



Guest Lecture

Prof. Dr. Hanna Walsdorf (Musicology University of Basel)

Terpsichore crossing the Channel (or not): From Molière to Ravenscroft and from Weaver to Noverre

Guest lecture Kollegienhaus, Hörsaal 118
October 12th 2023 from 10.00-12.00 am

Abstract

In late 17th- and early 18th-century London, English versions of the comédie-ballets by Molière and Lully were received with great applause. Yet translators had necessarily converted the rhythm, rhyme, and song of the French plays, which is why most of Lully's tunes seem to have been lost in translation, and replaced by newly composed songs. Discussing Edward Ravenscroft's *The Citizen Turn'd Gentleman* (1671/72), as well as 18th-century revivals of *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* and its "Turkish Ceremony" in London, the first part of this lecture examines source evidence suggesting that in this case some of Lully's vocal and instrumental movements may well have survived crossing the Channel – and it also reveals that Ravenscroft must have been able to draw on eyewitness accounts of Lully as an on-stage performer in both *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac* (1669) and *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* (1670).

The second part of the lecture is dedicated to another example of French-English exchange, namely to Jean-Georges Noverre's *Lettres sur la danse, et sur les Ballets*, written in London in 1756 and published in Stuttgart and Lyon in 1760. These Letters, published in English as *The Works of Monsieur Noverre translated from the French* in 1782, are a particularly rich source for research into eighteenth-century ballet en action (pantomime ballet). The treatise marks a new era of theatrical dance, influenced by the innovations developed by John Weaver (gestures and drama), Marie Sallé ('naturalness' in dance), David Garrick (acting and mime), and Jean-Philippe Rameau (tone painting).

If you would like to obtain more information on this guest lecture or attend the talk, please contact [Prof. Dr. Ina Habermann](#).