finished book from his shop in Catherine Street off the Strand.

³ For the broader question of general publishing controls in the *ancien régime*, see Jane McLeod, *Licensing Loyalty; Printers, Patrons and the State in Early Modern France* (Pennsylvania University Press, 2011), ch. 3. She says little, however, about the *privilège* system itself.

⁴ 1700, 1701, and Jacques Dezais’ engraved edition of 1713 after Feuillet had been allowed to transfer his *privilège* to him: see the terms of the *privilège* in the 1713 edition held by the Library of Congress.

The proprietor could of course be the author himself, but few dancing-masters could afford that and they usually turned to a commercial printer or bookseller. It was all a question of who had the right skills, outlets, and capital to see the project through.⁵

For added protection and publicity, the author or proprietor could also register the publication with the Stationers Company, or list it in the Term (or quarterly) Catalogues of those London booksellers who worked with the Stationers Company.

plates. Price for
3. Country Dances: being a Composition, entirely new and the whole cast different from all that have yet been published; with Bass and Treble to each Dance. Also the newest French Dances in use, Entry's Genteel and Grotesque, Chacons, Rigadoons, Minuets, and other Dancing Tunes. By **Thomas Bray**.
4. A choice Collection of Ayres for the

Term Catalogues Nov. 1699 and Feb. 1700: entries for Thomas Bray's editions of Country Dances, one in his own name, one in the name of his proprietor Wellington

the music shops in Town.
7. A choice Collection of Country-dances; being a composition entirely New; and the whole last different from all that have been published: in Bass and Treble to each Dance, carefully corrected and fairly engraven. To which is added, All the newest Country-dances now in use. Printed for **R. Wellington**; and sold by **J. Young**, Musical Instrument-maker, at the

For example Thomas Bray and subsequently his proprietor Richard Wellington advertised Bray's *Country Dances* and *A Choice Collection of Country Dances* in the 'Musick' section of the Term Catalogues in November 1699 and February 1700 respectively.⁶ But that was unusual, and daily/weekly newspaper advertisements were probably a more effective form of publicity. Even the Copyright Act of 1710 (known as the Statute of Queen Anne), which claimed to protect the rights of both author and proprietor, in fact heavily favoured the proprietor (that is, the printer), allowing him exclusive rights for fourteen years and only passing the rights on to the author (if a different person) after those fourteen years had

⁵ John Essex may have acted as author, printer and one of the booksellers of *The Dancing-Master* in 1728 (his translation of Rameau's *Le Maître à danser*), although its title page imprint is ambiguous: 'By J. ESSEX, Dancing-Master. LONDON Printed, and Sold by him at his House in Rood-Lane, Fenchurch Street; and J. Brotherton, Bookseller, at the Bible in Cornhill.' He also employed George Alsop to engrave the illustrations.

⁶ The entries in the Term Catalogues largely echo the wording of each title page. See Edward Arber (ed.), *The Term Catalogues*, vol. III: 1697-1711 (London: Arber, 1906), pp. 156,172. Bray's works do not however appear in the *Transcripts of the Registers of the Worshipful Company of Stationers* (London: privately printed for the Stationers Company, 1914), vol. 3, 1695-1708, perhaps because they were seen as music publications.

expired.⁷ Small wonder that the dance world made little use of this protection, for dancing-masters were in the business of highly competitive novelty (the newest dances, the latest guidance on ballroom etiquette, for instance); and also the 1710 Act tended to favour traditional letterpress over the engraved formats which the dance and music worlds were using more and more by that date. Yet, the Stationers Company and the 1710 Act did have some part to play for us this evening, and I'll come back to it later when we get on to piracy.

Another big difference between French and English dance publishing lay in the choice of patrons. While all but one of the treatises and collections of dances published in Paris early in the century were dedicated to members of the French nobility, in London at that time all the surviving dance treatises or manuals, except two, were dedicated to leading dancing-masters of the metropolis.

Dedication pages in English dance treatises and manuals, 1700-1750

John Weaver, *Orchesography* (1706): **Francis Isaac**
P. Siris, *The Art of Dancing* (1706): **the Dancing-Masters of this City & Kingdom**
Edmund Pemberton, *An Essay for the Further Improvement of Dancing* (1711): **Thomas Caverley**
John Weaver, *An Essay towards an History of Dancing* (1712): **Thomas Caverley**
Kellom Tomlinson, *Six Dances ...by Mr. Kellom Tomlinson* (1720): **the Ladies**
John Weaver, *Anatomical and Mechanical Lectures upon Dancing* (1721): **Thomas Caverley**
John Essex, *The Dancing-Master* (1728): **[John?] Groscourt**
Kellom Tomlinson, *The Art of Dancing* (1735, 1744): **Catherine Belasyse, Viscountess Fauconberg**

Named dancing-masters
Others

For instance, Weaver's *Orchesography*, dedicated to Francis Isaac in 1706; three different dance treatises dedicated to Mr Caverley between 1711 and 1721,⁸ and John Essex's *The Dancing-Master* of 1728 and 1744, dedicated to another dancing-master, Mr Groscourt.⁹

⁷ Statute 8 Anne c.19/c.21: *An Act for the encouragement of learning* [the so-called Statute of Queen Anne], 1710, clauses 2, 11. See *The Statutes Project: Putting Historic British Law Online*: <https://statutes.org.uk> accessed 02/02/2020.

⁸ The first part of Pemberton's *Essay* (1711), Weaver's *History of Dancing* (1712), and his *Anatomical & Mechanical Lectures* (1721).

⁹ Respectively John Weaver, *Orchesography* (his translation of *Chorégraphie*) (1706), Edmund Pemberton's *Essay for the Further Improvement of Dancing* (1711); Weaver's *Essay towards an History of Dancing* (1712) and *Anatomical & Mechanical Lectures* (1721); John Essex, *The Dancing-Master* (his translation of Rameau's *Le*

The odd ones out were Siris and Tomlinson. Siris hedged all his bets in his self-published book *The Art of Dancing* in 1706 (a rival translation of *Chorégraphie*) by dedicating it to ‘the dancing-masters of this City and kingdom’, but he needed to sell widely in order to cover his printing costs and to compete with Weaver’s *Orchesography*. Tomlinson however broke new ground, and I’ll return to him shortly.

***Dedications in English dance collections
of six or more dances, 1700-1750***

John Weaver, *A Collection of Ball-dances... by Mr Isaac* (1706): **Charles Lennox, Duke of Richmond** (illegitimate son of King Charles II)

John Essex, *For the Further Improvement of Dancing* (1710): **Henrietta, Duchess of Bolton** (daughter of the Duke of Monmouth)

John Essex, *For the Further Improvement of Dancing* (2nd ed., c.1715):
Caroline Princess of Wales

Kellom Tomlinson, *Six Dances ...by Mr. Kellom Tomlinson* (1720): **the Ladies**

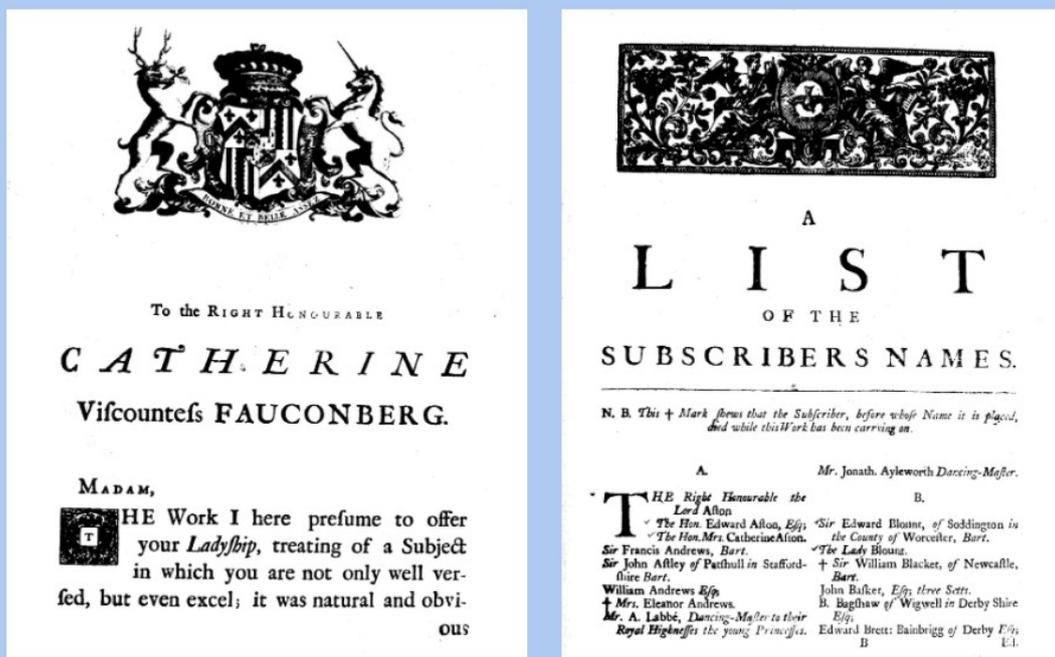
Ferdinand Le Roussau, *A New Collection of Dances ... by Monsieur L’Abbé* (c.1725): **King George I**

Members of the royal family
Others

Otherwise, we find the names of royal patrons of dance publications in early eighteenth century London only for collections of dances. Notably, Thomas Bray’s *Country Dances* of 1699, dedicated to William Duke of Gloucester, second in line to the English throne; John Essex’s enlarged edition of *For the Further Improvement of Dancing* in c.1715, dedicated to Caroline Princess of Wales with a duet named *The Princess’s Passepied* added in her honour; and Ferdinand Le Roussau’s *New Collection of Dances... by Monsieur L’Abbé* in the mid-1720s, dedicated to King George. Later in the century, however, things would change again in London as it became fashionable to dedicate dance treatises not to dancers but to social celebrities. We can see this, for instance, in Gallini’s *Critical Observations on the Art of Dancing*, dedicated in the 1770s to Elizabeth, Duchess of Argyll: she was that beautiful and strong-minded aristocrat who had refused to be intimidated by the rioters stirred up by the

Maitre à Danser) (1728/1744). If Gros court was the John Gros court, gentleman, whose will was proved in PCC on 2 January 1741, requesting burial at Covent Garden and naming one of his executors his brother-in-law Michael Maltair [the Covent Garden theatre dancer?], then he died a wealthy man, leaving almost £2000 in legacies: TNA:PROB 11/715.

radical John Wilkes.¹⁰ Noverre's works were always good for celebrity patronage, so when Parkyns MacMahon published his *Works of Monsieur Noverre* in 1782-3, he issued it in three volumes: the first dedicated to the Prince of Wales, and the third to Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire which should have ensured that sales rocketed.



Kellom Tomlinson relied heavily on his employer/patron and on subscribers for his several editions of *The Art of Dancing* (1735, 1744, 1758), but even they were unable to finance the intended de luxe coloured edition of 1756 and it never appeared.

There is little evidence of exactly how a likely patron was approached. All we can be sure of is that if the patron agreed, then the author or proprietor would launch into full publication and probably add a gushing dedication page at the front of the volume. If the prospective patron said no, then presumably another patron was sought or the book went ahead as a purely subscription or proprietor-financed project. Unfortunately dedication pages and subscription lists do not always survive, for they could be removed during later rebinding, or they were torn out and lost for other reasons; so we don't get a clear idea today of how ubiquitous they may have been originally. That is a pity, as they could have told us a lot about how much the different levels of society took an active interest in dance. Take Kellom Tomlinson's *Art of Dancing*, for instance, first published in 1735. It was an ambitious and expensive book. Tomlinson himself probably acted as his own proprietor, for no printer is named on the title page and the book was sold from his house, the Red & Gold Flower Pot, usefully situated between a coffee house and an inn at High Holborn. It was funded by subscription and dedicated in all its editions to Tomlinson's patron Catherine Belasyse, Viscountess Fauconberg. Indeed it was probably she who persuaded her aristocratic friends and relatives to subscribe to the work, along with lesser mortals attracted by either knowing

¹⁰ Elizabeth Campbell (1733-1790): see the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

Tomlinson as his pupils, or as other dancers, or just men and women responding to his newspaper advertisements inviting subscriptions (and ending up on the very long subscription list of over 170 names).



Tomlinson's Art of Dancing included beautifully engraved plates by Gerard Vandergucht and others.

This plate was dedicated to Nathaniel Curzon Esq. and his brother Assheton, of Kedleston Hall, Derbyshire. The music, by Tomlinson himself, had already been heard on stage for a more complex Saraband solo performed by his 'Prentice' at Lincolns Inn Fields theatre in 1716.

Tomlinson also offset the printing costs by the bright idea of dedicating each illustrative plate to a named 'scholar' (aka sponsor). This is really valuable for us today because it gives a good idea of who his wealthy pupils were, and how they formed another level of patronage for his work.¹¹

So much for patronage of bound volumes of collected dances, dance treatises and manuals. What about those one-off dances, issued one at a time and named after, or dedicated to, specific individuals? Was this also direct patronage, or did the dedicatees even know that their name was being honoured? There are many examples of them in both France and England (and elsewhere in Europe, too, of course), many of them honouring named courtiers (with all the political implications that often implied¹²), celebrating the birth of royal children or a prestigious wedding.

¹¹ For other aspects of the patronage of Kellom Tomlinson's work, see Jennifer Thorp, 'Picturing a Gentleman Dancing-Master: a Lost Portrait of Kellom Tomlinson', *Dance Research* 30/1 (Summer 2012), pp. 70-79.

¹² Eg Isaac's *The Godolphin* 1714: see Isaac Dances notes.



Anthony L'Abbé's royal pupils Anne, Amelia, and Caroline, granddaughters of King George I and honoured (along with their brothers) in dances to celebrate the king's birthdays. Martin Maingaud, oil on canvas, 1721. © The Royal Collection.

In London, for instance, Anthony L'Abbé, as the dance teacher of King George I's three eldest granddaughters, named dances after them, their brothers, and their mother, as part of his series of dances to celebrate the king's birthday each year. Presumably permission was sought in advance but even if not, there was a good chance that the dedicatees would have been flattered to have a dance named after them and performed at a prestigious ball. If I'd been there at the time, I would have loved to have a dance entitled *Thorp's Rant* created in my honour!

Sometimes, however, the patronage did not quite bring the rewards hoped for.

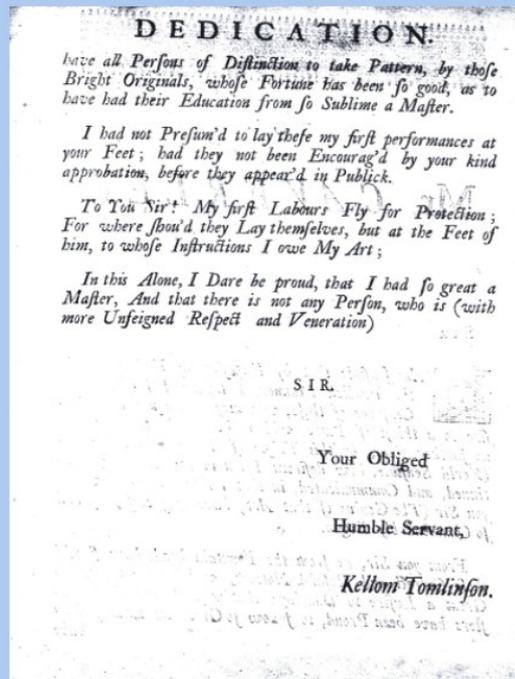
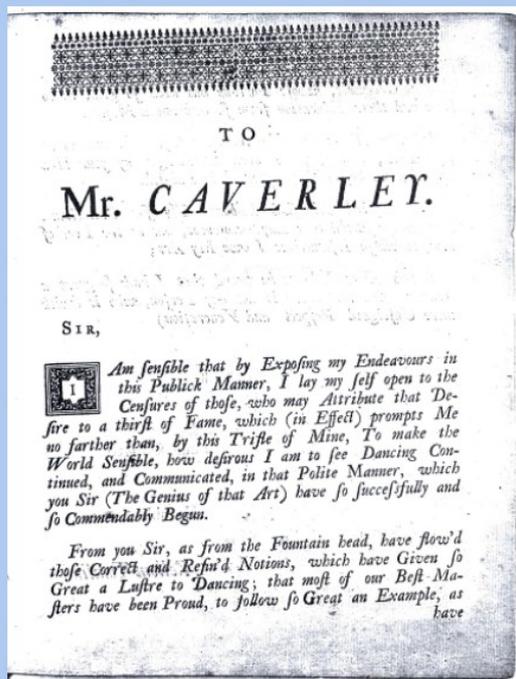


The first 'letter' of the first dance in Ferdinand Le Roussau's manuscript *Collection of [nine] New Ball- and Stage Dances, 1720.* (GB-Eu La. III.673)

This duet, named after John, 2nd Duke of Montagu, spells out the letters of his name in *menuet* and *gavotte* sections that combine different symmetries (mirror, axial, parallel), sometimes swinging the 'front' round by 45 or 90 degrees, sometimes demanding quirky steps, rhythms and acute spatial awareness from the dancers.

For example, it is very likely that Ferdinand Le Roussau dedicated his wonderfully jokey duet *The Montaigne* in 1720 to the equally whimsical John, 2nd Duke of Montagu, who at that time was closely involved in financing the Little Theatre in the Haymarket and about to become a subscriber to Handel's Royal Academy of Music at the King's Theatre Opera House, while also gaining a reputation for hosting magnificent masquerades at his London house. Le Roussau probably hoped that Montagu would be flattered enough by the duet named after him to perhaps one day fund the publication of the entire manuscript of nine dances, or otherwise further Le Roussau's career in some way. The publication never happened, but Le Roussau and his scholars did get to dance, a few years later, at the Little Theatre, and it may have been Montagu who introduced him to Anthony L'Abbé who at that time was looking for someone to notate and sell some of his work; the result of course was the superb *New Collection...* of L'Abbé's dances.

I also find it intriguing that dedications might not be permanent. Obviously, personal patronage ended when the patron died, but did dedications ever change during the lifetime of a patron? I know of only one example, but there may be more.



The original dedication to his mentor Thomas Caverley, of Kellom Tomlinson's *The Passepied Round-O*, 1715 (BnF Rés Fr 1027)

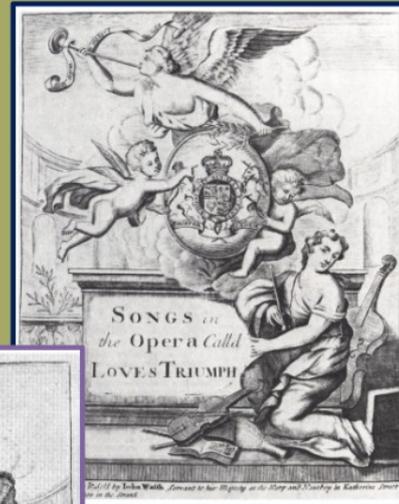
When Kellom Tomlinson completed his apprenticeship in about 1715, he published his first known ballroom duet; it was named *The Passepied Round-O* and dedicated to his old master, Thomas Caverley. Only two examples of the original dedication page survive, neither of them now in the UK,¹³ in it Tomlinson describes Caverley as the 'Fountain-head' of dance to whom 'My first labours Fly for Protection'.¹⁴ Yet, when Tomlinson later reissued this dance, along with five others in a volume called, rather unimaginatively, *Six Dances by Mr Kellom Tomlinson* (1720), he gave the whole volume a new and general dedication 'To The Ladies'; and that is the version that most of us know today in a facsimile of the British Library's copy. It is sheer luck that the separate dedication page to Caverley back in 1715 still survives elsewhere. It all suggests that, in the face of the financial imperative to sell more copies, hard-nosed business sense might quickly replace personal loyalty. But let's move on now to

¹³ In the Malkin Dance Collection now in Penn State University Library, the only known copy of this dance as a single issue; and in the Paris Bibliothèque Nationale added to their copy of the 1720 *Six Dances* (Res Fr 1027)

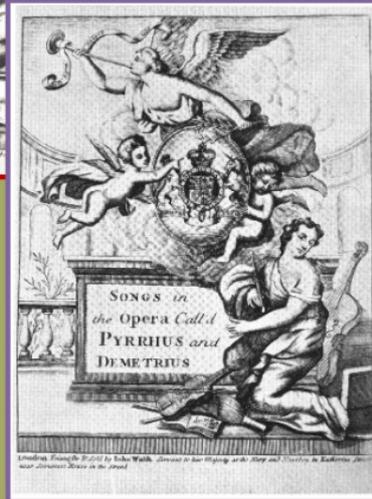
¹⁴ *Ibid.*, fol. 2r.



Godfrey Finger's dedication plate to Charles, Earl of Manchester, 1701, adapted by John Walsh, 1709.



See William C. Smith, A Bibliography of the Musical Works published by John Walsh 1695-1720, nos 82a, 293, 272.



Plagiarists and Pirates

Leaving aside the practices of 'self-borrowing' and 'homage' borrowing, which have always existed in the music and dance worlds, a more intriguing issue in the eighteenth century was plagiarism and piracy. There was of course the well-known case in France of Feuillet's appropriation of Pierre Beauchamps' notation system, publishing it as his own in 1700.¹⁵ In England, however, we don't get very far into the commercial production of dances and dance music without running into the business methods of my favourite publishing 'baddie' of the time, the music printer and bookseller John Walsh and his partners.¹⁶ I'm sorry I cannot introduce this with a dance image, but this example from music publishing makes the point just as well. All these are title pages to music issued by Walsh, the designs having unwittingly been funded by the music-loving Earl of Manchester who went abroad in 1702, having sold the engraved plate to Walsh, who then adapted it to advertise quite different material.

Walsh's shop, like Vaillant's, Playford's, and even Weaver's sometime publisher Jacob Tonson, was in that part of the Strand near Catherine Street; ideally placed for shops because easily accessible from both the City of London and from Westminster. By 1709

¹⁵ Régine Astier Kunzle, 'The Illustrious Unknown Choreographer, Pierre Beauchamps', *Dance Scope* 9/1 (1974/5), pp. 41-43. The documents presented as evidence in the court case of 1704 were listed in Philip J. Richardson, 'The Beauchamp Mystery', part 2, *Dancing Times* April 1947, pp. 351-354 & 357.

¹⁶ John Hare from 1697 to 1721, and P. Randal from 1706-1710: see William C. Smith, *A Bibliography of the Musical Works published by John Walsh during the Years 1695-1720* (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1968), pp. viii-x. For convenience in this lecture, I just use the generic term 'Walsh' to indicate the whole firm, for which the mainstay in the first half of the century was always John Walsh snr.

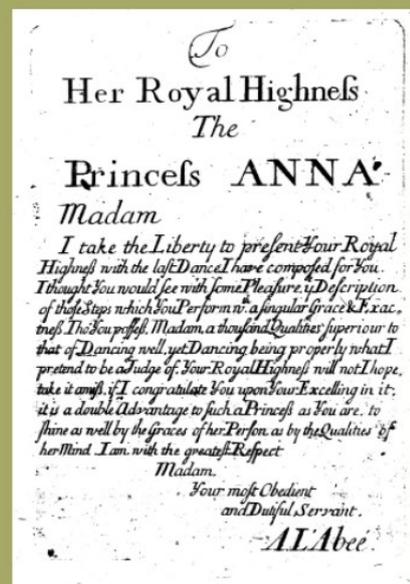
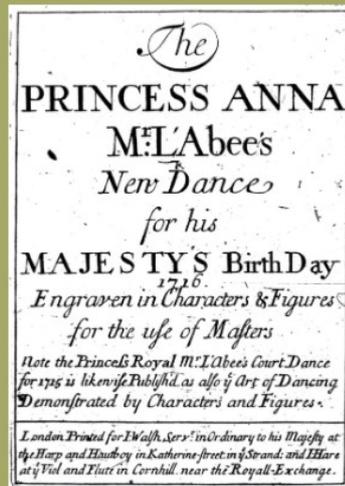
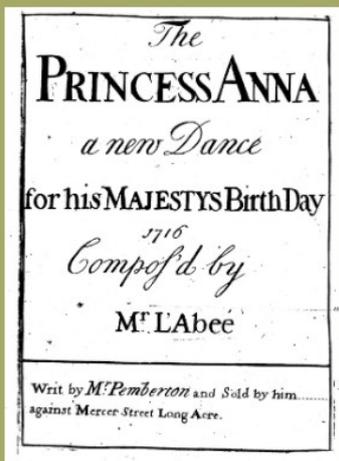
Walsh had been selling music there for a decade and was casting round for what else he could snap up. He was not averse to placing fake news in the press, as for example his advertisements in the *Post Boy* and the *Flying Post* in September and October 1699 hinting that Bray's *Country Dances* were available only from Walsh's shop, which was not quite true.¹⁷ Walsh was also very well placed to get advance notice of what music was being played at court, since for years he held the position of 'Musical Instrument Maker in Ordinary' there. So, not content with printing and selling the dance music celebrating royal birthdays and other events at court,¹⁸ which he had a perfect right to do, Walsh also jumped onto the bandwagon that was the production and sale of notated dances. In this way he took over Mr Isaac's dance *The Union*, first of all just the music in 1707, and then the entire dance notation after he had bought out (or squeezed out) both John Weaver as the notator and Isaac Vaillant as the distributor;¹⁹ and it is clear from Walsh's later title pages to notated dances that he had set himself up as a major proprietor of such works in London. But he misjudged badly when he got into arguments with Edmund Pemberton, as Moira Goff has described in her article on Pemberton's career.²⁰ I'll simply home in on the events of 1715 and 1716, when Anthony L'Abbé created his first two surviving ball-dances for the Hanoverian royal family and turned to Pemberton to publish them.

¹⁷ Walsh placed this misleading advertisement in the *Flying Post* on 26 September and 19 October, and in the *Post Boy* on 28 September and 3 October 1699. No copy of Bray's *Country Dances* 1699 under Walsh's imprint is known, and at best he simply sold copies of the Pearson imprint (which names other booksellers 'and all other Musick shops' as the distributors but does not specifically mention Walsh's shop. Walsh's claims however may have been one reason why Bray hastened to list the work in the Michaelmas Term Catalogue that November.

¹⁸ Which he did from at least 1698 onwards: see the *Flying Post* 16-18 Dec 1698, and also Smith no. 19.

¹⁹ In c. 1712: see William C. Smith 234, 405.

²⁰ *Dance Research* 11/1, Spring 1993, pp. 52-81.



Pemberton's *The Princess Anna* (1716), appropriated (along with its dedication page) by Walsh within days, resulting in an accusation of piracy from Pemberton. (GB-Lbl h.801 (1), h.801a (1))

First came his *Princess Royal* (1715), dedicated to Princess Ann, eldest granddaughter of King George I. Both Pemberton and Walsh issued the dance notation, with a dedication page to the Princess. We don't know which came out first (although I have my suspicions), but the following year it happened again, when L'Abbé's *Princess Anna* and its dedication page were issued by Pemberton and immediately appropriated by Walsh. At this point the growing rivalry between Pemberton and Walsh turned really sour, and was largely fought out in the pages of the *Evening Post* newspaper. This was Walsh in pirate mode, and Pemberton accused him of exactly that, for 'having pirated upon me the last birth day dance, compos'd by Mr. Labee', as he wrote in the *Evening Post* 14 Jun 1716. By then however Walsh had bigger problems than Pemberton on his mind, for he was just about to lose his illegal appropriation of Playford's *The Dancing-Master*.

The English Dancing Master :

O R,
Plaine and easie Rules for the Dancing of Country Dances, with the Tune to each Dance.



March. 19th L O N ' D O N ,
Printed by Thomas Harper, and are to be sold by John Playford, at his Shop in the Inner
Temple neere the Church doore. 1651-1650

According to Cecil Sharp (1913), this was George Thomason's copy of *The English Dancing Master* as registered with the Stationers Company in November 1650, acquired March 1651.

John Playford had long been an influential member of the Stationers Company, and as such enjoyed a near-monopoly of printing psalms, well known musical works such as *Orpheus Britannicus* and *Apollo's Banquet*, and – for our purposes this evening – *The Dancing Master*.

²¹ What evidence survives (and it is incomplete) for Walsh's abortive takeover of *The Dancing Master* is now in The National Archives, buried within twenty-one documents in a Chancery lawsuit known as 'Leake versus Tonson'.²²

²¹ See Richard Lockett, 'The Playfords and the Purcells', in Robin Myers, Michael Harries & Giles Mandelbrote (eds), *Music and the Book Trade from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Century* (Oak Knoll Press & the British Library, 2008), pp.45-67. See also David Hunter, 'Music Copyright in Britain to 1800', *Music & Letters* 67 (1986), pp. 269-282

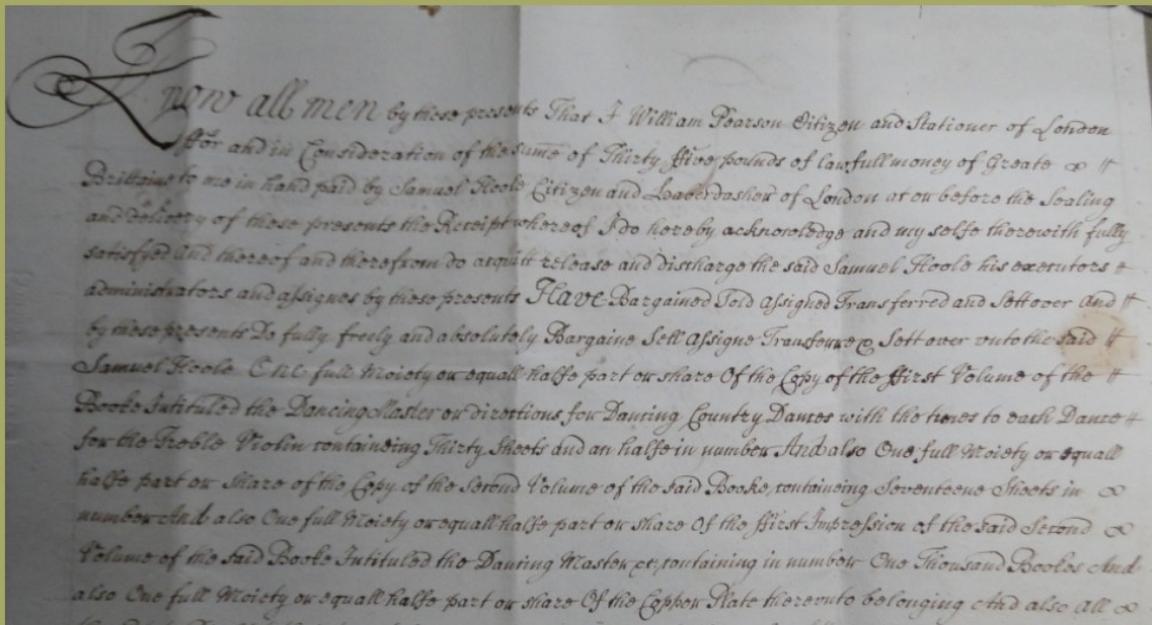
²² TNA: C 104/222, Leake v. Tonson.

I now all men by these presents That I William Pearson Citizen and Stationer of London
 for and in Consideration of the sume of Thirty five pounds of lawfull money of Great Brittain
 which is in hand paid by Samuel Hoole Citizen and Haberdasher of London at or before the sealing
 and delivery of these presents the Receipt whereof I do hereby acknowledge and my selfe therewith fully
 satisfied and contented and therefore do acquit release and discharge the said Samuel Hoole his Executors &
 Administrators and Assignes by these presents HAVE bargained sold assigned Transferred and Set over and
 by these presents do fully freely and absolutely bargain sell assigne Transfere & Set over unto the said
 Samuel Hoole One full Society or equall halfe part or share Of the Copy of the first Volume of the
 Booke intituled the Dancing Master or directions for Dancing Country Dances with the tunes to each Dance
 for the People Probin containing Thirty Sheets and an halfe in number And also One full Society or equall
 halfe part or share of the Copy of the second Volume of the said Booke containing Seventeen Sheets in
 number And also One full Society or equall halfe part or share Of the first Impression of the said second
 Volume of the said Booke intituled the Dancing Master &c. containing in number One Thousand Doobles And
 also One full Society or equall halfe part or share Of the Copy of the Plate hereunto belonging And also all &c

William Pearson's sale of half his publishing rights in *The Dancing Master* vols 1 & 2, and 1000 copies of vol. 2, to Samuel Hoole for £35, 24 July 1710 (TNA: C104/222/17)

The compilations of *The Dancing Master* volumes had passed from John Playford to his son Henry and his various printers and booksellers, as we can see from the title-pages of the different editions. Yet before he died in 1709 Henry Playford had started disposing of his own publishing rights; in particular selling the music titles to a London haberdasher named Samuel Hoole – a rather shadowy figure who may have bailed him out financially now and again. The rights to print and sell *The Dancing Master* had ended up with William Pearson and others back in 1706, but in a two-part transaction (half in 1710 and half in 1713) Pearson sold his rights, for £35 [about £4000 today?] to Samuel Hoole as silent proprietor while Pearson & Young continued to print and sell the new editions. Hoole registered *The Dancing Master* at Stationers Hall; but John Walsh (who was not a member) had spotted the potential of the 1710 Copyright Act in weakening the authority of the Stationers Company and, as one of the Chancery case papers puts it, 'Notwithstanding [Hoole's registration], John Walsh under pretence of being a Printer and Vendor of Musick, Printed the said whole Book with all the directions for dancing, and insists that it is free for anyone to do so'.²³ Hoole sought legal advice as to whether, under the 1710 Act, he could sue Walsh and seize his pirated stock of *The Dancing Master*.

²³ TNA: C104/222/21.

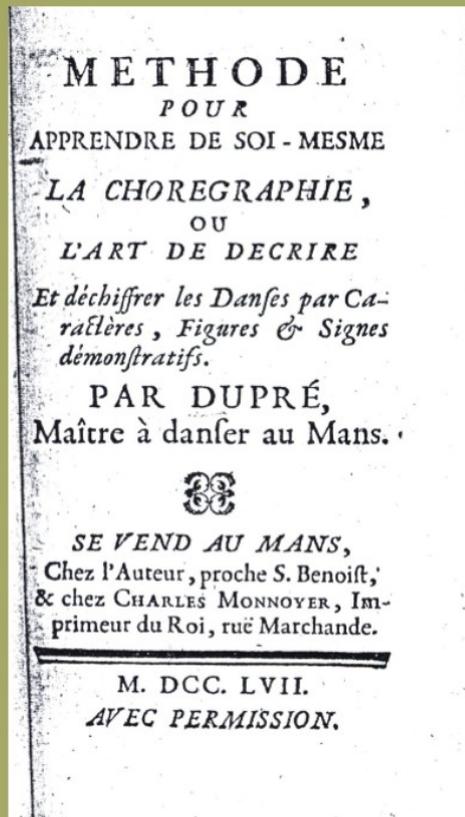


William Pearson's sale of half his publishing rights in *The Dancing Master* vols 1 & 2, and 1000 copies of vol. 2, to Samuel Hoole for £35, 24 July 1710 (TNA: C104/222/17)

In March 1717 the Solicitor General, Sir Robert Raymond, finally gave his legal opinion. It did not start well: 'Taking this book entitled *The Dancing Master*' he wrote, 'to be within the meaning of the Act, of which I have some doubt, the Act being made for the encouragement of learning'... ; in other words, he did not regard *The Dancing-Master* as a proper book, no doubt thanks to its subject (having fun dancing). Yet he gave Mr Hoole the benefit of the doubt and went on to say that 'If Mr Hoole has followed all the directions of the Act to vest the Property of the Book in him, I am of the opinion [that] Mr Walsh has incurred the penalty [as] in the Act, that is, he has forfeited the books by him printed and is liable to be sued [...] one penny for every sheet in his custody either printed or printing, published or expected to be.'²⁴ Half the fine was to go to the Crown, and half could be claimed by Hoole as the rightful proprietor, although Sir Robert was doubtful that it would ever be paid! Nevertheless, he went on to say that the Act also allowed the rightful proprietor to enter Walsh's shop and seize his stocks of the *Dancing Master*, on condition that he immediately 'damasked' them (that is, defaced each sheet so that it became illegible) 'to make waste paper thereof', as he put it. Walsh, needless to say, was unabashed; deprived of his pirated booty in 1717 he simply started to issue his series of *The Compleat Country Dancing Master*. I do urge those of you who are interested in Playford publications to go and look at this

²⁴ Cyril Beaumont, *A Bibliography of Dancing* (reprint New York: Benjamin Blom, 1963), pp. 36-50 describes all the editions of *The Dancing Master* that he knew as 'Oblong Foolscap 12mo', so each sheet would have produced 24 pages of each of the oblong duodecimo volumes we know today. See also Philip Gaskell, *A New Introduction to Bibliography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972/1985), pp.73-75 for the dimensions of English, French and Dutch papers of the time.

court case if you do not already know of it, as it also contains some fascinating details of the number of sheets and size of print runs.



Teach Yourself *Chorégraphie*, 1757

A self-help book by 'Dupré of Le Mans', for those wishing to learn how to read dance notation by first studying verbal descriptions of the steps.

'Avec permission' sounds dubious in a dance book trade dominated by royal licences ('privilèges').

(GB-Lbl Hirsch I. 153)

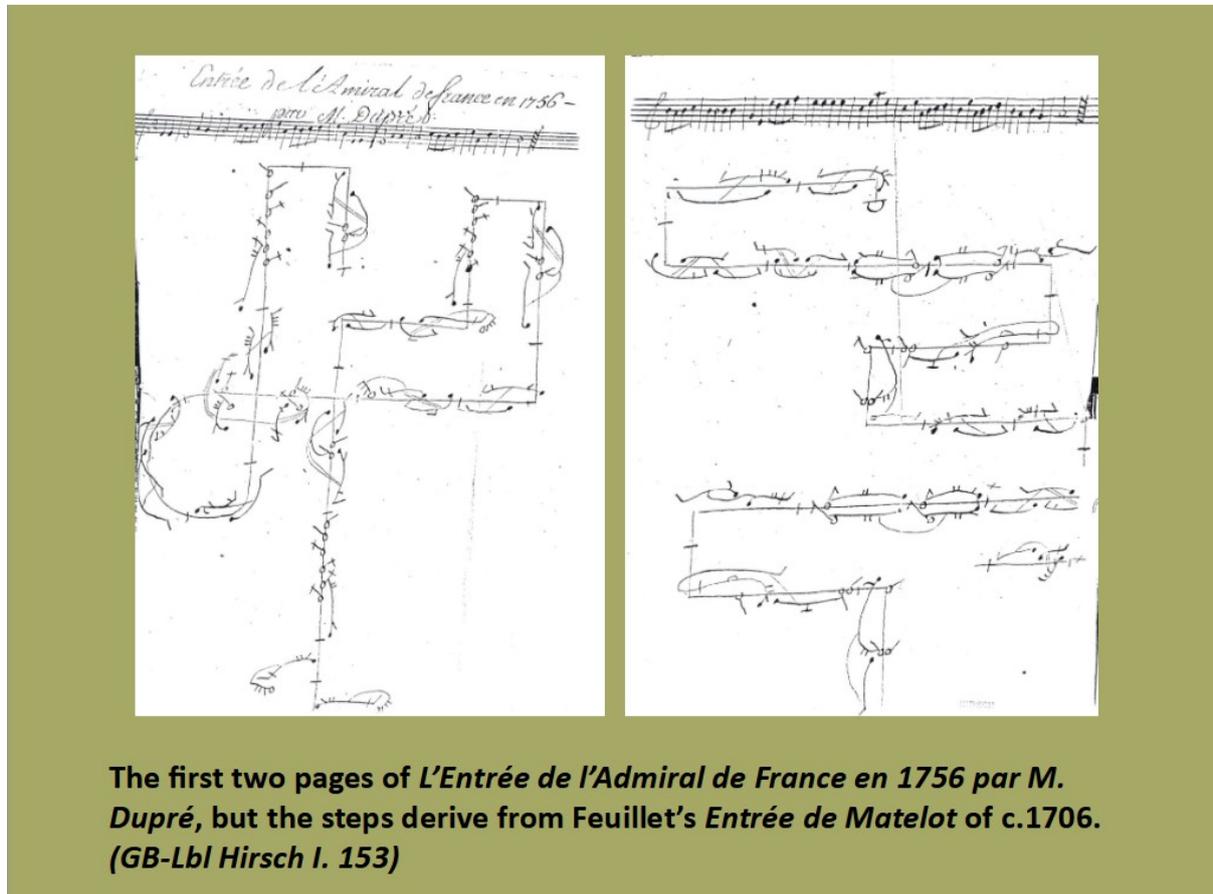
My final example takes us back to France, to a collection published in 1757. Some of you know of it already, not least for one dance in it which was a fine example of naval piracy. The book is Dupré's *Méthode pour apprendre de soi-mesme la chorégraphie* (Le Mans, 1757), which survives as a unique copy now in the British Library.²⁵ Its author seems to have been a rather obscure dancing-master of Le Mans named Dupré,²⁶ who produced this book in 1757 with the avowed purpose, as he explains in the introduction, of sharing his 'God-given talents' with those people in the provinces who had never learned to read Beauchamps-Feuillet notation but wanted to learn the dances recorded in it. Dupré's book contains verbal descriptions of eight named dances, credited to the likes of Pécour, Feuillet, Balon, Dezais and Blondy; and out of the eight, four also survive elsewhere in manuscript or engraved notation. That gives us today important controls by which we can judge how accurate Dupré's descriptions were; and the answer for those dances is 'very'. This is doubly valuable to know, as Dupré also describes two other ballroom dances which only survive in this one book.²⁷

²⁵ GB-Lbl, Hirsch I.153.

²⁶ Not the great Louis Dupré (1697-1774) of the Paris Opéra, nor his minor satellite Jean-Denis Dupré (1706-1782) who, according to Emile Campardon, *L'Académie Royale de Musique au XVIII^e siècle* (repr. New York 1971), I. 292, retired in 1757 to obscurity in Paris.

²⁷ A minuet for two couples by Dezais called *La Carignan* (bearing no resemblance to Pecour's duet of that name published 'for the year 1704'), and a duet for a man and a woman named *La Nouvelle Duchesse*, written

By contrast, the last dance in Dupré's book is a blatant piece of dishonesty, ineffectively masked by being given a new title, new music, and replacing a few of the steps with showy *entrechats* and other ornamentations that were so popular by the 1750s. Now called the *Entrée de l'Admiral de France*, allegedly created by Dupré himself in 1756, its verbal description is clearly of Feuillet's solo *Entrée de Matelot* from over forty years earlier.²⁸



The clincher is that, tipped-in to the back of Dupré's book, is a folded manuscript copy of the *Entrée de l'Admiral de France* in Beauchamps-Feuillet notation. Its pages tally with his description of the steps, and it may well be in Dupré's own hand – in which case his 'God-given talents' did not extend to writing notation accurately: he describes *entrechat cinq* but notates *entrechat six*, for instance; some of the foot symbols point the wrong way (well, we've all been there), and one bar of steps has been missed out completely and inserted afterwards with a small 'x' marking the spot. Even so, it is all clearly lifted from Feuillet's solo, with a few more hops and beats added. You have to admire Dupré's cheek, for at the beginning of his book he says that 'since there are jealous people who maliciously

in a variant form of Beauchamp-Feuillet notation, and which Dupré had found in an unnamed Parisian dancing-master's treatise called *La Chorégraphie Nouvelle*, itself no longer extant. He also notes the titles of two more dances in that collection (*Le Nouveau Menuet à 8*, and *La Nouvelle Conty*) but without descriptions. The Paris weekly *Affiches, Annonces et Avis Divers* nos 22, 23, of June and August 1762 which advertised the publication in Paris of les Sieurs Perrin & Lahante's *Chorégraphie nouvelle ou Méthode pour former et danser soi-même les Contredanses* [see BnF Gallica] had no direct connection with the work referred to by Dupré in 1757.

²⁸ It survives only in one Paris manuscript, F-Po Rés 817/18 (LMC 2980).

counterfeit the work of others and pass it off as their own authorship, the reader should accept no copies that are not signed by Dupré!²⁹

Why did he do it? The dance was doubtless meant to commemorate the victorious return to France of the Admiral after the naval Battle of Minorca in May 1756 (as a result of which the British temporarily lost Minorca and Admiral Byng was executed for dereliction of duty). The Admiral of France at the time was Roland-Michel Barrin, Marquis de La Galissonnière. He was an unlikely hero of dance since, according to the naval historian Ernest Jenkins, he was 'a hump-backed little man, of poor health', who had spent 46 years at sea and whose main interest in life was compiling maritime maps.³⁰ But he did win the only major French naval victory in the Seven Years War and so was a great hero in France.³¹

It may be that Dupré originally intended to describe Feuillet's *Entrée de Matelot*, but that he realised that he would sell more copies of his book by pretending that the last dance in it was a brand new piece to celebrate the recent naval victory. The music for Feuillet's dance was the march in 6/8 from Act III of *Alcione*, and it was still very well known by 1757.³² The tune written at the top of the notated copy of Dupré's version, on the other hand, is a gavotte in duple time; and it is pretty dire.³³ We don't know who composed it— perhaps Dupré himself, to make the dance seem new; but if so, it looks as if his 'God-given talents' didn't extend to composing music either.

Conclusion

Where does all this leave us in what survives and how? We are lucky that most of the known notated dances of England and France from the eighteenth century have been inventoried in the dance catalogues published by Meredith Little & Carol Marsh in 1992 and by Francine Lancelot in 1995,³⁴ but there is still more material to be discovered, and there are still plenty of puzzles to be solved.

For instance, why did some dances change their titles for no particular reason?

²⁹ Dupré p.[iv]. He went on to add that, if any individual wanted copies of other dances, he would provide descriptions from notations, but only if the client sent a pre-paid letter.

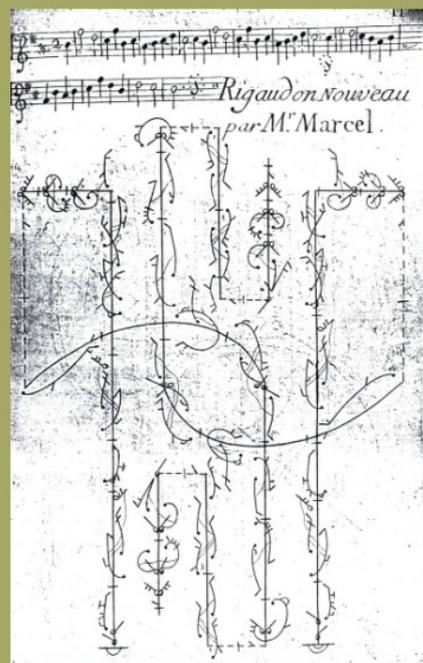
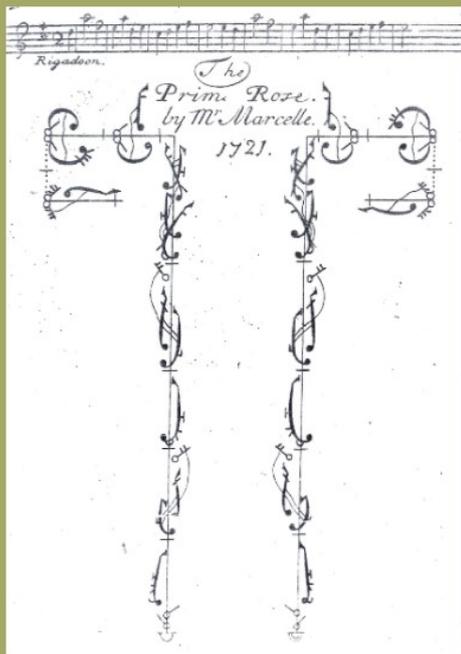
³⁰ EH Jenkins, *A History of the French Navy* (Macdonald & Janes, 1973) pp.121-129.

³¹ Even Dupré's celebration would have been short lived however, for by the end of 1756 La Galissonnière himself was dead, over 800 of his sailors had deserted, and Louis XV's government had axed most of the navy's funding James Pritchard, *Louis XV's Navy 1748-1762: a study of organisation and administration* (Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987) pp79-80.

³² Not least because of the extremely successful Paris revival of that opera the previous year. There had also been other dances set to it, a sure sign of the music's popularity: Feuillet's duet *La Matelotte* (LMC 5400) and country dance *La Matelote* (known in England from 1710 as *The Female Saylor*), both of 1706; and Balon's *The Matelott* as notated by F. Le Roussau in 1720 (LMC 5440).

³³ Its half-bar upbeat might make the *entrechats* rhythmically very precise but otherwise suggest a battle going on between the dancer and the music as the beaten jumps change the physical dynamics and rhythms of the steps (e.g. from *pas de sissonne* to *entrechat*): see my analysis of the two dances as demonstrated at the Oxford Dance Symposium 2002.

³⁴ Meredith E. Little & Carol G. Marsh, *La Danse Noble, an Inventory* (New York: Brodie Bros, 1992); Francine Lancelot, *La Belle Dance, catalogue raisonné* (Paris: Van Dieren, 1995).



François Marcel's duet as published by Walsh in 1721 and by Dezais in 1724: same steps, same music, different titles. (GB-Ob Don.d.46; GB-Lbl d.64.p) In 1757 Dupré described it as *Rigaudon*.

A prime example of this is François Marcel's *The Prim Rose*, 'a new dance for the year 1721', which was advertised by Walsh the previous December and survives in one copy now in the Bodleian Library. Yet it also exists as the *Rigaudon Nouveau* in Dezais' much more cluttered notation in his 22nd *Receuil de danses* for the year 1724.³⁵ The steps show very slight variants,³⁶ but it is clearly the same dance and music with different titles. Did Walsh get hold of the notation first and sell it on to Dezais? It would be great to know!

And what happened to the 'Known Unknowns', those dances which were advertised as having been published, yet no other traces of them now remain? One such was Tomlinson's *The Triumvirate*, danced on stage at Covent Garden in 1743 and its notation not only advertised for sale the following year but also dedicated to Tomlinson's former scholars Nathaniel Curzon and his brother.³⁷ But it is so tantalising not to know what this dance

³⁵ For Walsh's advertisement see the *Post Boy*, 17-20 December 1720 and Smith I. 598. For the spaciouly set out notation of *The Prim Rose*, 1721, see GB-Ob Don.d. 46, and for the much more cluttered notation of the *Rigaudon Nouveau* see GB-Lbl d.64.p.

³⁶ For example the French notation has *pas assemblé* and pause while the English notation has *pas assemblé* and step forward or sideways to release one foot as an aid to what follows. The English notation also contains one notational error (*pas de rigaudon* on the wrong foot).

³⁷ Tomlinson's *The Triumvirate* was performed at Covent Garden by Villeneuve and Mrs Delagarde for the actor Bridgewater's benefit on 9 Apr. 1743 (*London Daily Post & General Advertiser*). Notation advertised in the *Westminster Journal or New Weekly Miscellany* on 1 Dec. 1744 and again in the *London Evening Post* on 6 Feb. 1746, naming the dedicatees as Sir Nevile Hickman and the two sons of Sir Nathaniel Curzon (Nathaniel and Assheton); the Curzons had already featured as dedicatees of one plate in Tomlinson's *Art of Dancing* in 1735 (Book I plate 6), to which their mother had also given a subscription.

looked like, apart from the newspaper advertisement noting that it incorporated a *Menuet de la Cour* as one section within it, so it must have been a lengthy piece. Hopefully something might surface one day as someone's rough notes from the time.

I realise that one response to all that I've said this evening is 'so what?' Those who just want to enjoy doing a dance might not see much point in studying the ups and downs of its survival, and I sympathise with that. But those who perform will probably at some point have to write some programme notes about the context of the dances being shown, and those who give classes may well have to decide which version of a dance to teach. Also, common curiosity leads us all to wondering why there are different versions of one dance and what they are, and whether any more exist anywhere else. So let's keep looking; and let's keep dancing what we find!