THE MUSIC OF THE EYES AND THEATRICAL OPTICS
Pamphlets excerpted from an English Masterpiece on Common Sense
Pietro Di Gottardo Gonzaga
St. Pétersbourg, 1807

First English Translation with Prefatory and Notes
Translated and Curated by
Leman Berdeli
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AND
THEATRICAL OPTICS

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by

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St. Petersbourg, 1807

ORIGINAL TITLE

« La musique des yeux et l'optique théâtrâl: opuscules tirés d'un plus grand ouvrage anglais sur le sens commun »

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FIRST ENGLISH TRANSLATION
WITH PREFATORY AND NOTES

by

LEMAN BERDELI
Cover Image

Pietro di Gottardo Gonzaga
“Tomb Designed in the Gothic Style”
late 18th century
pen and brush, Indian Ink, watercolour and ink on paper
Dimensions: 27.2x29.6 cm
Entered the Hermitage in 1923; formerly in the
A.L. Stieglitz collection
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Prefatory Statement to the Readers

Pietro Gonzaga (Longarone, 1751 – St. Petersburg, 1831) has been one of the most delightfully eccentric figures of fine and performing arts history. How I define Pietro—a genuine artist with a refined taste in art—in addition to being known as “the inventor of the scenes” at Teatro La Scala, and “the chief painter with authority over other painters” in St. Petersburg, has also been an art writer whose little-known texts carry the attribute of a sort of manual about fine arts and their effects in general. I had the opportunity to reach the original French version of those typescripts at the Russian State Library during my doctoral research on the interrelation between the artistry of Pietro Gonzaga with the Russian Avant-Garde. So far the original French version of the booklet\(^1\) has been translated alongside the other writings of Gonzaga from French into Italian under the curatorship of Maria Ida Briggi & Cini Foundation and published in 2006 by Leo S. Olschki publishing house. Unlike a bound book there is a monograph thesis on Gonzaga's life and works dating back to 1974 carried out by Flora J. Syrkina including the

\(^1\) La musique des yeux et l'optique théâtrale: opuscules tirés d'un plus grand ouvrage Anglais sur le sens commun, 1807
Russian translation of the writings mentioned above under the curatorship of the academics Aleksandr Movshenson and F.J.Syrkina. The translation into Russian is dating back to the pre-war period around 1938. It is claimed that V.Y. Stepanov, a scholar of the pre and post-war periods, had devoted his entire life to study the art of Gonzaga. Thus, in one of his works, he published a large number of archival materials related to artist’s activities in Russia. Unfortunately, the Nazi invasion destroyed the research of Stepanov and some artworks of Gonzaga. Thanks to the post-war exertions carried out, a few of main studies have reached nowadays.

The absence of an English translation of Gonzaga's writings, both as a whole and separately, as well as the difficulty in obtaining it outside of libraries, inspired me to undertake it with the aim of making it more accessible to the public. If I were to talk briefly about the outline, the first original French version of the text\(^2\) appears as an anonymous author's work. In that first version signed by Sir Thomas Wtth whom nothing is known about, Gonzaga doesn’t appear. His name hadn’t been appearing in the first booklet for seven years until it appeared as translator in the 1807 version. Researchers concur that this was actually a trick which Gonzaga has been hiding

\(^2\) *La musique des yeux et l'optique théatrale: opuscules tirés d'un plus grand ouvrage anglais de Sir Thomas Wtth, 1800*
behind because he probably never had the courage to introduce himself as the author. It is claimed that it has been conducted a lot of research in order to recover the text of Sir Thomas Witth or other possible authors with a similar name but any satisfactory solution to the riddle has not yet been given. Regarding historical data carried out during my research, I would like to offer my opinion that is “Thomas Witth” pseudonym may be reflecting the Aristotelian thought linked with Empiricism questioning how does our body and senses interact with our mind; a philosophy of mind enhanced in the British-Scottish intellectual circles of the 18th century. Starting from this idea «La musique des yeux» is bringing together art and science and presents itself as a notable example for Synesthesia in literary - artistic studies. Readers will encounter alongside the Newtonian «optics», and the «ocular harpsichord» of the scientist monk Louis Bertrand Castel how the translator-author got into the habit of calling the ocular harpsichord the ‘toilette’, so the musical modalities were associated with all ‘à la mode’ forms arguing that all drawable forms could be described as «visible music». Thus, there are similes used as «well-combed people are like physiognomies placed into music; musicians-physiognomists are like hairdressers and the ocular harpsichord is the toilette». The translator-author had precisely referred to that is necessary to put «well-dressed women into music». The upshot of this approach
is the possibility that everything we see could be a piece of music for the eyes. Let us remember the ‘clavier à lumières’ of Alexander Scriabin who has placed the Luce (light) into the score of Prometheus, in the same way, aforementioned à la mode forms were meant to be embellished by the ocular harpsichord. Piero Gonzaga’s father, son of Gottardo, was a decorator of private houses and public buildings. Probably this disposition for decorative arts has been paternally inherited from his apprenticeship with his father.

The second part of the pamphlet succeeding the Music of the Eyes - on Theatrical Optics- is the simulacrum of a sort where «the illusion in theatre takes the place of reality» right after, a bizarre prophecy as «artificial visions», and the statement of performing a holistic Opera artwork before Richard Wagner professed his conception of Gesamtkunstwerk appear before us. The translator-author’s expectation had foreseen the total work of art by seeking a powerful genius who without being in any way an artist by profession could ally talent with knowledge and bring together under one field the three powers that reign in the theater: «poetry, music, and pantomime». If there is, he stated, a man capable of such a feat, let him set up the most beautiful spectacle that the human spirit has given birth to; but if we miss this man, let's leave things as they are.
Operas set in the 18th and 19th centuries needed the «artificial visions» capable of making a special effect on the spectators. This forethought perspective regarding optical illusions may suggest the use of the scenography as a television screen. In a contemporary sense, the Italian scenographer composes the pleasure of sight and hearing within the harmony of all elements of performance design, and therefore he must have imagined a soundtrack in the absence of technology.

I feel enthusiasm to have presented the first English translation of this cheerful inventiveness. I wish readers may experience pleasure while reading.

LEMAN BERDELI
THE MUSIC OF THE EYES
Pietro di Gottardo Gonzaga
Sketch of the Painting for the Gonzaga Gallery in Pavlovsk
18th Century

3 Pen and brush with bistre, watercolour and pencil on paper 18.2x38.6cm. Entered the Hermitage in 1925; formerly in the Yusupov collection Inventory Number: OP-21796 © Hermitage Museum
Contents of the author himself

Avertissement du traducteur
Avant-propos de l'auteur
Introduction
La musique des yeux
Avertissement du traducteur
Sur l’optique théâtral

4 As I have mentioned in the statement; the titles in the form of translator and author are exactly the same as appearing in the original text: “La musique des yeux et l’optique théâtrale opuscules tirés d’un plus grand ouvrage Anglais sur le sens commun”. As a matter of fact, both are belonging to Gonzaga himself. All footnotes are my own.
(I) Notice from the Translator\textsuperscript{5}

This writing struck me for the singularity of the ideas it contains and convinced me to translate for having fun in the countryside and to provide some table conversation to my friends. If there is a risk in going against fashion and mainstream opinion, I’d bewasting my time dealing with this booklet, it seems that nowadays our spirit understands only through ears, while good taste consists of delicate hearing and sharp eyesight. The vanity of appearing with glasses on the nose is contrasted with the despair of presenting oneself with an acoustic \textit{cornetto}\textsuperscript{6} in the ear.\textsuperscript{7} Today acoustic pleasures are so credited and so in vogue that the fear of being considered as unkind beings leads people of high society to do everything possible to be musicians likewise to acquire knowledge and taste for music. Many people who attend concerts are bored and yawning but act as though they have been blown away by the most acclaimed songs. I think there is more hypocrisy when it comes to music in the world than virtue and honor.

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{5} Pietro di Gottardo Gonzaga
\textsuperscript{6} A trumpet-like wind instrument used in European music of the Baroque periods
\textsuperscript{7} Being uninterested in visual pleasures as much as the auditory ones.
Therefore, the beautiful, light, enthusiastic world will certainly be surprised with the fact that there is in our day a partisan declared for the pleasures of sight and who dares to compare them with the pleasures of hearing. Writers and talkers are not interested in the sense of sight; the wise men and economists regard the pleasures of sight as vanity that leads to vice or luxury; it may be that scholars find it ridiculous, after the attempts of the famous L.B. Castel\(^8\) we still dare to talk about visible music. Not everyone knows that the famous father has been a great mathematician who invented a kind of harpsichord in which instead of sounds a scale of gradient colours would have appeared at the third, octave, etc., according to the intervals of the sound system, in this way he thought that the music for the eyes could be made. The experiment failed and this wise man would have made himself ridiculous, if he hadn’t already had a stable reputation for his other erudite studies.\(^9\)

\(^8\) Louis Bertrand Castel (1688 –1757) French mathematician, scientist, mastermind Jesuit priest
\(^9\) *Traité de physique de la pesanteur universelle des corps* (1724); *Mathématique universelle abregée à l’usage et à la portée de tout le monde*, 1728; *L’optique des couleurs: fondée sur les simples observations & tournée sur-tout à la pratique de la peinture, de la teinture, & des autres arts coloristes*, 1740
Far from creating new music, only a few observations are presented in this booklet on the common practice of *artificial visions* and appearances, their musical characteristics, and sentimental ascendency, which is poorly known and no longer considered.

**Foreword by the Author**\(^{10}\)

Men who take off their sensitivity from the action of external objects don’t enter my field of investigation. These severe, frown beings who have altered their natural constitution of mental subtraction and abstraction by force, are of a sphere that is totally unknown to me and I don’t claim to elevate myself to their height. I involve myself to the kind, delicate human beings who love to rejoice in all their faculties, I hope that their amiable moderation would excuse my *bagatelles*\(^{11}\) and will save themselves from the jokes of our Aristarchi. Who knows! Perhaps wisdom consists more in conforming to our weakness, in forming relief from delusion itself and vanity, than in always pricking ourselves with austerity, deprivation, and reserve.

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\(^{10}\) Pseudonym Thomas Witth

\(^{11}\) A short piece of light character music for the piano.
Introduction

The word music used to mean more than it does now. It may be that the ancients meant by music the artificial order. It belongs to music that the order of the conversation is surprising, pleasant, and persuasive. By using the best voices, it was possible to attract the majority's attention when delivering rhetorical speeches with beautiful voices. From this discovery, we moved to study the most pleasant tones and accents, then the most convenient and the most expressive. Thus, was born the art of singing in ancient times whose appeal must have been very strong, for simple, light and delicate people. The sages who were listened more eagerly when they sang, after seeing its effect, thought that through singing they could lure and conquer the crowd with saying: “Listen my children! let me amuse you”. Instead, if it had been said: “I could teach you”, their offers and worries would have been ridiculous. This is how Amphion\textsuperscript{12} by pinching his lyre, sang to Thebans that the enemies will come and seize their properties and their wives if they don’t surround their villages with good walls immediately. Certainly nothing is more stimulating than this chord to move stones and make walls and it is indeed a piece of good music. Powerful is the lyre, it could well be a tool

\textsuperscript{12} son of Zeus and Antiope, and twin of Zethus
for conciliation and the stimulus that had stimulated the multitude, but without poetic enthusiasm, exaggeration and sensibly speaking, it has been only the eloquence of the words that made the crowd convinced. Even today such music would have the same effects in the same circumstances: *moi-même, je vis en Italie* (*) the whole people, men, and women animated by the sermons of the eloquent parish priest were running to work accompanied by the sound of bells with an ardor to demolish an old church and to build a new one from the debris brought. We would certainly not have dared to stop work while the bells were ringing, and it is still told to the travelers that this church was built by the sound of bells, without counting the force of the sermons for nothing.

The music of the ancients was probably composed of meaningful, sonorous, cadenced, well pronounced and recited words with attraction and clear order, accompanied with a beautiful voice and generally supported by the sound of any instrument which fortified the effect of accents and rhythm. Music once had a philosophy, thanks to the harmonious poetry, rhetoric and melody sung in ceremonies. Today the music separates itself from the union with other arts and sets itself up as an independent art. It possesses enough means to capture all our attention by pleasing and shining on its own. I am honored to present this point of view to those who have time to waste while reading this booklet.
Of our five senses, hearing, is evidently the least favored by natural pleasures. Voluptuous man, in the state of simple nature will have no other amusement for the pleasure of hearing other than the singing of birds, which is not much, and the human voice, which is also not always pleasant. Everything else to the ears will be nothing but silence or noise. The instruments, the song, the language itself are but the ingenious work of man, and for the sense of hearing, there is only the art of sounds and their pleasant combinations. Finally, the art of sound is almost everything done with the ears. Sight, on the contrary, is the richest in natural pleasures, here lies the difference between the art that must please the eyes and the art that must satisfy the ears. So, it is natural to feel a great attachment to an art that provides pleasures which can’t be derived from the natural order of things. But despite many beauties and wonderful variations that nature offers to the eyes continuously, there is still an artificial beauty that can affect the eye and man can abundantly derive pleasure among these visions since it is not uncommon to see that the productions of art surpass those of nature and capture our attention. The art of sounds has yet another great advantage over the art of vision it is the beautiful sound doesn’t last and passes quickly by leaving us in desire.

I always had in spirit the idea that appearances deserve our attention, otherwise, I never would have undertaken to
demonstrate my ideas and write about this subject in this booklet if I hadn’t received one of those stimulations which are not common in society. Following a certain, natural inclination and without paying much attention to sayings, I got into the habit of calling the ornaments in general as visible music, as well as I likened the well-combed people as physiognomies in music, the musicians-physiognomists as hairdressers and the ocular harpsichord as the “toilette”. In this way, when seeing well-dressed women, I openly asserted that they were well set to music. After scandalizing someone's opinion, it got serious to show what I meant by visible music. We hereby had discussions in which both sides said a lot of nonsense; further, have gone through deep and serious examinations to get away from the attacks of the ear advocates in conversing and reflecting on what I was trying to develop. After the fog dissipated, I realized that I have jokingly stated some facts that could be highlighted and even supported.

Therefore I put before the eyes of those who sometimes enjoy reading trifles, a list of observations and reflections made on the impact of the artificial visions; and if I cannot persuade my reader that this transposition of the word “music” is well applied, it may be that, in the end, they will agree with me that we must at least know how to appreciate appearances.
The Music of the Eyes

It is necessary to consider “music” in its weak side, preferably taking into consideration its representative qualities and to compromise it to the art of imitation; it often mimics and its song interests us much more than its imitations.\footnote{Jean-Jacques Rousseau has considered music to be quite superior to all other arts as an imitative art. We encounter throughout the text what a great impact had Rousseau's enlightenment thought concerning his philosophy of education on Gonzaga.} Should we call the art of cooking the art of imitation, due to the fact that the cook often gives the jams the shape of castles and the meat the taste of mushrooms? Although we like this refinement, it is actually only the art of combining flavors. The primitive, most general, and also the most accurate definition of music is an art that embellishes the hearing. Then why we could not say that the art of embellishing what we see is the music of the eyes? The first poets were the first rhetoricians. Lovers at the first sight embellished themselves with ornaments. Here is the common principle of these two music; that is to say: to embellish one's own speeches and adorn one's person for pleasure. The whole difference consists in knowing that the first supposes a little more refinement in man and the second is naive and natural. Music gets its rights by filling the void with a dull serenity or a sad
abandonment. Prodigious influence of fashion exerts on tender brains taking extravagance into account! Without the form that fashion prescribes everything becomes unbearable to the eye. Why does a building under construction take more than twenty-five years to complete or is never completed? Because the taste in fashion changes but the empire of fashion always exists and commands. But why does fashion exercise such a pressing empire over delicate spirits? It is on account of the union of shapes and colours concentrated and put together, either by groping or through the ways of rules and precepts, result in happy combinations of visible objects that affect us strongly. Here is the music of the eyes that takes the name from fashion, good taste, and art, depending on whether it is guided by whim, spirit or wisdom.

Physiologists\textsuperscript{14} regard the feeling of the sight as the most spiritual; and light is the vehicle of vision, like matter is closest to the spirit. It is a kind of hermaphrodite, some said, between spirit and matter. The sound air is more attached to our physical and has more gradations to

\textsuperscript{14} It refers to Gabrielle Émilie du Châtelet (1706–1749) French philosopher and mathematician, notably recognized for her translation of and commentary on Newton's \textit{Principia}, beside to Claude-Nicolas Le Cat’s (1700–1768) \textit{Physical Essay on the Senses} (1750).
overcome and to penetrate the feeling; its tumultuous and figurative operations are naturally confused. It is art and study that distinguish harmonious tones and relationships. Light is freer to cross and slide over the soul with almost no intermediary. The decisive and continuous impulses of light push, the sound air touches and passes. Light is to the soul as the nobility is to the monarchy, it penetrates toward its sovereignty without noise. The sound air therefore can be considered as the soul which represent itself tumultuously and the tumult is just a vain noise. Regarding historical facts, I would explain them with the effectiveness of the artificial visions and their most common effects; let's start looking at the list.

I will present as the first proof the power of these visible concerts, or of this music, the great attention and careful importance that a beautiful gender reveals it as a fact. The sagacity of females certainly surpasses that of men, in terms of the subtlety of sentiments, in which they are more particularly interested. In fact, there is no need for many studies or great reason to realize that beauty powerfully attracts, taste and elegance add to the beauty, and novelty exercises curiosity and maintains interest. In the long run, you get tired of everything, even the most beautiful end up boring. Who imagines representing the dancing Graces must be conscious of the variety and elegance against boredom and distaste. Since every inclination and every commitment began to attract
attention, one is naturally inclined to observe and fix gaze on everything that concerns the 'originality and extravagance and presents itself with new or in a luminous way. The greatest morose passions began with a look and were often preserved through visions, very often by the illusory visions. The art of appearance therefore must have a very attractive and reserved power acting on its own. It is to the lovers, voluptuous veteran amateurs to whom I appeal, in case they look through the ups and downs of their love, they will realize that they were almost always in a fantasy game and it all started with the sense of sight. It is the facial features, the attitudes, the movements of the person that struck us first, and it is the grace, taste, the elegance, and above all the charming spirit that rekindles the flame. The harmony of the colours on clothing and 'deshabillés' will always be remembered and while some important embellishments appeal to the imagination and increase the attraction, the physiognomic composition of the attitude will tell more.

Unfortunately, I had the opportunity to examine the bearing of a woman very fearful for her talent in her artifices. With sensitivity, spirit, and a strong dose of vanity, she has not neglected anything that could attract her admirers and applause. Every pleasant art was tested and surely the music was one of the first. Everything was

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15 Négligée
in accord with her seductive spirit. On the one hand she has several types of quaint apartments that serve as a stage for her representations on the other hand elegant and voluptuous toilets, bright and pompous rooms, solitary retreats, mysterious, tender, fresh and delicious groves.

But the power of this representative *mimic* is manifested more than anywhere else in the theater where without no bias, everyone can observe how appearances mean not only the truth, but how they oppose the reality itself. Indeed, we see very often the same person on the scene, changing his state through the hypocrisy of appearances and with help of a costume, a hairstyle or a similar bearing, growing old, rejuvenating, making people laugh or pity, depending on imaginations and delusions despite the certainty of the lie. In the theater, people prefer to believe more with the eyes and when appearances do not agree with the sense of words, it is the words that lack the effect. If the lover is not lovable in the figure, he will be in affliction of showing an expression contrary to what he says. The proper representation of the role is the first characteristic of the actors and the face is the first convention of all the roles. The image convinces more compared to what is perceived while hearing, and nothing can contradict what is seen. The appearances therefore serve for two strong passions: voluptuousness and vanity which jointly attack the heart and the imagination. It is typical of our weak constitution to abuse everything that
interests us, but it is only beyond the limits of moderation when everything is not in its right place, ruined for excess and makes fool of oneself by being clumsy.

Before we go any further, it will be good to undertake a little supporting clarification on this denomination and account for its convenience. Let's analyze a bit these two tricks, comparing them to each other, step by step, detailing their relations and similarities to see if there is really a musical character in the visions of art, or if I am a visionary like reverend Castel.

This wise mathematician observed that colours and sounds appeal equally so they are both susceptible to the same gradations, the same nuances, and have very similar harmonic ratios to combine. Castel concluded that they could produce the same effects; but this reverend father has not considered that the field of colours is space and that of sounds is time; the ears love to hear sounds successively one after the other and the eyes on the contrary love seeing the colours spread at the same time, close to each other. It seems that Castel never understood that this fleeting operation is against the properties of glance which wants to stop on the object. Although the Father Castel's harpsichord\footnote{The Colour Organ} failed, it is very clear that space and colour may mean to the eyes what time and
sound mean to the ears. So, I hope you approve of my musical expression “the music of the eyes”, and for the construction of this “visible music” a rhythm of space and modulations of colours is required. Colours are indeed susceptible to the same ranges or gradations as sounds. We definitely have a colour scale with many shades, with the same proportions as the sound scale and we can divide and subdivide the space as time divides and subdivides. By artistically varying the intervals of the sounds and varying their duration, we obtain a song or, as the artists say, a melody. Thus, by correctly varying the shades and dimensions of colours, we will obtain shapes or, if you want, images. By images I don’t mean those of painting but what results from the mixture of space and colours divided and shaded with discernment. Painting is an art of imitation rather than embellishment. It represents the combinations of visible objects as they are in their natural state. The art that I compare to music is what creates the visible beauty that does not exist in the natural state of things; or if you like, it is the art of adding what is missing to the visible objects with combinations provided

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17 Newton’s Colour Wheel
18 In his music dictionary, Jean-Jacques Rousseau has defined the mélodie as a succession of sounds ordered according to the rules of rhythm and modulation.
by inventions. In the meantime, let Father Castel and sages of our times to settle calculations and to carry out experiments to guess if colours have the same properties as sounds and if they can produce similar effects. We’re ingenious enough to please our eyes with visible musical embellishments and sight can delight in this music.

I have already announced my licentious habit of calling the ocular harpsichord, the 'toilet'. Let's try our harpsichord by trying to set to music an object taken from its natural state that has not received any alteration from art and let's see if the experiment can work or not. Let's take a very presentable young person and let the person pass through the different degrees of operations of the 'toilet' and it will be well to observe the changes resulting. The physiognomical traits and the proportions will be altered and accentuated in the whole transformation and we will notice the same difference passing between the speeches of the peasants and the ariette sung between the person who arrives from the village and the same person who comes out of the 'toilet'. Let's examine in detail how this change occurs: the person comes out of the 'toilet', with a combed head. What does this arrangement of head refer to? It is exactly the amplification of form and colours operated around a face. It’s nothing but a physiognomy, a figure set to music, exaggerated by the natural disposition
of features as colours, the musical rhythm, the syllabic accent of the words, nuances, and sound modulations, like a small poetic feeling becomes a breeze. The *ariette* are composed by the distribution of a certain amount of modulated sounds in short tempo, and long tempo in few modulations. Therefore, in our small head concerts both quantities of variations would be distributed in either in small or large space with various modulations. Like sounds, colours have their tones, their characteristic modes that indicate the convenience of the subject and supporting. The most frequent and sharpest divisions give liveliness and strength to sounds and colours, those which simply continue over tempo are sweet, sad, grave, etc. The tone of colours rises and falls as well as that of sounds, their relationships are combined and contrasted, faded or exploded, extended and narrowed, they develop and end, a unity of subjects is formed in such a way that it is impossible to change something without changing the whole concert. Let's try to add a small ribbon to a perfectly matched hat. In order to create small pieces of music or *ariette*, we can finish our concerts with small throws of feathers, tufts of flowers and other soft materials that give the eye the pleasantness of the cadence, and the glittering stones placed on the heads would be real visible trills. With the same order we can pass from the head to decorate the whole person in order to create slightly more
complicated piece of music. This operation has more extensions and more alliances to be reconciled together, because the clothing requires separate conveniences but should always be in harmony with the hairstyle like the recitatives in the Opera who stand out individually.

Therefore, without Father Castel's calculations and without any other theories, it seems clear to me that we are capable enough to make a music for the eyes by our rules. Stylists who have enough taste and finesse to succeed, they dare not to be musicians. If they were mathematicians, they would perhaps be embarrassed to observe conventions than to guess them by taste. In the meantime, a little scientific equipment would be very useful for the interest of the art of forms. Who knows if aesthetics of the ancients ever took care of it and why don't we? But, please, let's turn back to our little person whom after being cured and set to music, needs to have social relations. The person has seen enough to compare objects. She can no longer bear the dissonances of her furniture with her personal appearance. The sofas, the chairs have good cushions and are very comfortable, but their old graceless form is annoying; the colours do not match the wallpaper around, the bed has everything needed for sleeping comfortably; it has nice curtains to ward off midges; it is in all respects a bed placed in a quiet place but it lacks elegance, the colours are badly
matched, unpleasant to the eye; all this must be changed and must be put into music. The windows have curtains that limit the brightness of the day quite well, but unless they are not gracefully decorated, they are useless. The paintings, the hanging prints are admirable, but not enough. It doesn't matter if the watch hung on the wall on standing right, it must at least have a pleasant shape. The cook seasoned very well, the confiseur as well; but since the order of the dishes is old-fashioned, everything is indigestible, unbearable to the eye. This book actually says the same things, but the other edition, in tissue paper, with borders, with vignettes, bound in Moroccan, is undoubtedly very preferable. This harpsichord, this harp, are finally sonorous and harmonic, but it is a pity that their shape is no longer elegant and modern.

Every age and every condition find proportional and suitable satisfactions in our visible music, and we will observe our delicate, voluptuous and judicious little person changing her opinion according to the circumstances of her state of mind; but she will always have a taste for appearances and for the pleasures of the eyes. Having passed the first lightness of youth, the age of passions replaces and our musician, immediately feels the need of being considered and loved. You have to present yourself to her in the best way then with a kind and tempting air, attending walks, societies and parties by
enjoying taste in one's 'set' and in one's crews. And you must show that you have a heart to give; but maintaining a noble behavior at the same time. By spreading, therefore, one after the other, very judiciously, grace, taste and luster, our musical person naturally manages to be loved and esteemed. The age of tumultuous passions passes in turn, the vivacity of the temperature softens, but we behave with reflection and reach the calm age which is said to be the age of tranquility and wisdom. The voluptuousness takes on a reasonable character, now it is precisely the proper time to appreciate the peaceful acclaim of the fine arts. The noble architecture, at the head of the arts of drawing, offers us its help and everything embellishes, the noble unites with the pleasant and the delicious. Finally, at a mature age, our person gets taste for architecture.

We have gradually reached the strongest point of our music. Up to now it joked a little, let’s see it now in a much more important aspect. The brightest part of architecture is decoration that is the art of dominating the feeling of sight for the appropriate characteristic, aspects or appearances; and if the milliner adjusts our clothes, our furniture, and is interested in 'bagattelles', the decorator, with more daring and art, decorates the palaces, the cities, the countryside with delightful, splendid and brilliant distribution of space and colours that is the essence of our
music. Mr. Charles Étienne Briseux the wise French architect, coped very well with the expression of visible forms and their harmonic relationships; but he wanted to explain them with the theory of sounds, and thus fell in the same distractions as Father Castel. Despite the fact that Briseux complicated the matter a little, to understand the spirit of his work well; it is clear that the division of space can operate in architecture, the same effects that the division of time produces in music. It explains enough that beauty in architecture results from the judicious division of space and that everything consists in knowing how to combine on purpose, sometimes a small amount of division of the space; and sometimes a lot of space and few divisions, and must also be known how much space must be allocated for the objects to make them stand properly. The Italian architect Sebastiano Serlio must have felt this harmonic relation and the existence of this kind of rhythm or contour melody that left us a few striking examples of this kind of buildings which he has called the profiles of the graces. But the simple and unadorned space is so well calculated and in proportion with the ornate space that results in a pleasant effect, and one will be surprised that such strong interest could be emanated from a simple composition.

The five orders of architecture are the result of a work of several centuries, and the first inventors are unknown. The
happy combination of shapes and proportions are the result of a long meditation and a judicious and constant experience of sight with all the means serving to satisfy it. The system of architectural orders already contains the seeds of every expression, as the mere division of space produces pleasant sensations and makes the appearance of the buildings cheerful, graceful, majestic, noble, etc.\textsuperscript{19} A space, divided into large intervals and not very varied, is sweet or sad to the eye. The most frequent divisions, more varied and sharper, mark more cheerful and lively.\textsuperscript{20} The medium proportions form the noble, the elegant, the majestic, etc. What makes the difference between the Doric order and the Corinthian order, if not the different dimensions in the same matter? For this unique division, the Doric order is majestic,\textsuperscript{21} the Corinthian order is elegant and graceful. What is said about the orders of architecture in detail is also applicable to the whole mass of the building. Its character and its beauty derive from the arrangement of its parts and their relationships with each other. Each tastefully decorated building therefore is a concert that has a melodious rhythm of contours, of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{19} Gonzaga refers to the Glossary of music terminology see: Italian musical terms used in English
\item \textsuperscript{20} See the tempo: Allegro Vivace
\item \textsuperscript{21} See Maestoso
\end{itemize}
forms, and a harmonic chord in its composition. So it could be said that every ornate building is a piece of music and a city is a collection; or if you like, it's like a composition composed of several ariette and different pieces, an in its totality it has a general character which distinguishes in serious, comic, half character, and when the clairvoyant stranger, who enters by the first time in a city, first realizes the dominant tone that reigns there, and the character of its own music.

Our music still extends over the countryside and the forests, by transforming them into gardens. Someone said that gardening needs poetry. It seems to me that a musical artifice is more suitable for the composition of gardens. The art of the gardener speaks to the imagination, to the spirit and to the heart, its essence is to unravel and classify the pathetic tones that emanate from visible objects and make them count more for their happy combinations; as the art of the musician unravels the character of the sounds and happily combines them in order to make the piece more interesting. The art of the gardener therefore consists in knowing to discern the character of visible objects which nature has confusedly scattered, and to subdue them to an order that deliberately increases the effectiveness. The chosen combination of cheerful objects will give stronger impulses to excite happiness as a confused or scattered mass could not do without
connection. The objects united and agreed between help each other to make the sadness more sensitive. The wise gardener, in the distribution of the layout of his field, proposes a succession of different scenes tastefully prepared according to the quality of the project. Here only happiness must reign, sadness further away, tranquility, kindness, freshness, surprising, romantic, horrible places; for there, some whims, some oddities, and even small extravagances, if the project is large enough to compose a lot of variety. Perhaps, it would be more willingly agreed that this distinctive sentimental character announcing itself in different ways, is found more in the combinations of natural objects than in the physiognomies produced by architecture. Since English gardens are fashionable, there is freedom and also the interest to distinguish the pathetic tones of natural objects and the effect resulting from their combinations. Today every observer first distinguishes the differences of places and their nuances and feels if the forest is only sad or if it is horrible, if it is majestic or solemn; whether the grove is calm and cool, or voluptuous and seductive. In which point a cave is frightening, a laughing knoll, a pompous or bizarre waterfall, etc. Each of you must have had the opportunity to observe and feel how a beautiful site consoles, how a tender grove invites you to rest and inspires to dream sweet dreams likewise a dark forest saddens and frightens. There are caves, rocks,
solitudes that are terrible and sublime. The shape and
colour of the trees also distinguish between; there are
happy ones, graceful ones, sad ones, proud ones, majestic
ones, etc.

In his original, my author complains about this subject,
how fashion abolished regular gardens. He deeply regrets
the loss of those majestic arched avenues, arched galleries
in green, this intrigue of intersecting streets, etc. These
symmetrical, pompous waterfalls, these pools surrounded
by nymphs, tritons, and other marine divinities, these
capricious caves of a bizarre regularity, garnished with
ice, shells in which the waters frolic in a thousand
different ways, these suspended terraces decorated with
balustrades, vases with flowers, statues, busts...Finally,
only art alone can make us to appreciate this artificially
graceful, noble, imposed regularity that nature deprived
entirely. The taste of the irregular gardens is more modest,
the other is more admirable. Would we dare to uproot the
gardens of Versailles, Schönbrunn, Sans-Souci, and
Petergof in order to make them irregular? The translator
who does not dare to pronounce these two different tastes
would nevertheless be of the opinion that he advises the
great gentlemen to know how to judiciously combining, as
he would advise them to have good prose and beautiful
verses in their library. Why Jacques Delille (1738 –1813)
has written so regularly in verse with rhymed ends about the irregularity he recommends?

In addition to the article on gardening, there is also in the original English, a fairly long chapter on the appearances of the scene in theater performances. I completely omitted both of them, since it would perhaps hurt too much the dominant opinion, but in the second part of the booklet, I will address this subject in another way always adhering to the opinion of my author.

To finish all these procedures of our music, let's see if the visible artifices can rise as much as the auditory to the high peaks of this world. It is said that the musical sound serves to unite men, to animate the great passions, to direct the spirit and to express an opinion. I believe that the signs, the mottos, the clothes, the formalities and the apparatus or decoration, give us a greater movement, and determine us much more easily for the effectiveness of their attractions and for the clarity of their meanings. If we fix our gaze on civil society it will be easy to recognize those who know how to exhibit with the best appearances. If two gifts of the same value were given, why would we choose the best one? If we were invited to two parties at the same time, it is quite natural for us to choose the brightest. What makes the difference between an assembly and a party? Same people are met almost everywhere same as the same dishes are served; but the character of
gallantry, elegance, joy, and magnificence result from appearances, even in war and funeral. It is always the meanings of appearance that create the advantages, arranges the feeling and the spirit. Thus, at the great events, visions are the means most capable of arousing joy or terror. When the greatest public events are announced with posters or simply with shout, majority chooses one side or the other. On the contrary, the same announcement accompanied by a feast, by a brilliant illumination, by a beautiful fire of joy, will undoubtedly have a particular effect, everyone would like to take part in it, and without thinking about public utilities, nor about private ones, joy would be shining and universal.

All Romans were perfectly informed about the feats, conquests, victories and advantages obtained by their armies, just as the feats of their generals, and the pomp of triumph added nothing to the certainty of public utility, nor to the glory of the nation; but that magnificent string of chariots and men carrying trophies, this consequent exhibition of arches, quadrigas and the extraordinary 'parure' of the triumphant person, gave such luster to man and to the thing that they could never have obtained an equal one by any other means, nor in any other way. Visions have been of great use in all nations of the world. Going through the history of all the peoples of Asia, that of the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans, etc. we see that
ceremonies have always been an instrument of politics, and the nations, the most civilized, are those who have made the most use of ceremonies, formalities and visions.

The antiquity dominated the public spirit by solemnizing the acts with monuments and decorations. Then it was realized that the prosperous and majestic inspired respect, and therefore we began to build temples and palaces. In the civil institutions of the social order, there are things that are meaningless in case they are marketed without grace or without dignity. If illusions can do good, why neglect illusions? Idols were needed because people were idolaters. Imagination is perhaps the most restless of our faculties, and it could become very worrying, if we left it without suitable employment. When recently the nation, which today passes for being the most enlightened, needed disorder, it began to abolish, and turn into ridicule all kinds of formalities, and give only licentious feasts. But before the order became necessary, it was enriched in fact on the distinctions, on the ceremonial, and on the good claim of the decorum that makes a sensible difference between men and things.

During the terrible sack of Rome by the Gauls the enemy soldiers ruthlessly killed all the men on the spot. While the Senate ran away cautiously an old senator in a toga, unable to walk, sat quietly in his curule chair adorned with ivory, and, with a composed air, cast, without speaking, a
bold look at the brute who was about to kill him. This tells us something in favor of appearances; because every idea and every reflection on the dignity of this man should have determined the soldier to continue his carnage, and it was only the grave behavior of this old man, who could instantly change the dispositions of the soldier and calm his fury. I don't know which question or what music could have operated such a decisive and strong effect.

No one, as far as I know, got a better attractive exposition of his personal qualities than the King of France, Louis XIV and more important than of his feasts, it was perhaps the grace and dignity of his ways that earned him the title of great. The philosopher of Sans-Souci, on the contrary, Frederick II, King of Prussia, felt that it would be inconvenient for him to use beautiful manners, dance with his courtiers, and do the elegant in his circle. It was a lion who shook his mane and made the 'toilet' of his nails. It is also said that he was very attentive to the demeanor of those he approached and that this greatly influenced the judgment he had about people.

Our music of appearances sometimes unfortunately, served to harm, and very often favors vice, seduction, and imposture. Great God, what is not abused? Grace and beauty are seductive, splendor dazzles, and it is found that the rascals, lies, and misdeeds can be covered up with a
beautiful disguised exterior, with the luster and majesty of visible artifices.

Our music rises a little too much, it becomes completely tragic that can put us in a bad mood. It is therefore more worth to return to the cheerful effects and finish this chapter with a *firework*; because it would be a great mistake to finish a visible music discourse without touching an artifice that has the greatest resemblance to the aforementioned music. The fireworks show the great advantage that nothing is permanent, the combinations of their shapes and colours pass in time; change and pass quickly as the sounds, the modulations and the musical rhythm. Here the successive progression and movement are essential by cooperating with the instant pleasure of variations. Finally, here is the ocular harpsichord, and the music of the eyes for excellence.
(II) Notice from the Translator

I eliminated everything that was in the original, about the nation for which the Author wrote, and kept only what can be of interest in general. So, this translation is not entirely in conformity with the English original.

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22 As it is understood from its title, the booklet is puzzling as it may have been inspired by the Scottish school of common sense that originated in the ideas of Scottish philosophers as Thomas Reid and James Beattie. I infer by considering that the author-translator recommends readers to read James Beattie's observations on musical expression. (see:p.46)

23 Could be based on the opinion that during the reign of Catherine II's grandson Paul I, the Royal affairs with British policy were not good enough.
ON THEATRICAL OPTICS
On Theatrical Optics

Illusion in theatre takes the place of reality! The great show, called Opera, is among the auditory-visual shows of the scene, the one that has the greatest need for the artificial visions to make sure prodigy and prosperity reign likely. Following a refined taste in what needs to be listened to in the theater, it is reasonable to clarify what appears advantageous from a visual point of view in theatre performances, especially in Opera. In my travels during my long stay in Italy, I had the opportunity to observe that despite so many beauties and auditory refinement, the boredom was caused only by negligence in visible conveniences. Italians, the great lovers and inventors of Opera humiliated the show by taking the easy way out. Opera is not a show to be given unconditionally but it is a show that should be seen more than once. On the one hand the ideal beauty, prosperity, enchantment, are essential in this kind of representation; features that naturally conquers and interests us severely, but all these qualities lose their strength when they become too familiar to us and ask to be seen rarely. On the other hand, the composition of a great show, where all fine arts show their attractions and expressions, is too complicated to be understood in its entirety and be enjoyed in detail at once. The success of an Opera where many subtleties such as
poetry, music, dance, architecture, painting, mechanics, tailoring and the art of embroidery can impress us at the first display due to the general effect that emerges, presents itself to us with new beauties and details that will demand attention longer than any other show invented, based on our attention and precision to the finest details of the spectacle. Thus, for the general effect resulting and for the almost infinite consensus of the details, the right show must be the most interesting of all the shows invented. This kind of so cost-consuming show would be so delicate to handle and so difficult to succeed, therefore it would require all the possible attention, reserve and respect in order to not venture into much expense. Such a prosperity is nothing but a magnificent nonsense if it succeeds badly. Eventually Opera is, from time to time, the spectacle of the senses, of imagination, of spirit and taste. The senses are exact, the spirit subtle and the taste delicate and capricious. Theatrical performances hit through the mediation of two main senses, sight, and hearing namely our two most delicate senses fruitful in sensations and ideas. A cure has not yet developed to tune together what must-hear with what must-see. The soul of those who are relating entirely to the sight, often finds certain defects of convenience, contradictions annoying the verisimilitude and consequently the illusion, the interest, the expression preventing the enjoyment of the display. There's nothing more shocking and inconsistent in a performance than
seeing a slew of rhetorical, poetic, or musical phrases scattered around. What a bore for example, to see the furious aggressor with the weapon raised giving his opponent time to recite his beautiful phrase and his beautiful cadence and that the other instead of going fast to rescue his friend or lover in distress, stops and expresses his great haste. When we just have to listen, the viewer focuses all his attention on the thread of speech and refers to the meaning of the word and the auditory meaning alone, but when you have to listen and see at the same time, the attention of the soul is divided, it listens and sees at the same time, so you have to realize equally what to see and what to listen. The vision is naturally acute and exact, the view is fixed on the object, it captures its properties more easily, it is the best spy and the first council of the soul. It prevents reflection and predicts judgment on almost all occasions.

How would you welcome someone showing himself with a smiling face and a triumphant air to offer your condolences? This clumsy would make every effort to tell you that he is sad and afflicted with your loss, but his appearance would betray, and in any way his words will serve for no purpose. In the event of he shows the obvious demonstration of his trouble, he would persuade you to believe his feelings without saying a single word. If the actor who plays the lover on the stage has an amiable air, he will convince us effortlessly that he is a lover, or that
we are wrong to not love him, but if his face is unpleasant, even if he will act in the most eloquent way to convince us that he is the cause of so much suffering and madness, it will be without effect. On the one hand, you can psalm in a lugubrious tone in a beautiful room elegantly decorated, illuminated and filled with a brilliant society and on the other hand you can make people cheerful and make dance without the fumes of alcohol in a cave. Playwrights often overlook the conventions seen in their performances, this is one of the main reasons why so many texts that look fascinating for reading or concert are so cold on the stage. We heard before that the combined power of visible beauty and auditory beauty would be a supreme force in the auditory and visual performances of the scene, so we decided to combine the interests of sight and hearing to bring them to a common end, but apparently, a kind of rivalry reigns between these two senses that prevents us from making a good and sincere alliance. Poets of all times found it more practical to get to the soul through the ways of the ear and wished that men abandon their eyes completely. There would be many quotations to be made in this regard from many ancient and modern poets who were deeply concerned about what men like to see and who found negative to have an audience with demanding and delicate views. But despite the efforts of dramatic poets to spread only the taste of auditory things and despite the people we call of spirit and letters, authors
apathy for the visual communication, left a flaw in the representations of the scenes. The interests of these two senses are naturally separated due to the many spectacles invented by the ancients and the moderns to appeal only to the sense of sight. Since the attention of the public has been divided into seeing and listening in different venues, it was aimed to bring the interests of these two senses together in a single show, thus making the spectacle of spectacles Opera!. It happened successful when the genius men gathered and knowledge worked on the organization and composition. Owing to it we saw magnificent and surprising performances adorned with music, dance and sets that flattered the senses and raised the soul. But when the intensity of the enterprise exhausted the bravest who could find nothing on their own, it was encountered that after combining so many difficulties to operate in such a complex machine, the great movement of the play and its influence were often sacrificed to dishonor. Thus, the show was left to whim, intrigue, and chance. The music that binds most naturally to the rhythm of the verses and approaches their expression, became as was expected, the favorite of poets. Proud of its success and reputation, music wanted to shine by keeping its own strength, challenging everything on its own, and belittled any help from outside. Thanks to the happy talents, music alone has done more than expected. Thus, the show of the fine arts became the particular spectacle of music. Once reached to
the point of being able to dominate, she wanted to carry out her prosperity and shine on her own, whatever it costed. But then everything succumbed to brazen repetitions, artificial lengths, to the whims of some of the performers, and skill became rare for this show. Opera no more represented anything but gave the opportunity to sing loudly and in magnificent clothes. This was funny for a while; but as soon as it managed to consume every source of excitement as natural, fake, ideal, strange, capricious, meticulous, gigantic, exaggerated and insolent pleasures, it became a meaningless show-off where the all the musical finesse disappeared. Although the admirable efforts and extraordinary dexterity games, they were tiring rather than pleasing the senses. But we didn’t dare to mock them or turn to the natural, so we tried the sterility of what we were seeking, while deftly coping with the musical difficulty, the natural disposition that is easy to feel and grasp, drew the public’s attention to the lure of Buffon opera for a time. At first, the feat of this show was less extensive, the music more modest, and everything was much better. But musical luxury faded as this elegant spectacle lost its playful and characteristic naïveté. Opera stood by the sheet music rather than the song that was somehow sung, and the comedy and tragedy of the drama consisted of poems in inert dialogue or some outrageous jokes. There wasn’t any proper representation indeed. Throughout the Grand Opera, dance always played a role
considerable enough to attract public attention on its own. It has presided over the movements of all the action to perform small figurative concerts forming graceful moving paintings, minimal pantomimical animating representations that dance adorned with its melodious tactics. All this was noticed, tasted and applauded by the audience, and it also seemed that one would wish to see it more often. This refined taste in pantomime was flattered, and little by little represented with gestures much better than with words; then the love of the plays awoke, found itself impressive to indulge, and set out to make great pantomime ballets apart, without connection to the rest of the show. Here again how the interests of sight are separated from those of hearing, and far from making a common cause.

Today, almost throughout Europe, the show called Opera consists of two different shows, one addressing the ears and the other the eyes. That is to say, there is a freely dramatic performance where you sing as you like, and a pantomimic ballet, where you represent an uninterrupted ballad action. In Italy, where people love to spend the evenings in the theater, there are constantly two ballets at each Opera house. The first is immediately given following the first act of the drama, and is tragic and great, and the second is comical. After the second act, there is sometimes a third at the end of the last act, which serves as the final to end the show. This taste of pantomime performances is still supported in Italy.
forming the main interest of the great shows. But although in Italy the strongest part of the Opera is methodically ballet, musical drama has continued to be looked at as the main object for privilege of primogeniture that Italians have constantly preserved. Such drama is represented without mentioning the ballet display which is still considered as the accessory ornaments. It happened in one of the largest cities in Italy where absolutely the best shows in the world were given in this genre, the conductor with refined taste and care for ballet dancer hung a post-show announcement at the entrance of the theater about how the cries of writers and singers had prevented the reasonable distinction between the pantomime ballet representation of Hamlet and the well-composed and skillfully performed drama of Iphigène.  

At present, three essences hold sway over the theater: poetry has narrowed its field to tragedies and only comedies in prose and verse where it reigns alone, music rules despotically over Opera claiming support from all other arts, and pantomime is confined to mere performances. So, in the place of the only empire once dominated by poetry, here are the three powers. If among us a powerful genius and conciliator feels strong enough to bring together under one field these three statutes, each

24 Dramatic tragedy in five acts written by the French playwright Jean Racine first performed in Versailles, 1674
complementing the other’s, a great favor would be done to the public by putting on a proper Opera performance. Such a vast and difficult undertaking would require the constancy of an impartial man who, without being an artist by profession, would be able to ally the talent with the knowledge by estimating these arts in their proper value by possessing delicate ability to know how to harness the performers to make them giving up their own interests dealing only with those of the show.

If there is, I say, a man capable of such a feat, let us pray to him that he will kindly consecrate himself with all his faculties to set up the most beautiful spectacle that the human spirit has given birth to; but if we miss this man, let's leave things as they are. The arts thus divided, are freer, and their rivalry itself is good since it excites everyone to show their best to overcome each other. From this emulation, it would of course be an excellent effect leading everyone to explain their strengths. Everything will develop in this rivalry, and the outcome will always have variety, refinement, and sometimes perfection.

Now that music is an absolute and independent art of imitation, it will be very difficult to reduce it and subordinate it only to the needs of representation. Too proud of her successes, she wants to dominate. It would therefore be a very rude undertaking, to want to make music composers understand that their art can only contain the tint of the painting, and that drawing belongs
exclusively to poetry. In this regard, read the observations of *Dr. James Beattie*\(^{25}\), *Avison*\(^{26}\), and *Pascal Boyer* on musical expression\(^{27}\). But it is very clear that music is in fact a kind of secondary hue or *iris* that never forms particular images, and one must be convinced that music is only a kind of secondary hue and that like any hue is a nuance in a painting depending on the happiest combinations to which it is directed but never producing definitive images. Thus, the melody of the sounds, the most artificial without the support of specific indications of words or gestures, will awaken only vague effects in us, never distinct feelings or precise ideas. Nothing more ingenious certainly than what J.J. Rousseau said in his Dictionary of Music in the article on imitation. But all this are as indisputable as the creation of his *tableaux sonores*, but still remains entirely dependent on the imagination of the listener, and in this expansive commotion of feeling that the author describes so well the spectators; agitated, but not directed, a different phantom will take shape each in their own way relative to their particular dispositions.

\(^{25}\) James Beattie (1735 –1803) was a Scottish poet, moralist, and philosopher.
\(^{26}\) Charles Avison (1709-1770) was an English composer during the Baroque and Classical periods. He is known for his *Essay on Musical Expression*, the first music criticism published in English
\(^{27}\) *An Essay on Musical Expression* (Avison, Charles). First Publication, 1753
So, the same emanations will produce different images depending on the disposition of the person.

Close to the auditory shows there has always been visual shows, and the art of showing and making people listen remains in emulation until the favorable circumstances contribute to the reunion of these two artifices making a common cause. If poets count only on beautiful strings of words, if musical luxury is no longer compatible with the accuracy of the representations and the need for great actions, and if poetry and music aim to please each other to make everything with their own funds, thank goodness. Let us spectators give them a free field to display as they wish. It would be a difficult task to persuade the poets to be directed toward the sense of sight than that of hearing, as well as putting the music back to its first state of subordination would be to oppose the dominant opinion and evade the taste of the amateurs. Although such shows of unique beauty and only auditory imitation are excellent, one must not lose sight of the great dramatic actions that are exact and complete representations adorned with all their visible conveniences as the place, costume and movement, considering that ‘men and women go to the theater with their eyes and spectacles as they go there with their ears’.
The commitment of pantomimic ballets is to represent to the eyes. The imitation of everything that fascinates us with the sense of sight, and every kind of visible beauty is within its competence. In this kind of show, the action is dominant and free, space and movement are essential, and the great facts and great appearances are better suited than in auditory performances. Nothing can disturb its order, if the composer knows how to distribute in his instrument the ornaments of dance with discernment and taste. The success of the pantomimic ballets has enlightened the Italian authors on the convenience of the scene and on the taste of the representations, it strengthened to the point of scrutinizing a little on the improbabilities of the music and reforming it despite its ascendancy and prejudices. But such compositions, unfortunately, have the disadvantage of being unread that’s why they are unprinted and can’t be advertised remaining at the theater for which they were made. Action shows are more dependent on the location and demand exact service for appearances. The site announces the action and greatly influences the effects of the representation. The place where the event takes place must therefore be prepared judiciously. The place can be indifferent to simply dialogues, but the expressions of the appearances and their physiognomies would need a suitable place for the movement and also favorable to the representations of ballet d’action. In this case scenography plays a very exciting role. The realization of
this kind of crafting unfortunately is usually expensive further requires a skilled and trained team of workers and mechanism equipment. This point is crucial for the construction of the theatres because when action shows are poorly set up it can sometimes be impossible to make up for the venue's mismatch with the show being staged. The small dramatic representations of *Camilla Ossia il Sotterraneo* 28, *Raoul de Créqui, Renaud d'Ast, Les Deux Petits Savoyards, Richard Coeur de lion*, and others of this kind in which the place and the action work in agreement and say more than words; The spectacles aimed at combining the interests of sight and hearing gave me new hope for the future. I had the opportunity to see these ingenious plays performed in different theaters of Europe with a fascinating interest both for their impressive representations of illusions, and for their pathetic effects resulting from the bad montage. In the Opera “*Camilla*” all the pathetic comes from the sadness of the castle and Camille's state of being would not have been so impressive without the frightening appearance of the dungeon in which she was locked. And night, the bad weather, and snow make the situation of “*Renaud d'Ast*” 29

28 Dramma Serio-giocoso by Ferdinando Paer (1 July 1771 – 3 May 1839)
29 Renaud d’Ast's Overture Opéra-comique in two acts by Nicolas Dalayrac
so touching that all this could be eloquent only with the
appearance of the scenography. It is very easy to conceive
of how much the site influences and acts in the plays of
“Raoul sire de Créqui”\textsuperscript{30}, “Les deux petits savoyards”\textsuperscript{31},
and “Richard Cœur de Lion”\textsuperscript{32}. I have seen at La Scala,
some surprising representations adapted from the plays of
the famous poets Shakespeare, and Count Gozzi, put in
pantomime by skilful ballet composers who made me
forgive the English poet and the taste of Italians for all the
bizarreness of their imagination. The skill practiced for
the appearances, the splendor, the pomp, the surprise, and
the exactness of the whole, awakened so much interest
causing such a glare that it hasn’t been possible to pay
attention to the inconveniences which were so remarkable
in comparison with the original works. By dint of art, I
have seen all the impertinences of the plays disappearing
as “Macbeth”, “Hamlet”\textsuperscript{33}, “Il Moro di corpo
bianco”\textsuperscript{34}, “Il Corvo”\textsuperscript{35}, “L’amore delle tre melarance”\textsuperscript{36}

\textsuperscript{30} Comedy in three acts, in prose by Jacques Marie Boutet, 1789
\textsuperscript{31} Opéra-comique in one act by the French composer Nicolas
Dalayrac. It was first performed by the Comédie-Italienne in
Paris, 1789.
\textsuperscript{32} Richard the Lionheart is a comic opera set to music by the Belgian
composer André Grétry
\textsuperscript{33} Shakespear’s plays
\textsuperscript{34} Comedy play by Count Carlo Gozzi, Venice, 1799
in which even abstractions made out of magnificence became very interesting. But it is in the paraphernalia of the scenography and in the visible conveniences of the scene where the store of all the impertinent and ridiculous fatuities resides. And there is where the largest cabinet of the public square, the modern buildings in an ancient subject, the castles and fleets seen, where men are larger than the walls and ships; the armies and military evolutions forced into a small space, the marches that collide turning, the chariots of triumphs that can’t move, the storms, the thunderstorms composed of torn canvases; the deities suspended with visible ropes that swing, descend, rise all surrounded by perforated cardboard badly scribbled to depict clouds, the beggars badly disguised in cupids, nymphs, archers, bears, devils, etc. etc. All this really bores and pities. People of common sense who had the opportunity to see these types of performances must have believed that it is a kind of show defective in itself and monstrous that it would be impossible to do better, so they do not care about what was displayed to them. They are rightly disgusted by this scandal, they shout and

35 Tragicomic theatrical fairytale in five acts by Count Carlo Gozzi, 1762
36 Comedy play by Count Carlo Gozzi represented in Carnival of 1761. In 1919, the Russian musician Sergej Prokofiev composed the opera L'amore delle tre melarance, on a libretto based on Gozzi's comedy.
declaim against these attempts, and they intimidate the playwrights and the theatrical composers who love their reputation, leading them to think that it is against the wisdom of breaking their heads, to imagine things subjected to local and performing circumstances that they could consequently succeed only in a few theaters, and become tasteless, ridiculous, unbearable when they are misrepresented, moreover having no other resources than succeeding on the scene, they cannot satisfy even reading.

To ensure the enjoyment of the visible and action shows which we already have, and to not discourage the authors to imagine new ones, it is very important to establish a venue suitable for performances where optics as well as acoustics dominate. But a simple observer can only notice the defects and can glimpse the means to remedy them; it belongs to the artists to apply and to imagine what could be favorable to the illusion of the scene, and to the good conveniences of different genres of representation of theatrical performances.

As for me, the translator and the scenographer according to my observations and practice supported by the feelings of my colleagues, I applaud the sagacity of the English author whose thoughts I just shared, I would only add that the man, who is in charge of giving shows, must give attention to the space of the theater the same attention that the musician must give in choosing the musical instrument on which he/she plays, this care naturally depends on the
skill of the artist. The relations between the content of the performance and the space of the theater are so immediate and reciprocal that to neglect them would destroy all the effect, the good creations, and the agreement. A wide theatrical space is absolutely contrary to the interests of simply auditory and declamation-only demonstrations, as a narrow room is inconvenient for the scenic equipment of the action shows, artificial visions and, festivals. Hence, neither a grandiose demonstration in a small room nor, so to speak, a lost show in a vast room, is suitable. The empty is sorrowful by its nature and is not in any way convenient for the parties.
If Plato were a theatrical entrepreneur, he would have operated in bewilderment while filling the void. But since, according to my English author, all this is explained quite clearly through the common sense that he is the champion, and which I also care very much about, I believed that this profession is somewhat within my competence, and is to my taste insomuch that I couldn’t stop myself from adding my word as well. *Tractant fabrilia fabri*\(^37\)

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\(^37\) “Physicians attend to the business of physicians, and workmen handle the tools of workmen.” - Horace [Lat., *Quod medicorum est Promittunt medici, tractant fabrilia fabri.*]

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**THE END**
IMAGES
Pietro di Gottardo Gonzaga
“Park Composition with a Marquee”
18th century

38 Pen and brush with Indian Ink, watercolour and pencil on paper
Dimensions: 25.6x29 cm Entered the Hermitage in 1923; formerly in the A.L. Stieglitz collection Inventory Number: op-3439 © Hermitage Museum
Pietro di Gottardo Gonzaga
“Park”
18th century

39 Pen and brush with bistre, watercolour and pencil on paper 40,5x57 cm Entered the Hermitage in 1923; formerly in the A.L. Stieglitz collection Inventory number: OP-3744 © Hermitage Museum
Pietro di Gottardo Gonzaga
“Cave View”
18th century

40 Pen, brush and ink and Indian Ink and pencil on paper 32,5x47 cm. Entered the Hermitage in 1923; formerly in the A.L. Stieglitz collection. Inventory Number: op -34554 © Hermitage Museum
Pietro di Gottardo Gonzaga
“Dungeon with Doric Columns”
18th century

41 Pen, brush and ink and Indian Ink and pencil on paper 33.5x46.5 cm Entered the Hermitage in 1923 formerly in the A.L. Stieglitz collection. Inventory Number: op-34537 ©Hermitage Museum
Pietro di Gottardo Gonzaga
“Design for a Stage Set Showing the Interior of a
Fortress or Dungeon.”
18th century

42 Pen and brown ink, brush and brown and gray wash Dimensions: sheet: 7 1/16 x 9 5/16 in. (18 x 23.6 cm) Credit Line: Purchase, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund and Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, 1971 Accession Number: 1971.513.69 © Metropolitan Museum Of Art
Pietro di Gottardo Gonzaga
“View of the Hermitage Theatre. Sketch of a Curtain”
18th Century

43 pen and brush and Indian Ink over sketch in pencil on paper
Dimensions: 25.5x34 cm Entered the Hermitage in 1923; formerly in the Stieglitz collection Inventory Number: op-34441 ©Hermitage Museum
Pietro di Gottardo Gonzaga
“Interior”
18th century

44 Pen, brush and Indian Ink on paper 32,8x44 cm Entered the Hermitage in 1923; formerly in the A.L. Stieglitz collection
Inventory Number: op-34561 © Hermitage Museum
Pietro di Gottardo Gonzaga
“Architectural Composition with a Fountain”
18th century

45 Pen, brush and ink and Indian Ink and pencil on paper Entered the Hermitage in 1923; formerly in the A.L. Stieglitz collection Inventory Number: op-34455 © Hermitage Museum
Pietro di Gottardo Gonzaga
Stage Design:
“Temple with a Columned, Rotunda with Statues of Philosophers” 18th century

46 Pencil, Indian Ink and ink on paper Dimensions: 36x44,4 cm
Entered the Hermitage in 1923; formerly in the A.L. Stieglitz collection
Inventory Number: op-34394 © Hermitage Museum
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