Music for French Kings
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An internet search for "musette" will generally yield images of bicycle bags and accordions. Until the 1960s the existence of the bellows-blown French bagpipes of this name had been entirely forgotten. As a result, there are very few recordings of the wealth of repertoire that exists for musette. Some operas with musette were recorded in the 1990s, and since then there have been a few recordings that include chamber works for the instrument. However, it was very easy to select for this disc works hitherto unrecorded.

As with all bagpipes, the musette's origins are pastoral. A bellows-blown instrument, its closest relatives are the Northumbrian pipes and Uilleann pipes. Its repertoire, however, belongs firmly to the French Baroque canon, its adoption by composers such as Jean-Baptiste Lully, Jean-Philippe Rameau, Jean and Jacques Hotteterre, and Michel Corrette cementing its place in French opera, orchestral and chamber music, with works for both amateur and virtuoso players. And it was the musette's identity as a Baroque instrument (as opposed to 'just' another folk bagpipes) that led first to a failed attempt at revival by Eugène de Bricqueville in 1894, followed by a more successful revival from the 1970s, led initially by flautists Shelley Gruskin and Jean-Christophe Maillard, with contributions from Jean-Claude Compagnon and Sylvette Robson, Remi Dubois and Jean-Pierre van Hees. (Robin, p.19). Both attempts occurred as the result of wider interest in historical performance, and in this sense the musette is a latecomer to the Early Music revival, occurring several decades later than the re-emergence of instruments such as the recorder.

As a recorder player, baroque violinist and musicologist, it is not surprising that my approach to the musette and the interpretation of its repertoire is historically informed. This approach makes total sense particularly when one considers the symbiotic relationship between the meteoric popularisation of the instrument and the composition of its repertoire by many composers across various genres. During its short life, the musette's circumstances, its adoption by royalty, aristocracy and then the bourgeois, prompted composers to write for it and heavily influenced what they composed. Its fast-track adoption was of course followed by an abrupt fall into obscurity, where it languished until relatively recently. And so there is still much to uncover and understand about the musette and its repertoire.

A drawing of a mouth-blown version of the musette in Claude Paradin's 1551 publication *Devises heroïques* – a printed collection of devices or crests used by the aristocracy – provides an early indication of the historical adoption of bagpipes by the aristocracy. The musette participated in *ballets de cour* during the eras of Henri III, Henri IV and Louis XIII. The instrument features in Mersenne's *Harmonie Universelle* (1636-7) and musettes are first mentioned in *L'Etat de la France* (a Court circular) in 1661, when it is listed among the instruments of *l'Ecurie*, this being the ensemble used not only for open-air entertainments, associated with the King's stable, but also for chapel and chamber music. (Albert Cohen, One Hundred Years of Music at the French Court, 773). All of these early mentions are probably references to the mouth-blown musettes de Poitiou - like those illustrated by Paradin - whose presence at court is known to have predated the bellows-blown musette.

Lully wrote for musette in 1664, in his multi-media fête, *Les Plaisirs de L'Ile Enchantée* (the pleasures of the enchanted Isle) and the instrument is featured is a 1672 portrait of Louis XIV by Jean Garnier. (Kopp, p.34) The first known treatise on musette, by Borjon de Scellery, was

published in the same year, and the publication dates of known repertoire for the instrument support the notion that the musette's lifespan as a high art musical instrument was relatively short, from about 1670-1780. Its position as a high art instrument was cemented almost solely thanks to its patronage by Louis XIV, who used it as part of his 'peasant' *soirées* where he would dress in 'peasant' costume (still made from silk, but a little shorter in the hem), enjoy 'rustic' music (composed by his finest court composers) and even on occasion be joined by sheep to complete the faux-rustic mis-en-scene. (Kopp, p. 247, 2011; Leppert, *Arcadia at Versailles* for iconography). It was thanks to Louis XIV's patronage that the musette began to feature in various genres of music, from ballets and operas to duets for two musettes, or musette in combination with another melodic instrument. At the same time, a family of court-based wind players and makers - the Hotteterres - turned their attention towards it. By the time of de Scellery's treatise, the instrument had been assimilated into Lully's orchestra and the author noted that 'Pastoral and Rustic performances cannot do without it, and we see them almost every year in the King's Ballet. It is at this sort of assembly that the little pipe of the Sieur Hotteterre triumphs.' (*Les representations pastorales & champetres ne s'en sçauroient passer, & nous en voyons Presque tous les ans dans le balets du Roy. C'est dans ces soites de rencontres où le petit Chalumeau du Sieur Hotteterre triomphe…*de Scellery, 33).

De Scellery was referring here to one or more of three members of the Hotteterre family, whom he commends for their abilities in playing, making, and composing for musette. The three were Jean (c.1605-?1690/92), and his sons Jean *fils l'aîne* (d.1668) and Martin *le cadet* (c.1640-1712). And the 'little pipe' was the *petit chalumeau* (small chanter), the invention of which is largely attributed to Martin Hotteterre. Other players from this period mentioned by de Scellery include François Pignon Descouteaux (*fl.* 1670s), Jean Danican (known as Philidor, c.1610-79), Jean Brunet, Jean Destouches *fils* and an otherwise forgotten player by the name of Doucet. Away from the court were players in Bourg en Bresse (Perrin) and Turin (Du Buisson), as well as Paris-based virtuoso François Langlois, whose portrait painted in the 1630s by Anthony van Dyck shows him playing the bellows-blown musette. Other players in Paris included Thomas le Vacher, Nicolas de Marine and Gilbert Martin. (Kopp, p. 32, 2005)

Unless their precise title is given, however, it can be hard to know whether players from this period played the mouth-blown *musette de Poitiou* or the bellows-blown instrument. From 1649 musette players at court tend to be referred to either as one of the *Hautbois et Musettes de Poitiou* (a divison of the royal *Ecurie*) or as *Muzette ordinaire* of his Majesty's chamber. (Kopp, p. 31, 2005). Such a division suggests that those in the latter category almost certainly played the bellows-blown musette, but players' titles are not always recorded.

Given Louis XIV's affection for the instrument, composers wrote for musette in the hope of securing Royal favour, and interest in the instrument soon spread through the aristocracy, who were always keen to emulate Royal circles. From the 1720s, composers with an eye for commerce, such as Joseph Bodin de Boismortier, saw the opportunity for sales of simple works for amateur musette players. As a result, there was a huge amount and variety of music composed for the instrument over a relatively short period of time, the amount published outstripping that of all other instruments except the violin and the transverse flute. (Maillard, 59) At the same time, famous virtuosi such as Nicolas Chédeville (1705-1782), Colin Charpentier (*fl.* 1726-1734) and Philibert Delavigne (c.1700-1750) made a fortune performing at the *Concert Spirituel* and teaching the many students chosen from amongst court circles. (Maillard, 59) Other musette players in this later period included the brother of Nicolas Chédeville, Esprit-Philippe (1696-1762), René Pignon Descoteaux (or des Côteaux, *fl.*1690s-1730s, son of François Pignon Descoteaux), Pierre-Alexandre Pièche (1693–1728),

Michel-Gabriel Besson (1689-1765), Gabriel-Louis Besson (1733-1785) and André Danican Philidor (known as l'aîné; le père after 1709, c.1652-1730).

De Scellery's treatise was followed in 1738 by Jacques-Martin Hotteterre's *Méthode pour la Musette*, and Jean-Philippe Rameau's inclusion of the instrument in his operas from *Hippolyte et Aricie* (1733) to *Les Paladins* (1760) helped the musette maintain its place in France's musical culture. The musette's decline began as early as the 1750s, against the backdrop of changing society. As early as 1752, the first publication of *l'Encyclopédie méthodique des Arts et Métiers mécaniques* claimed that the musette was falling into disuse. (Compagnon et Robson, 92). Perhaps the fall in the number of compositions dedicated to it was unsurprising given that so many had been composed over a relatively short period of time, saturating the market. Adding to this, the final development of the instrument occurred in 1768, when an innovation (claimed by the maker Luzzi) made it possible to eradicate the continuous sound from the main *chalumeau* (chanter), thus making it possible to play without drones. (Robin, 19) This had the effect of rather destroying the unique sonority of the instrument, therefore perhaps contributing to the decline in interest towards it. But it was the musette's indelible links to royalty and aristocracy that resulted in its total erasure from cultural memory after the French Revolution.

Musettes confiscated from their owners during the Revolution were deposited in the Paris Conservatoire, where they lay forgotten, their repertoire abandoned. However, it is interesting to note that the tradition of labelling as 'Musette' movements that include imitations of drones continued. Seen in works by Bach (BWV Anh. 126), Handel (overture to Alcina) and Couperin (Musette de Choisi), compositional 'Musettes' continued to appear after the instruments demise in works by composers as diverse as Brahms (Op.24), Grieg (Holberg Suite, piano version), Schoenberg (Op. 25) and Bartok (Out of Doors suite). These echoes were all that was left of the musette until its 20th-century revival.

Organology

As with other double reeds instruments, there were several different sizes of musette. The most common model was the musette du 3 (its identification notes in piping terms being G/C), and there also existed the musette d'Amour, or musette du 5 (E/A). The musette du 2 was a piccolo musette (A/D), and the musette du 4 (F/Bb) was also called the musette du ton grave. Then there was the musette *à ravalement* 'du 3', which extended by three notes the range of the musette du 3. And the musette *à ravalement* du 5, which extended the range down to a low A. There are no existing examples of the musette du 1, probably because its small size and odd tuning makes it unlikely that it was ever made. But it existed theoretically. Instruments were made in various pitches, from c.A=392 to c.A=400 or 410. Modern copies tend to be made to play at A=392 or A=415 in order to fit with the standardized modern pitch of other historical instruments. (Bart van Troyen, 2022)

Beginning as a single chanter (or pipe) with holes, the musette had gained a second chanter (or *petit chalumeau*) by the time of de Scellery's *Traité*. This is also how it appears in Hotteterre's *Methode*. Inserted into the top of each *chalumeau* is a double reed, in the manner of the baroque oboe. The *grand chalumeau* has a mixture of holes at the front, with keys at the right-hand side and down the back, thus achieving almost full chromaticism. The *petit chalumeau* in its early form was cylindrical at the top, like the *grand chalumeau*, with a pear-shaped bottom. Over time, it was flattened at the front and back but retained curved edges. This allowed the 6 keys (3 at the front and 3 at the back) to be attached more securely. The internal bore is also cylindrical but closed just before the last hole. This means that, unlike the *grand chalumeau*,

the *petit chalumeau* is silent when not in use. When the *petit chalumeau* is deployed, it sounds against the constant note (for example a G in the musette du 3) of the *grand chalumeau*. While the addition of the *petit chalumeau* extended the range of the musette by a 4th, it also removed the need for some of the keys that had been added to single-chanter examples by makers such as Le Vacher. (Maillard, 62) There were various experiments with extra keys and double bores, but this model of *petit chalumeau* became the most common.

The dates and origins of the various developments seen in surviving instruments is often undocumented and hard to trace. But the invention of the *petit chalumeau* was almost certainly the work of Martin Hotteterre, as attested in 1738 by his son Jacques-Martin Hotteterre. Martin and his father, Jean *père* did however share a shop in the Enclos du Palais sur la petite porte, and so may have collaborated over the years on various developments concerning the mechanism of the instrument. (Kopp, p. 33, 2005)

The Hotteterres were not the only innovators during this time, and de Scellery praises several provincial makers, particularly Lissieu, one of whose instruments featured in Garnier's portrait of Louis XIV (Kopp, p.34, 2005) and another of which can be seen today in the Morpeth Chantry Bagpipe Museum (UK). De Scellery's identification of several makers with links to Lyons suggests that the city might have been something of a centre for makers. Later makers included Ésprit-Philippe Chédeville and his brother Nicolas.

Like the *chalumeaux*, the shuttle drones were also subjected to various experiments during the early years. The shuttle is a cylinder containing a system of channels that wind their way up and down the shuttle (or cylinder). Each drone has its own double reed across which the air blows, and a sliding layette that opens and shuts the hole leading to the channel, thus lowering or raising the pitch of the drone, or silencing it altogether. Many examples have two holes cut into a single groove. This enables the note of the drone to be altered by a tone. Amongst existing historical models, there are many variations in the number of drones in a shuttle, but the most complex examples, such as the those made by Lissieu, can have 6 drones. Others have only three.

In contrast to instruments such as recorder and flutes, but in common with other types of bagpipe, the musette is played using a 'closed' fingering system, where only one finger hole at a time is opened. As Borjon points out, this is in fact easier for the novice to learn as it avoids complicated cross-fingerings. It also allows the player to articulate the notes, returning between each note to the 'constant' note that sounds with all holes closed. This 'constant' note also sounds when the *petit chalumeau* is played. (Borjon, 11 and 23) On a musette du 3, the constant note is G, which can sound quite distinctive against the Ab of the *petit chalumeau*!

The only occasion on which – according to Borjon – the player is allowed to lift more than one finger at a time is when playing a trill, when it is sometimes necessary to use a combination of fingers to achieve a particular interval for the trill. The musette is capable baroque embellishments and techniques too. Finger vibrato can be achieved as it can on a Recorder, for example. And although the musette is similarly limited to Recorder in terms of its ability to play dynamics, players can achieve a *piano* effect by stopping the end of the *grand chalumeau* on their knee.

Repertoire

The number of composers who wrote works for the musette, or included them on the title pages of works, is vast. The instrument features in over 30 theatrical works (operas, fêtes, ballets

etc.), and nearly 60 composers wrote at least one work for musette. Michel Corrette (1707-1795) and Jacques-Christophe Naudot (1690-1762) both composed a significant number of works for the instrument, and Corrette's in particular were obviously intended for the amateur market as they make little use of the petit chalumeau (small chanter) and are therefore quite simple to play. But Corrette's and Naudot's output is dwarfed by that of brothers Ésprit-Philippe and Nicolas Chédeville.

Nicolas Chédeville's suite (published between 1739 and 1750), *Les Deffis; ou l'étude d'amusement* is dedicated to 'Illustrious Virtuosi'. Each movement has a descriptive title, and it appears that Chédeville had hoped to dedicate each movement to a particular patron (or perhaps a future patron), for each movement in the suite was published 'A M[onsieu]r'. However, not all of
them have names, suggesting that he failed to find suitable candidates for all 30 movements in the suite. Although the overall form of *Les Deffis* is in the old French style of a *Suite*, this is not a dance suite, although it does include some dances such as *Menuets.* Instead, the movements form a set of miniature tableaux, each one portraying a character, scene or emotion. The titles themselves often set the scene then painted by the music. So we have a bright, cheery 'L'Italiene, followed by an upright, brisk 'Les Plaisirs Militaire'). Marked *gracieusement*, the gracefulness indicated by the title 'Les Tendres Fleurettes A M[onsieu]r Le Marquis de Cheffontaines' is mirrored in the music, which utilises the full range of the musette. Further rhetorical devices are used in the next movement, where Chédeville uses angular intervals to portray the Orientalism of 'Le Chinois, 2e Menuet A Monsieu]r'. In contrast, 'Les Tourbillons' is a straightforward whirlwind of notes depicting windmills.

Like his brother's, Ésprit-Philippe Chédeville's compositions cover various forms, from *Simphonies* to *Duos Galant*, and include traditional French elements such as dances as well as reflecting the trend for Italian forms and styles as these spread into France during the 18th century. Published by 1742, his Op. 6 *Sonatilles Galantes* are his most Italianate compositions, consisting of four movements that follow the usual pattern (slow-fast-slow-fast) associated with Italian sonatas. All four movements make frequent use of the *petit chalumeau*, suggesting that they were intended for serious and competent players.

Published posthumously in 1722, Jean Hotteterre's *Pièces pour la Muzette* represent an early style of writing for the instrument. Throughout the collection, dance forms such as *Menuet*, *Rigaudon* and *Passepied* are interwoven with *Entrée* (entrance music for processions in ballets) and movements with titles suggestive of their use, for example 'Le Coucher' (bedtime). Given Hotteterre's connection with the court at Versailles, it is likely that the *Pièces pour la Muzette* were composed for Louis XIV. And although no evidence exists of their performance at court, the fact that the musette was one of the *Instruments du Chambre* makes it likely that these movements were composed to be played in the intimate setting of the King's bedchamber, perhaps to accompany and reflect his daily life. Although their date of composition is unknown, the simplicity of these movements, and the prevalence of dance forms and rustic titles such as 'Marche des Bergers' and 'Branle' suggests that the collection was probably assembled during the late 17th century. Their sparing use of the *petit chalumeau* supports this.

Branles (rustic peasant dances) also feature in the second part of de Scellery's *Traité de la Musette*, where he provides examples of the sort of repertoire played by musettes in the early 1670s. *Branles* feature alongside *Airs* (songs), for which de Scellery provides the text, thus suggesting that musette players at times accompanied themselves on the instrument while

singing. The *Branles* included by de Scellery appear as theme and variations. Some – such as the 'Branle de Normandie' – have a single variation, labelled 'autre branle' (other branle). Others are unlabelled but have a clear connection to each other. Such is the case with the 'Branle de Normandie', which is followed on the same page by a set of two further variations, unnamed but clearly connected.

Amongst extant musette repertoire there exist a number of works by anonymous composers. The location of surviving manuscripts can sometimes give clues as to the work's origins, but in the case of *Les Amusements de Chambre* very little is known of its provenance. Published c.1730, its title page describes the contents as 'Brunettes pour les Musettes et Vielles/Distribué en Six Suitte/Trois à Duo, Et Trois à Solo/avec un Pot poury a la fin.' (Songs for musettes and hurdy-gurdys/distributed in six Suites/three duos, and three solos/with a pot-pourri at the end). The range of the fourth *Suite* suggests it was intended for musette, the other *Suites* containing notes playable on Vielle (Hurdy Gurdy) but not on musette. Also, the title of the collection makes the intended purpose of the contents plain. Each of the movements is relatively short, and although the titles (Rondeau, Air Gay, Menuet, Muzette, Tembourin etc.) suggest an earlier date of composition than 1733, the density of the texture and the virtuosic nature of some movements (for example the Tembourin) suggests that these movements were composed at a point in the instrument's history when its capabilities – and that of its players – were well-known. The delightful 'Pot Poury' [sic.] supports this theory, presenting an amazing, innovative, melting pot of French and Italian style, with no regard for traditional form or structure, and changes of time signature and tempo occurring willy-nilly.

Colin Charpentier's *Amusemens* [sic], published in the 1740s, present another example of experimentation, this time with instrumentation. Little is known of Colin Charpentier beyond the fact that he was a virtuoso musette player, to whom Jean-Jacques-Baptiste Anet (1676-1755) dedicated several suites (published 1724-1734) for the instrument. The title page of *Amusemens* [sic] describes the compositions as simple and undemanding, and the full title '*Amusemens des Dames et les Délices de Charpentier* (Ladies' amusements and the delights of Charpentier), suggests that Charpentier's target audience might have been his female students. There are twelve 'Amusements' in the set, and despite being subtitled *Premier Livre Amusemens* (first book of amusements), no further publications by Charpentier are known. In line with most publications of the time, the title page specifies that these works can be played on several other instruments (in this case the hurdy-gurdy, flute, oboe or violin). This was a common marketing ploy, aimed at increasing the number of potential buyers for the published volume. What is odd, however, is that normally several bass instruments would be also suggested for the same reason. But here the title page mentions only bassoon. This might be a simple omission. There is however one further clue, and that is the dedication at the foot of the title page: *Les fruits du ménage…par un particular T.D* (the fruits of the household…for a particular T.D). Perhaps Charpentier's *Amusemens* were not dedicated to 'all' ladies after all, but to one particular female bassoonist?

A certain amount of obscurity surrounds Domenico Scarlatti's Op. 4 collection of six sonatas. The title page advertises the collection as *Sonates pour le Clavecin* (keyboard sonatas), but two additions to the score challenge this notion. The bass line is figured – a feature unnecessary in keyboard sonatas whose very nature precludes the use of accompaniment. And further light is shed by the note at the beginning of Sonata II that explains how with some transposition the sonata can be played on a musette du 5, indicating that these are in fact sonatas for musette (and perhaps also other melody instruments) and continuo. That the

intended instrument was primarily musette is clear from the limited range of the sonatas. In addition, as far as is known, Domenico Scarlatti never published an Op. 4, nor composed for the musette. Instead, the sonatas were most probably composed by Nicolas Chédeville. The date of their publication is unknown, but they could post-date another set of sonatas by Chédeville published in 1737 as Antonio Vivaldi's Op. 13, 'Il Pastor Fido'. As is the case with the 'Scarlatti', Vivaldi never published an Op. 13 and so Chédeville's subterfuge in attaching his music to the name of a better-known composer was unknown until his cousin Marchand signed an affidavit in 1749 disclosing his own part in the plot to publish 'Il Pastor Fido', exposing Chédeville at the same time. This affidavit was only discovered in 1990 by Philippe Lescat, and the extent of Chédeville's practice in this manner is still unresearched. What is clear, however, is his ability to compose in the style of, Italian composers like Scarlatti and Vivaldi, and his fondness for doing so. In 'Il Pastor Fido', Chédeville wove specific themes by Vivaldi and other composers into the fabric of his own original composition. Perhaps the same is true of the 'Scarlatti' sonatas, though this has yet to be researched. What is clear from these sonatas is that Chédeville's excellent grounding in counterpoint, combined with a fertile creative imagination enabled him to 'reimagine' the sound of the musette in a highly convincing Italian style.

The instruments

Amanda Babington plays on a musette du 3, made by Bart van Troyen in FSC African Blackwood (Dalbergia melanoxylon from Tanzania), with plum mounts and 12 argentium silver keys. The chanters are a copy of an unsigned Chédeville in the maker's possession. The drone is a 6 reed, 7 layettes model, with bass, taille, haute contre, dessus, tierce and petit ut drones. The drone reeds are made from spruce, the chanter reeds from cane.

Claire Babington plays on a modern copy of a 1730 Stradivarius model, with inlaid fingerboard, by the Czech luthier Karl Stamitz.

David Smith plays on a Michael Johnson French double manual harpsichord, a copy made in 2000 of a Goerman's model modified by Taskin, c.1760, the original of which is in the Russell Collection in Edinburgh. Thanks go to the Royal Northern College of Music Research Department for their generous loan of the harpsichord.

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