
H-France Review Vol. 21 (October 2021), No. 192

Anne-Madeleine Goulet, ed. *Les foyers artistiques à la fin du règne de Louis XIV (1682–1715): musique et spectacles*. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2019. 446 pp. Notes, illustrations, and index. €65,00 (pb). ISBN: 9782503586199.

Review by John Romey, Purdue University Fort Wayne.

Les foyers artistiques à la fin du règne de Louis XIV (1682–1715): Musique et spectacles, a 2019 collected volume of essays edited by Anne-Madeleine Goulet, broadens our knowledge about the sites in which noble and haute-bourgeois Parisians witnessed, created, and shaped French musical and theatrical traditions. In the same vein as much of Goulet's previous scholarship, the volume's contributors examine myriad performative activities not merely as reconstructions of past works and events from fossilized archival documents but as vibrant, polyvalent, and flexible modes of sociability. The essays also extend efforts to decenter Louis XIV's court as the locus of divertissement and artistic experimentation during his late reign, a time in which his court was becoming increasingly devout under the influence of Madame de Maintenon, his morganatic wife. Throughout its pages, the book discusses spaces in which public and private intersected. As the authors examine these spaces, they invite the reader to explore not only the diverse social forms of entertainment performed and consumed by early modern Parisians but also to understand how the social networks of the nobles and bourgeois who gathered in these spaces were essential to career advancement for artists. Many of the artists who circulated in these spaces sought to create new forms, styles, and genres to distinguish their work as modern, nurtured relationships to obtain better positions both at court and in under-studied tangential patronage systems.

The essays contained in this volume began as papers delivered at a colloquium organized by Rémy Campos, Anne-Madeline Goulet, and Mathieu de Vinha at the Salle de Colonnes de la Grand Écurie du château de Versailles on 5-7 November 2015. The colloquium was a collaboration between the Centre d'étude supérieures de la Renaissance de Tours and the Centre de recherche du château de Versailles to celebrate the tri-centenary of Louis XIV's death (as part of an exposition entitled "Le Roi est mort"). The volume consists of twenty-three essays divided into four main sections: "La Cour, les cours," "Des musiciens en partage," "Un esprit nouveau," and "Foyers réels, foyers imaginaires." These sections are bookended by a forward by Goulet and Campos and a conclusion by Jean Boutier under the heading "Perspectives." Although the essays began as spoken papers delivered at a colloquium, the authors and editor deserve praise for assembling a volume that reads more like a collected volume organized on a common theme than as published conference proceedings. Chapters reference the work of other authors in the collection in a way that suggests the authors spent considerable time reshaping their papers after the intellectual exchange that occurred throughout the colloquium. As with most books produced by Brepols, this book is beautifully typeset on luxurious glossy paper and includes many

examples, tables, figures, and color plates. A more thorough index including concepts and terms and not only “proper names” would have facilitated quicker navigation of the volume.

As Goulet and Campos explain in their Introduction, they have adopted the concept of the *foyer*: “Pour explorer ce moment où la Cour, loin d’imposer une norme immuable, autorisait le développement d’autres lieux de pratiques musicales et spectaculaires et tolérait des tentatives d’établissement d’un goût nouveau, la notion de ‘foyer’ est apparue particulièrement opérante” (pp. 21). Christian Biet defines *foyer* perceptively in his essay: “Un foyer, au XVIIe siècle, est d’abord ce qui réunit des individus autour d’un objet qui chauffe, ou réchauffe, autour, comme on le disait à l’époque, d’un «chauffoir», un appareil et/ou un endroit où il y a de la chaleur—qui elle-même réunit et qui permet, en quelque sorte, que la chaleur humaine advienne” (pp. 212). At its core, then, a *foyer*, as either a physical space or a concept, focuses attention on social activities and the intimacy of small spaces. As a physical space the *foyer* represents a venue for agents in France’s artistic and socio-cultural landscape, and as a theoretical concept it addresses fractured centers of artistic production during the late reign of Louis XIV (as defined by the authors, roughly 1682—the installation of the French court at Versailles—until 1715, the year of the king’s death). The volume’s essays therefore examine the French court from the perspective of aristocratic residences, including salons and *ruelles*, dispersed throughout Paris, the Île-de-France, and Versailles.

Each of the four sections of the book organizes the essays thematically in ways that invite the reader to draw connections between specific *foyers* or *fêtes* and social activities that occurred within these spaces. In the first division of the book, “La Cour, les cours,” authors expose a plurality of aristocratic homes, events, and patronage networks as some nobles asserted independence from the court at Versailles. The second, “Des musiciens en partage,” develops a different approach to artistic agency. Instead of discussing specific noble households, authors focus on the circulation of musicians between various *foyers* and cultural domains (sacred to secular spaces, for example). In some cases, the most renowned performers were viewed as artists, while in other cases musicians were seen as servants, a focus that excludes the noble amateurs who likewise performed in these spaces. Catherine Massip concludes this section by examining the resulting professionalization of artists circulating between *foyers*. Her important contribution highlights the inequality among musicians and the variety of types of social musicking that occurred at *foyers*. In the third section, “Un esprit nouveau,” authors explore musical and theatrical genres that either developed at *foyers* or were popular in their confines. Thierry Favier demonstrates that spiritual divertissements were performed alongside their secular counterparts. Louis Delpech reminds us of neglected foreign sources that are essential to understanding cosmopolitan Paris as a European cultural center. He uses the Parisian séjour and *foyer* of Friedrich August II, Duke of Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg, as a case study to highlight the rich layers of artistic creation that disappear when we rely solely on French archives. Finally, “Foyers réels, foyers imaginaires,” the fourth and final section of the volume, is less thematically coherent but includes some of the volume’s most thought-provoking essays. In this section authors examine evidence from varied sources such as the *Mercure galant*, Le Cerf de La Viéville’s *Comparaison de la musique italienne et de la musique française*, and the exiled Stuart assemblage of Italian music as evidence of real and imagined *foyers*. Rebekah Ahrendt concludes the section by presenting evidence of activity at *foyers* preserved in a recently discovered trove of undelivered postal letters. Her chapter and Louis Delpech’s essay in the previous section suggest rich possibilities for future transnational investigations that would reveal a more textured and less fractured vision of the circulation of artists throughout Europe. Performers, as highlighted in the work of Ahrendt and

Delpech, often performed at salons or other types of *foyers* in addition to touring European courts. Both of these scholars have already published important and stimulating work in this direction.[1]

While this volume is a crucial and necessary step in investigating neglected spaces in which early modern Parisians performed and consumed music and spectacle during Louis XIV's reign, it is by no means global in scope or inclusive in socioeconomic focus. There is no examination, for example, of similar *foyers* that existed in the French colonies. The essays center on aristocratic homes and the nobles, haute-bourgeois, and artists who gathered in these spaces of privileged sociability. Servants were omnipresent in *foyers*, and we know that they imitated and parodied the manners, expressions, traditions, and games of their masters. As women and men who moved seamlessly between *foyers*, cabarets, theaters, salons, and streets, they also functioned as essential connective tissue between social ranks, infusing a vibrant urban popular culture with a constant stream of new material as they both mimicked and mocked elite cultural products. Servants and other members of the lower ranks therefore shaped the reception and dispersion of musical, theatrical, and spectacular traditions from elite social spheres. The lives of servants can be a challenge to suss out in the archives, and these women and men are largely invisible in this volume, with the exception of essays about the musicians who were viewed as servants in noble households, a discussion of the agency of the *parterre* by Christian Biet, and oblique references to the "chansons du Pont-Neuf" by Laura Naudeix. Likewise, performers of various types of popular theater, who at times moved seamlessly from Fairgrounds to courts to *foyers* and who influenced the development of the *théâtre de société*, are discussed by Guy Spielmann, but could have been a fruitful avenue for more in-depth exploration throughout the volume.

Despite the limitations in the volume's scope, Goulet has assembled and edited an interdisciplinary collection of essays that widens our knowledge of artistic experimentation during the late reign of Louis XIV. During this time nobles sought to shape artistic production and exert their influence while artists worked to carve out a niche that would assure them noble patronage in a changing and uncertain political landscape. The kind of interdisciplinary scholarship and collaboration represented by this volume offers a vital pathway to deepening our understanding of early modern French music, spectacle, and political life. Rediscovering the various mechanisms through which the nobility and haute-bourgeoisie used creative endeavors as personal expression, as ornaments in their social lives, as diversion, and to project their power and influence, remains a mode of inquiry that can help us better understand not only this cultural and political milieu but also force us to think critically about our own.

LIST OF ESSAYS

Rémy Campos et Anne-Madeleine Goulet, "*De la pertinence de la notion de foyer pour l'étude de la musique et des formes spectaculaires à Paris et à Versailles (1682-1715)*"

La Cour, les cours

David Hennebelle, "La grande dépense et le fracas': Recherches sur l'économie matérielle des patronages artistiques de l'aristocratie au tournant des XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles"

Don Fader, "Monsieur and Philippe II d'Orléans: A Cultural Influence Beyond their Residences"

Tarek Berrada, “La musique dans les appartements: Mlle de Guise, le roi et les princes de Condé”

Thomas Vernet, “Musique et théâtre dans la « maison de ville » de Marie-Anne de Bourbon Conti à Versailles”

Catherine Cessac, “Les Nuits de Sceaux: derniers feux du Grand Siècle?”

Laurent Lemarchand, “Les arts entre Paris et Versailles: le Palais-Royal de Philippe II d’Orléans ou l’absolutisme rénové”

Des musiciens en partage

Jean Duron, “Composer pour les nouveaux foyers: la ‘fureur’ des musiciens d’église au crépuscule du Grand Siècle”

Marie Demeilliez, “Les collègues, des foyers pour la musique et la danse de théâtre”

Thomas Leconte, “De la cour à la ville: les musiciens du roi face à l’émergence de nouveaux foyers culturels”

Catherine Massip, “Amateurs, professionnels: foyers et professionnalisation progressive des artistes (1680-1715)”

Un esprit nouveau

Christian Biet, “Foyers, chauffoirs, chaleur et hétérogénéité des publics au théâtre: la séance comme contre-pouvoir?”

Thierry Favier, “Foyers et dynamique des genres musicaux à la fin du règne de Louis XIV”

Nathalie Berton, “Le Mercure galant, un révélateur et un passeur de répertoire: l’exemple du petit opéra”

Guy Spielmann, “Le ‘théâtre de société’, foyer de création (?)”

Louis Delpech, “Abends zu einer Concert de Musique eingeladen’: aspects musicaux du séjour parisien de Friedrich August II de Saxe (1714-1715)”

Foyers réels, foyers imaginaires

Mathieu da Vinha, “Fêtes privées entre Versailles et Paris: éléments pour une typologie”

Anne Piéjus, “Une galanterie très politique: l’image des foyers artistiques dans le *Mercure galant*”

Laura Naudeix, “Foyers et territoire: l’espace de la musique dans la Comparaison de la musique italienne et de la musique française de *Le Cerf de la Viéville*”

Barbara Nestola, “L’art d’assembler, le choix de partager: la collection de musique italienne des Stuart en France (1689-1718)”

Tatiana Senkevitch, “The Making of Taste: Rembrandt and French Painting in the End of the Reign of Louis XIV”

Rebekah Ahrendt, “L’activité des foyers musicaux et théâtraux en Europe vers 1700: une enquête en coulisses”

Perspectives

Jean Boutier, “Pour continuer l’enquête”

NOTE

[1] See, for example, Rebekah Ahrendt, “*Armide*, the Huguenots, and The Hague,” *The Opera Quarterly* 28, no. 3-4 (2012): 131–158; Rebekah Ahrendt, Mark Ferraguto, and Damien Mahiet, eds. *Music and Diplomacy from the Early Modern Era to Present* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Louis Delpech, *Ouvertures à la française: migrations musicales dans l'espace germanique 1660-1730* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020).

John Romey
Purdue University Fort Wayne.
jromey@pfw.edu

Copyright © 2021 by the Society for French Historical Studies, all rights reserved. The Society for French Historical Studies permits the electronic distribution of individual reviews for nonprofit educational purposes, provided that full and accurate credit is given to the author, the date of publication, and the location of the review on the H-France website. The Society for French Historical Studies reserves the right to withdraw the license for redistribution/republication of individual reviews at any time and for any specific case. Neither bulk redistribution/republication in electronic form of more than five percent of the contents of H-France Review nor re-publication of any amount in print form will be permitted without permission. For any other proposed uses, contact the Editor-in-Chief of H-France. The views posted on H-France Review are not necessarily the views of the Society for French Historical Studies.

ISSN 1553-9172