

Subversive Climes

Exploring the role of exoticism in *Les Indes Galantes*



Bethany Shepherd

3027422

Research Coach: Charles Toet

Master Circle Leader: Gerda van Zelm

Main Subject Teachers: Rita Dams, Jill Feldman, Peter Kooij, Michael Chance, Pascal Bertin

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Koninklijk Conservatorium

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Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century and the Koninklijk Conservatorium Early Music Department, directed by Frans Brüggen. Recorded live by the author 14 May, 2014.

Introduction

Motivation

I first became interested in the music of Rameau after hearing a recording of the rondo *Forêts Paisibles* (based on the harpsichord piece *Les Sauvages*) from *Les Indes Galantes* while studying my Bachelor degree in Australia. I was instantly captivated by the energy and vitality of this music, and wanted to explore this repertoire for myself. Unfortunately, French Baroque music is rarely performed in Australia, and the style was so foreign and intimidating that it was difficult for me to find a teacher who was willing and capable of helping me to discover this music. This was one of the deciding factors for me to undertake studies at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague.

Once I arrived in The Hague and began my studies, it became apparent to me that while French Baroque music was certainly included as a fundamental element of education in the Vocal Department, there was a prevalent attitude amongst the students and even certain members of staff, whereby it was seen as being of lower status than music of the German or Italian traditions. It was suggested to me that music of the French Baroque, particularly the comic operas, was too preoccupied with grace, elegance and frivolous entertainment to be considered as of the same merit and worth as other, more “serious” styles.

It was during my first year studying at the Royal Conservatory that I had the luck to participate in excerpts of *Les Indes Galantes* performed in conjunction with the Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century, conducted by Frans Brüggen. While preparing the excerpts, I was struck by the fact that this was the only Baroque opera I could think of that, apart from the Prologue, used real-life, contemporary settings for the plot. Every other opera I had encountered either had plots taken from history or Greek and Roman mythology. During my Bachelor studies, I had done a small research project on exoticism in 19th Century vocal repertoire, and had come across the argument that for artists across many disciplines, exoticism during this time provided an opportunity to express attitudes and ideas not openly accepted by European society. Often, the exoticism was less concerned with providing an accurate representation of a foreign culture and locale, and more concerned with using this exoticism as a filter by which to communicate ideas and attitudes that would be considered too challenging or confronting expressed outright in the European society of the time.

It was from this perspective that I started to wonder whether, by refusing to look past the surface level of entertainment and spectacle in comic French Baroque operas, young singers approaching this music could be missing a layer of meaning and function in these works which could change the way we perform this music and portray these characters onstage. As it has played such a significant part in directing me towards this repertoire and this research, I decided that the focus of my Master of Music research would be Rameau’s *Les Indes Galantes*.

Research Question

With this in mind, I formulated the research question:

What is the role of exoticism in *Les Indes Galantes*?

Research Process

I began researching this topic by reading key works on exoticism in music, namely Ralph. P. Locke's *Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections*, and Jonathan Bellman's *The Exotic in Western Music* to assess whether approaching *Les Indes Galantes* from this angle would be possible. I also consulted multiple editions of the score itself, including various manuscripts digitised by the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and the facsimile of the 1736 publication of the opera *Reduit à Quatre Grand Concerts*.

It became apparent to me that looking at exoticism in this work would be a worthwhile and relevant study, but in order to do that successfully, I would also need to go beyond the score itself to understand the way *Les Indes Galantes* functioned within its context. I read more about opera in France at the time, and Rameau's position as an operatic composer. Where possible, I looked for contemporaneous writings on *Les Indes Galantes* such as letters, gazettes and journals to understand how it was received and how French audiences at the time experienced the work. I also wanted to have an understanding of the social context and attitudes towards the New World would have informed the response of the audience.

During my initial reading on the concept of the "noble savage", I came across a reference to *New Voyages to North America* by the Baron de Lahontan. This has proved to be an important discovery, as a comparison of the themes in the entrée *Les Sauvages* shows that this work had a strong influence on the libretto. While further research and reading of articles revealed that this connection between Fuzelier and Lahontan was not unknown, it was only once I was aware of it and deliberately searched for scholarly articles and references that explored the link between these two works that I was able to discover writings by authors such as Catherine Cole, whose PhD thesis "*Nature*" at the *Opéra: Sound and Social Change in France 1750 -1779* was of great help to my research.

To examine the impact this study would have on my own performance of this music, I initially had the idea of recording two arias, one each from the roles of Phani and Zima, at the beginning of my research and re-recording them towards the end, to see if there was any noticeable difference in interpretation and performance. However, as I was learning and working on the aria *Sur nos bords l'amour vole* from *Les Sauvages*, it became clear to me that this approach would not be particularly useful, as so much of how these characters are represented as exotic relies on the context of the piece, and how the characters interact.

In order to have a less isolated approach, I took part in the International Rameau Summer School in September 2015, where we rehearsed and stages excerpts from *Les Incas du Pérou*. This experience made me more curious about the significance of historical acting and gesture in conveying a character from a Baroque opera, and so I contacted João Luís Veloso Paixão,

a singer and researcher in this area, to gain some insights into how a modern performer might approach this element of performance.

Exoticism

The New Grove Dictionary of Music defines exoticism as “the evocation of a place, people or social milieu that is (or is perceived or imagined to be) profoundly different from accepted local norms in its attitudes, customs and morals.”¹ Musical exoticism has largely been identified as a set of established stylistic identifiers, such as modes and harmonies different from the traditional major/minor binary; bare textures such as unisons; parallel 4ths and 5ths; drones; rhythmically stratified layers, and unusual instruments or performing techniques. The approach of classifying a musical work as exotic based solely on musical characteristics is what Ralph P. Locke terms the Exotic Style Only Paradigm.² This approach, however, excludes works that convey exoticism through extra-musical means, which is often the case in operatic works from before the 19th Century. By looking at verbal and visual indicators, and the social and cultural context in addition to the musical content, a broader understanding of how exoticism functions within a work can be achieved. Locke terms this approach the All Music in Full Context Paradigm. It is from this broader approach that I will look at the role of exoticism in *Les Indes Galantes*.

Purely Musical Exoticism

The standard method of defining a work as exotic or not is based on the presence of musical devices that have come to be associated with foreign locations and cultures. Bellman uses this approach when defining musical exoticism as “the borrowing or use of musical materials that evoke distant locales or alien frames of reference”.³ From this perspective, the musical traits should be drawn from – or at least sound as if they are drawn from – foreign, non-European elements. These musical traits can include⁴:

Non-normative modes and harmonies

- Pentatonic and gapped scales
- Intense chromaticism and unstable harmonic centres
- Chromatically altered; whole-tone; octatonic scaled
- Unharmonised unisons; parallel fourths and fifths
- Drones; pedal points
- Complex and undefined chords

¹ Ralph P. Locke, “Exoticism,” *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*

² Ralph P. Locke, *Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections*, p.2

³ Jonathan Bellman: *The Exotic in Western Music*, p. ix

⁴ Locke: *Musical Exoticism*, p. 51 - 54

Rhythmical and structural features

- Repeated rhythmic or melodic patterns
- Ostinato
- Asymmetric phrase structure
- Sudden pauses or long notes

Vocal and instrumental writing

- Chanting
- Monotone
- Extended melismas
- Quick ornaments
- Distinctive use of vocal range and tessitura, such as the 'seductive' mezzo-soprano or 'ethereal' coloratura soprano
- Unusual styles of vocal production, such as lack of vibrato, throbbing vibrato, overly darkened tone
- Unusual words and use of local dialects

Instrumentation

- Foreign musical instruments
- Standard Western instruments used in unusual contexts
 - Extensive solos or arabesques for flute, oboe, cor anglais
 - Unpitched percussion instruments such as tambourine, bass drum, triangle, gong, bells
- Distinctive instrumental techniques
 - Emphatically regular emphasis of repeated rhythms
 - Flexible, floating, imprecise instrumental solos
 - Standard techniques, such as portamento, double stops, pizzicato, used in unusual contexts

Many of these stylistic features only carry exotic connotations in combination, while many also directly contradict each other. It is important to recognise that these stylistic devices do not represent the musical traditions of the foreign culture, but rather the impression Western composers and audiences had of that music.

An example of 19th Century vocal repertoire that draws on these musical conventions to portray a foreign locale and character is Bizet's *Adieux de l'hôtesse arabe* (1866). The opening rhythmic figure in the piano is continued throughout the entire piece, only broken momentarily by expressive pauses and exclamations in the vocal line. The use of the harmonic minor, chromatic, and whole-tone scales in the vocal melody conveys the sensual "Otherness" of the Arabian narrator, which is then further illustrated in the highly chromatic moments, such as a fully diminished D chord over the drone like C in the bass on words such as "Hélas" and "Adieu". Bizet includes many interpretive suggestions in the vocal line, marking moments where the singer should use portamento, and where to colour the tone *avec*

tristesse or to sing in a voice interrupted by sobs (*d'une voix entrecoupée par les sanglots*). It is this type of musical evocation of a place and culture that we most readily associate with the term exoticism.

Ex.1: Bizet: *Adieux de l'hôtesse arabe*, bars 1-9.

No 4. Andantino melanconico. (♩=72) à Madame MIOLAN-CARVALHO.
 CHANT. *p semplice.*
 Andantino. Puisque
 PIANO. *pp*
bien rythme.
 rien ne t'ar-rête en cet heureux pa-ys, Ni l'ombre

Ex. 2: Bizet: *Adieux de l'hôtesse arabe*, bars 55-69

sempre *f* *dim:* *p* *con slancio.* *colla voce.* *cresc.*
soir, de-vant leur porte as-sis, Des'en al-ler dans les é.
a Tempo. *f* *p*
toi les! Hé-las!
a Tempo. *mf* *cresc.* *sf*
mf *f* *portez la voix.* *long. Lent. p tristement.*
A-dieu! A-dieu! beau vo-ya-
cresc. *f crescendo.* *f* *long.*
6831 Ped. *

A Contextualised Approach

While a purely musical analysis can provide an insightful approach to understanding how a composer represents a foreign culture, it is limiting when examining theatrical works. Operatic music functions within the framework of the plot and libretto, enhanced by costumes, sets, stagecraft, and dance. Thus, the creative team can portray and exotic locale or character by more than purely musical means. The words and visual elements in an opera establish the character as belonging to a particular culture or location, and the music further reinforces the character or qualities associated with the foreign culture. This is particularly relevant for Baroque operas, where composers use standard Western musical techniques to construct situations and moods that the audience then understood as being characteristic of the exotic place or characters in question.⁵

By accepting that the representation of a foreign location or people can be constructed by more than purely musical means, we are encouraged to not only consider how a work is constructed, but how it functions within its own particular context. This in turn raises questions regarding what was considered exotic for a particular time and culture, what

⁵ Locke: *Musical Exoticism*, p 62-63

attitudes and values were ascribed to the exotic locale, and how the work supports or challenges the expectations and assumptions that a particular audience would have towards the represented exotic culture. For example, in the modern world we tend to consider an exotic culture as one being geographically and ethnically different from our own. However, exoticising tendencies in Western art traditions are not exclusively driven by distance and race, but rather by a sense of perceived difference. For example, many French comic operas, such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Le Devin du Village* (1752) participate in a degree of "internal exoticising"; for Parisian audiences in the 18th Century, rural France was considered different enough to be typified dramatically in stock characters, and musically in pastoral movements and the inclusion of instruments associated with peasants, such as the musette.⁶

Whether the exotic locale is a close or distant one, what is fundamental to how exoticism functions in a work is a basis of assumed knowledge about the foreign location. For a location to be considered exotic as opposed to fictional, it cannot be entirely imaginary. However, this screen of reality allows the creators of exotic works to project their attitudes, values, and beliefs upon this different location, regardless of how accurate or implausible they would be in the actual location. By presenting an exotic locale which, despite possible differences in beliefs, values and morality, is accepted as being as "real" as the world the audience and composer belong to, the composer (or compositional team in an opera) are able to offer an alternate reality which can reinforce, challenge or subvert the social structure and values of the non-exotic society. Thus, exotic works can be as much about the culture and society they are written in as the exotic ones they depict.

Background to *Les Indes Galantes*

Rameau's second opera *Les Indes Galantes* received its premiere on the 23rd August 1735 at the Académie Royale de Musique. This first performance consisted only of the Prologue and the first two entrées, *Le Turc Généreux* and *Les Incas du Perou*. At the third performance, the third entrée, *Les Fleurs*, was added. After a negative reception of *Les Fleurs*, a heavily revised second version replaced the original entrée on the 11 September.

By early 1736, *Les Indes* had received 28 performances, and on 10 March the fourth and final entrée *Les Sauvages* was added and the opera obtained its final form. It received a total of 185 performances until the last contemporary revival in 1761.

⁶ Locke: *Musical Exoticism*, p.67. Locke explains that not only the use of the instrument itself, but all movements marked "musette" are an evocation of rural life, assumed to be simple and good-hearted.



Ill. 1: Louis – René Boquet: Mlle Dubois as Phany Palla, costume design for the 1761 revival.

Plot Outline

Prologue

The prologue retains the use of mythological characters to explain the theme of the opera: the triumph of love around the world. The young men of Europe are abandoning Hébe, goddess of youth, in order to join Bellone in war. L'Amour decides to fly to the various Indes in order to bear witness to the power of love across the globe.

First Entrée - Le Turc Généreux

Émilie, a French girl, is held captive by the Turkish pasha Osman, who is in love with her. She in turn remains faithful to her husband Valère. After a tempest leaves him shipwrecked

upon the island where Émilie is held captive, Osman recognises Valère as the Frenchman who had previously released the pasha from slavery. Osman grants them both freedom, and allows them to return to France with ships filled with precious gifts.

Second Entrée - Les Incas du Pérou

The Spaniard conquistador Don Carlos is in love with the Incan princess Phani, and they plan to escape during the Festival of the Sun celebrations. However, the Incan priest Huascar is consumed by jealousy and possessiveness towards Phani, and orchestrates a volcanic eruption in order to intimidate her into remaining with her people. Carlos foils his plans, and Huascar is killed by further volcanic eruptions as Phani and Carlos escape together.

Third Entrée Les Fleurs – Original Version

The Persian prince Tacmas is in love with Zaïre, the slave of Ali. Ali is in love with Fatime, Tacmas's slave. Tacmas disguises himself as a woman to get close to Zaïre, and after a case of mistaken identity that threatens to ruin everything, Zaïre and Fatime confess that each loves the other's master. The two men exchange slaves and all take part in the Festival of Flowers.

Les Fleurs – Revised Version

Sultana Fatime suspects her husband Tacmas of infidelity with Atalide. Disguising herself as a slave, she gains the confidence of Atalide and discovers her fears are without cause. The couple are happily reunited and take part in the Festival of Flowers.

Final Entrée - Les Sauvages

In North America, a tribe of Native Americans are preparing to make peace with their European conquerors. Spaniard Don Alvar and Frenchman Damon are both suitors for the chieftain's daughter, Zima. She, however, ridicules the European notion of love, and chooses as her husband the Indian brave, Adario. The entrée concludes with the Great Peace-Pipe Ceremony.

Opéra-ballet

Les Indes Galantes belongs to a uniquely French operatic genre, that of the opéra-ballet. An opéra-ballet generally consists of a prologue and an independent plot for each act (or entrée), which were linked by a unifying theme or idea. In style, it offers a blend of opera, dance and grand spectacle, and there was usually at least one divertissement of songs and dance in each act.

The prototype for the opéra-ballet is André Campra's *L'Europe Galante*, with a libretto by Antoine Houdar de la Motte. This work, first performed in 1697 at the Académie Royale de

Musique, presents the stereotypical behaviours of four different European nations, namely France, Spain, Italy and Turkey, in matters of love. Louis de Cahusac, a later librettist of Rameau's, identified *L'Europe Galante* as the first truly original work in French lyric theatre after Lully and Quinault.⁷ This model, and indeed the theme, was to have a strong influence on Rameau and Fuzelier's work.

According to Christout, the development of the opéra-ballet was the most significant invention in post-Lullian lyric theatre.⁸ The structure of independent acts demanded a constant renewal of attention, and allowed for the introduction of new musical and dramatic innovations. The opéra-ballet as a genre introduced an element of realism and naturalism to French lyric theatre that was to play a significant role in the development of the *opéra-comique*. Unlike the *tragedie lyrique*, where the plots and characters were drawn from Classical mythology or antiquity, the opéra-ballet presented real-life characters in recognisable contemporary settings.⁹

Between Campra's *L'Europe Galante* of 1697 and the premiere of *Les Indes Galantes* in 1735, at least 40 new opéra-ballets were presented in Paris. In 1723, a sub-genre called the *ballet-héroïque* was developed, first presented in *Les Fêtes Grecques et Romaines* by Collin de Blamont and Louis Fuzelier. While the structure of the opéra-ballet and ballet-héroïque are identical, the subject matter of the latter is more noble and elevated, featuring heroic, noble or exotic characters in place of the comic bourgeois, rural and amorous characters of opéra-ballet. Fuzelier designated *Les Indes Galantes* as a ballet-héroïque.

Critical Reception

Les Indes Galantes received a lukewarm initial public response. The libretto was widely condemned as weak, and Rameau's music received a divided response. Many Lullian traditionalists criticised his music as being overly complicated and difficult, while more progressive supporters defended his innovations as bringing new life to theatrical music.

It is difficult to know the exact public reaction to any work of the eighteenth century. As Malherbe explains, opinions were formed and shared more in fashionable salons than in newspapers and journals.¹⁰ Fortunately, there remains to us a certain number of writings in the form of journals and letters that offer insights into the reaction of contemporary audiences to *Les Indes Galantes*.

⁷ Louis de Cahusac, *La danse ancienne et moderne, ou Traité historique de la danse*. (The Hague, 1754). "L'Europe Galante est le premier de nos Ouvrages Lyriques qui n'a point ressemblé aux Opéra de Quinault... ce Spectacle n'est pas moins une composition originale..." p.110

⁸ Marie-Françoise Christout, "L'opéra-ballet de Campra à Rameau, un genre français" in *Les Indes Galantes: L'Avant-Scène Opéra*, p.46

⁹ James. R Anthony, "Opéra-ballet", *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*

¹⁰ Charles Malherbe, foreword to *Les Indes Galantes* by Jean-Philippe Rameau, ed. Camille Saint-Saëns. "Les jugements se rendaient moins alors par la plume que par les conversations; l'opinion se formait non dans les journaux, mais dans les salons..." p. 52

In the November 1735 edition of the *Mercure de France*, a monthly Parisian gazette which aimed to inform elegant society on intellectual developments, fashion and culture, published an article titled “Reflections on the Opéra *Les Indes Galantes*”. The article stated:

The idea of the ballet is charming: it is a shame it has not been executed to its full extent. A more gallant design could not be better suited to the present situation of Europe. It seems that the author has not perceived all the richness, as he says nothing of it in his Avertissement; nevertheless, the Prologue is displayed to us in all its magnificence; but it is only the Fête of the Incas which fully rewards the attention of the spectator.¹¹

The article praised the subject choice of Le Turc Généreux and Les Incas, but further criticised the third entrée, Les Fleurs, for presenting a nonsensical plot, and particularly condemned the farcical disguises used in the plot as being unworthy of the theatre. It was with these criticisms in mind that Rameau and Fuzelier heavily revised Les Fleurs, in order to better please the taste of the Parisian public.

Rameau’s music also came in for its share of criticism. In an anonymous letter to the Abbé Desfontaines, published in *Observations sur les écrits modernes*, the author complains that:

The music is a perpetual witchery; Nature has no part in it. Nothing is so shocking or rough: it is a road where one is jolted incessantly. The musician dispenses with buying the armchair of the Abbé Saint-Pierre. What an excellent joggling chair this opera is, its airs would be very useful to rattle the numb nerves of a paralytic! These violent shocks are different to the gentle movements that Campra, Destouches, Mouret, Montéclair etc know how to use. The unintelligibility, gibberish and neologism want to make speeches in the music: there is too much of it. I am pulled at, scraped, dislocated by this diabolical Sonata of *Les Indes Galantes*! My head is all shaken up by it.¹²

The contents of this letter were later attacked by Voltaire, who argued that the criticisms merely proved that the author possessed neither an ear for music nor any common sense, and ought to have stayed silent on matters that were beyond his power to critique. Indeed, Voltaire was one of the opera’s most enthusiastic supporters. In a letter to Nicolas-Claude Thieriot from September 1735, he states:

I believe that the profusion of his [Rameau’s] semi-quavers might revolt the Lullistes; but over time, it must be the taste of Rameau will become the dominant taste of the nation, as it will be more learned. The ears are formed little by little. Lully has given us the sense of hearing which we did not have; but Rameau will perfect it.¹³

Modern audiences hear Rameau’s music as being different to that of his predecessors by only a certain degree. While his works are larger, more heavily orchestrated and harmonically complex than those of Campra and Destouches, we consider these developments as a continuation and extension of the principles established by earlier composers. It is evident, however, that contemporary audiences heard *Les Indes Galantes* as a different kind of music

¹¹ *Mercure de France*, “Reflexions sur l’Opéra des Indes Galantes”. p. 2367. Translated by the author. Accessed from Gallica: Bibliothèque Nationale de France

¹² As quoted by Charles Malherbe in the foreword to *Les Indes Galantes*. Translation by the author.

¹³ Ibid.

altogether. In the journal *Le Pour et le Contre*, a correspondent reports “I find the music truly Indian, allowing that this nation does well in it, for this extraordinary music is not without beauty.”¹⁴ Evidently, Rameau’s music was unusual enough to be heard as belonging to a different tradition, as so un-French as to be “exotic”.

Despite its uncertain beginning, *Les Indes Galantes* was to become extremely successful and popular. In Diderot’s *Encyclopédie*, Louis de Cahusac wrote:

Les Indes Galantes appeared in 1735 to be an insurmountable difficulty. The majority of spectators departed declaiming against a music supercharged with sixteenth-notes, from which nothing could be retained. Six months later, all of the airs from the overture to the last gavotte, were parodied and known to everyone. By the 1751 revival, our parterre sang *Brillant Soleil* with as much facility as our fathers “psalmised” *Armide est encore plus aimable*.¹⁵

Libretto

Louis Fuzelier

Louis Fuzelier (1672 – 1752) was a dramatist and librettist well established in Parisian literary society. He was twice the co-director of the *Mercure de France* (1721-24, 1744-52) and a prolific writer of stage works. He wrote or collaborated on more than 230 stage works, and frequently had his works being simultaneously performed at all of the major Parisian theatres.

The majority of Fuzelier’s dramatic output was written for the informal Théâtre de la Foire, or the fair theatres of Saint-Germain and Saint-Laurent. Comedies, as well as parodies of famous operas and tragedies were extremely popular in the repertory, and Fuzelier frequently parodied works by Lully, Destouches and Campra. Fuzelier provided cantata texts for Stuck, Campra, Bernier and Courbois, but made his most significant contribution to high musical culture through his libretti for 13 works performed at the Académie Royale. These works are characterised by a lack of sentimentality and touch of cynicism.¹⁶ In the prefaces to his librettos for the Opéra, Fuzelier took pains to justify his subject matter and stage effects, bringing extra legitimacy to his writing by referring to works which he consulted or which support the drama he presents.

The Preface to *Les Indes Galantes*

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Louis de Cahusac, as quoted in Charles Dill, *Monstrous Opera*. p.9

¹⁶ James R. Anthony and Roger Savage, “Louis Fuzelier” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (Second Edition). Ed. Stanley Sadie.

The preface to the 1735 version of *Les Indes Galantes* provides an interesting insight into what Fuzelier hoped to achieve with this work, and the role exoticism plays in achieving this aim. His opening states:

Is an author carefully occupied with pleasing the Public wrong to think that sometimes he must try to divert them without recourse to Gods and Magicians? Perhaps in presenting to this Public, indulgent towards novelty, objects chosen from the most distant climates, they will give their vote to the singularity of a spectacle which furnishes Erato and Terpsichore [the Muses] with the opportunity to exercise their genius.¹⁷

Evidently, Fuzelier was concerned with presenting novelty and entertaining spectacle. Exotic locations provided him with the opportunity to do this without having to resort to the tropes of divine intervention or magic. However, he was also concerned with what we would call today authenticity. He takes pains in the preface to assure the readers that his plots are not fully fictitious or imaginative, and that the foreign spectacles and countries are presented realistically. For example, he directs the readers to the January 1734 edition of the *Mercure de France* for the history of Topal-Osman, a Pasha of Turkey, which formed the basis of *Le Turc Généreux*. For the second entrée, *Les Incas du Pérou*, Fuzelier informs the reader that the ceremony of the Adoration of the Sun is drawn from Garcilasso de la Vega's *L'Histoire des Yncas, Roys du Peru*. He also goes on to stress that the volcanic eruption is a natural phenomenon well documented and observed by naturalists and reliable travellers.

The preface also provides clues as to other opportunities afforded to Rameau and Fuzelier by the use of exoticism. Fuzelier, while explaining the theme of the universal power of Love, states:

But while Lovers all follow the same law, their National Characters are not uniform; this suffices to put in a Lyric Poem [libretto] variety so necessary at present, when Parnassus seems exhausted as a source of simple and natural pleasures.¹⁸

It is evident from this statement that Fuzelier was using the exotic characters in *Les Indes Galantes* as an opportunity to offer a new kind of drama that did not conform to the traditional plots drawn from mythology. That he was also concerned with offering Rameau the opportunity to write a new or different kind of music to match this drama is apparent when he justifies the volcanic eruption. He asks "Will anyone condemn me when I introduce to the Theatre a Phenomenon more realistic than an Enchantment? and also suitable to bring about Chromatic Symphonies?"¹⁹

In an appeal to the good judgement of the public, Fuzelier offers us with one further insight into his objectives in adopting exotic settings in this work. The colonial explorations in the 18th Century were part of a wider scientific development that in turn fed into the principles of

¹⁷ Louis Fuzelier, "Avertissement" as quoted by Charles Malherbe in the foreword to *Les Indes Galantes*. Translation by the author.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

the Enlightenment. Evidently, Fuzelier believed this new way of thinking had a place in the arts, as his final statement in the preface is:

Judicious taste should sooner be born in an enlightened century; in a century witness to the progress of skills that sees each day, guided by true Principles, the acquiring of science without the loss of grace.²⁰



Ill. 2: Zérate: Depiction of a volcanic eruption in *Histoire de la découverte et de la conquête du Pérou*.

²⁰ Ibid.

The Baron de Lahontan

As Fuzelier wrote his Preface for the 1735 edition of *Les Indes Galantes*, there is no mention from the librettist himself regarding the literary sources that informed his plot for the fourth entrée, *Les Sauvages* which was added in 1736. However, while doing background reading on the literary trope of the “noble savage” in the 18th Century, I came across travel writings by the Baron de Lahontan which evidently had an immense influence on Fuzelier. The characterisation of the two American Indian characters are strongly influenced by Lahontan’s information on the social customs. In fact, the primary male character in the entrée shares the same name as the chieftain with whom Lahontan holds extensive dialogues: Adario. Furthermore, elements of Lahontan’s radical criticism of European society are also found, albeit in a more indirect manner, in *Les Sauvages*.

Louis-Armand de Lom d’Arce, Baron de Lahontan (1666 – 1715) was born into minor nobility in the south of France. His father died in 1674, leaving the family close to destitute, despite having been promised certain privileges from the king in appreciation for establishing and enlarging canals in the area.

Lahontan joined a Bourbon regiment as a teenager, and hoping to gain rapid advancement he later transferred to the Compagnies Franche de la Marine, and was sent to Canada to assist in the French colonisation of North America²¹. While stationed in New France, Lahontan had extensive first hand encounters with the Native American population due to the formation of raiding parties consisting of French soldiers and native allies such as the Hurons. Lahontan learnt to speak Algonquian and was interested in Native American customs.

Whilst in New France, Lahontan’s estate and inheritance in France came under dispute from false creditors, and in 1688 he ultimately lost the Barony of Lahontan, associated land and income which was in the possession of the Chamber of Bayonne. In 1691, Lahontan returned to France to present his case in court at Versailles. He was granted absence from the military in New France until the departure of the last ship for Quebec in 1691 to resolve the issue, although his lawyers advised him the case was too complicated to be addressed in that time, and he departed for Quebec before the case was brought to court. In the preface to the 1703 English edition of *New Voyages to North America*, he expresses his disgust at the French legal system:

I envy the state of a poor Savage, who tramples upon Laws, and pays Homage to no Sceptre. I wish I could spend the rest of my Life in his Hutt, and so be no longer expos’d to the chagrin of bending the knee to a set of Men, that sacrifice the publick good to their private interest, and are born to plague honest Men.”²²

His involvement in defending Plaisance, capital of Newfoundland, against the English in King William’s War led King Louis XIV to elevate him to the rank of King’s Lieutenant in

²¹ Louis Marie Le Jeune. “Lom d’Arce, Louis-Armand de, Baron de Lahontan.” In *Dictionnaire general de biographie*. Accessed from World Biographical Information System

²² Louis-Armand de Lom d’Arce de Lahontan, Baron de Lahontan: *New Voyages to North America, Vol. I.* (London: H Bonwicke, 1703) p.ix. Accessed from Internet Archive

Newfoundland. This brought him into contact with the Governor Jacques-François de Monbeton de Brouillon, who was surprised and annoyed by his appointment.²³ Tensions and conflicts between the two men intensified, and after learning that Brouillon was preparing charges of insubordination against him, Lahontan deserted his post and fled to Portugal in 1693. With a royal order issued for his arrest, Lahontan spent the rest of his life in exile in Europe.

New Voyages to North America

While serving in New France, Lahontan kept meticulous notes of his adventures and observations of the new country and the Native American peoples. These observations, along with letters written to an elderly relative in France formed his memoirs *Nouveaux Voyages de Mr. le Baron de Lahontan dans l'Amérique Septentrionale*, first published in The Hague in 1703. In the same year, an English edition appeared as *New Voyages to North America*. The work achieved immediate success, being reprinted in French multiple times per year for the decade following the first publication.²⁴ In addition to English, it was also translated into German and Dutch, and was regularly reprinted in all four languages until 1757.

While Lahontan's writings have fallen into obscurity in modern times, his work was well known by leading European philosophers and intellectuals of the time. The juxtaposition of the new and the old worlds in his writing made a significant contribution to the philosophy of the "noble savage" and the concept of the natural world that would later appear in works by Swift, Diderot, Rousseau and Chateaubriand. His work "utilises the idealised image of a primitive people to better critique European civilisation."²⁵

Lahontan often compares European and Native American societies throughout his writings. However, it is in the supplement to the two volumes, *Dialogues de Monsieur le baron de Lahontan et d'un sauvage dans l'Amérique* that Lahontan goes into great depth in his criticism of European religion, law, monarchical and economic structure, marital arrangements, and medicine. The *Dialogues* is a fictional transcription of four discussions between Lahontan and Adario, a Huron chieftain, comparing their two cultures with Lahontan trying – and failing – to argue the superiority of European civilisation.

While the dialogues themselves are fictional, the character of Adario is not. Lahontan based him on Kondiaronk, a Huron chief also known as The Rat, who led the tribes at Michilimackinac. While officially an ally of the French, Kondiaronk was a shrewd politician and strategist, often undermining French policies and treaties to manoeuvre his tribe into more favourable political and economic positions. He was a key figure in negotiating the 1701 Great Peace of Montreal between the French and 40 Native American tribes. His

²³ David M. Hayne. "Lom d'Arce de Lahontan, Louis-Armand de, Baron de Lahontan." In *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 2. Accessed from Canadian Biographical Archive,

²⁴ Victor Hugo Paltsits. "Lahontan Bibliography." In *Lahontan New Voyages to North America*, vol 1. pp.lv-xci

²⁵ Réginald Hamel. "Lom d'Arce de Lahontan, Louis-Armand de, Baron de Lahontan." In *Dictionnaire des auteurs de langue française en Amérique du Nord*. Accessed from World Biographical Informational System. "utilise l'image idealise d'un peuple primitive pour mieux critique la civilisation europeene."

funeral reflected his status and the esteem in which he was held by the French, and various Native tribes, both allies and enemies.²⁶

Lahontan chronicles meeting Kondarionk in his memoirs, but the views and arguments expressed by Adario in the *Dialogues* are rather the attitudes of Lahontan himself, with the “character” of Lahontan taking on the role of devil’s advocate to further prove the veracity of Adario’s arguments. The two men compare aspects of French and Huron society with not only the aim of educating the reader on the exotic culture, but also to criticise and condemn aspects of French society which Lahontan saw as corrupt.

You *French* folks do all of you make large Pretensions to Faith, and yet you are downright Infidels; you would fain pass for wise People, and at the same Time you are Fools; you take yourselves to be Men of Sense, but at the Bottom Ignorance and Presumption is your True character.²⁷

Take my Advice and turn Huron; for I see plainly a vast Difference between thy Condition and mine. I am Master of my own Body; I have the absolute Disposal of myself; I do what I please; I am the first and last of my Nation; I fear no Man, and I depend only upon the Great Spirit: Whereas thy Body, as well as thy Soul, are doom’d to a Dependence upon thy great Captain; thy Vice-Roy disposes of thee; thou hast not the Liberty of doing what thou hast a Mind to; thou art afraid of Robbers, false Witnesses, Assassins etc., and thou dependest upon an Infinity of Persons, whose Places have raised them above thee.²⁸



²⁶ William Fenton, “Kondarionk, Le Rat” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 2. (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2015).

²⁷ Baron de Lahontan, “Dialogues” in *New Voyages to North America*, vol.2. p111

²⁸ Ibid. p 126-127

Ill. 3: Deserps: L'Homme Sauvage and La Femme Sauvage from *Recueil de la diversité des habits*.

New Voyages to North America and Les Sauvages

The clearest evidence that Fuzelier was familiar with Lahontan's writing comes in the name given to the central male character of *Les Sauvages* – Adario. In addition, the trope of the noble savage is also here used to satirise aspects of French society, albeit in a more veiled and indulgent manner than in Lahontan's original. Within the opera's central theme of love, Fuzelier references Lahontan's arguments of the natural moral superiority of the savage to the Europeans, and also subverts the expectation of the promiscuous exotic sexuality by demonstrating that the Native American characters exhibit more virtue following natural love than the French, who while subscribing to the religious institution of marriage happily ignore the concept of marital fidelity.

A closer comparison of Fuzelier's libretto indicates how well he was acquainted with the arguments put forward in *New Voyages to North America*:

Lahontan:

Long live the Hurons; who, without Laws, without Prisons, and without Torture, pass their Life in a state of Sweetness and Tranquillity, and enjoy a Pitch of Felicity, to which the *French* are utter Strangers.²⁹

We live quietly under the Laws of Instinct and innocent Conduct, which wise Nature has imprinted upon our Minds.³⁰

Fuzelier:

Zima

Nous suivons sur nos bord l'innocente nature,	We follow an innocent nature in our borders,
Et nous n'aimons que d'un amour sans art.	And we love nothing but a love without art.
Notre bouche et nos yeux ignorent	Our mouth and our eyes are unaware of
l'imposture;	deceit;
Sous cette riante verdure,	Under this pleasant green,
S'il éclate un soupir, s'il échappe un regard,	If a sigh bursts, if a glance escapes,
C'est du coeur qu'il part.	It comes from the heart. ³¹

Lahontan:

Your Men glory in the Debauching of Women, as if yielding to the Temptations of Love were not equally criminal in either Sex. Your young Sparks use their utmost Efforts to tempt the Maids and married Women; they set all Means at Work to compass their End; and when Masters of their Wishes, talk publicly of the Adventure; upon which everybody censures the Lady and crys up the Cavalier, whereas the former merits a

²⁹ Baron de Lahontan *New Voyages to North America*, Vol.2. p.130

³⁰ Ibid. p.133

³¹ Louis Fuzelier, Libretto to *Les Indes Galantes*. "Les Sauvages", scene 2

Pardon, and the latter deserves to be punished. How do ye think your Women should be faithful to you, if you are faithless to them?³²

Fuzelier:

Alvar (*montrant Damon*)

(*pointing to Damon*)

L'habitant des bords de la Seine
N'est jamais moins arrêté
Que lorsque l'hymen l'enchaîne ;
Il se fait un gonneur de sa légèreté ;
Et pour l'épouse la plus belle
Il rougirait d'être fidèle.

The Parisian who lives on the banks of the Seine
Is never held captive less
Than when nuptials bind.
He celebrates it for its lightness,
And for the most beautiful bride
He would be embarrassed to be faithful.³³

Lahontan:

I affirm that what you call Silver is the Devil of Devils; the Tyrant of the *French*; the Source of all Evil; the Bane of Souls, and the Slaughter-house of living Persons... This Money is the Father of Luxury, Lasciviousness, Intrigues, Tricks, Lying, Treachery, Falseness, and, in a word, of all the Mischief in the World. The Father sells his Children, Husbands expose their Wives to Sale, Wives betray their Husbands, Brethren kill one another, Friends are False, and all this proceeds from Money. Consider this, and then tell me if we are not in the Right of it, in refusing to finger, or so much as to look upon that cursed Metal.³⁴

Fuzelier:

Zima, Adario

Dans nos retraites,
Grandeur, ne viens jamais
Offrir tes faux attraits!
Ciel, tu les as faites
Pour l'innocence et pour la paix.
Jouissons dans nos asiles,
Jouissons des biens tranquilles!
Ah! peut-on être heureux, Quand on forme
d'autres vœux?

In our refuge
Grandeur, never come
To offer your false charms!
Heaven, you have made them
For innocence and for peace
Let us revel in our sanctuaries,
Let us revel in the tranquillity!
Ah! Can we be happy,
When we form other desires?³⁵

From this comparison of extracts of Fuzelier's libretto and the Dialogues of the Baron de Lahontan, it is evident that the influence of Lahontan was not merely a superficial appropriation of the name Adario. Rather, *New Voyages to North America* gave Fuzelier the essential plot device of a woman being at liberty to choose her own spouse, and coloured the characterisation of not only the Native Americans, but the depictions of the European

³² Baron de Lahontan *New Voyages to North America*, Vol.2. p.178

³³ Fuzelier, Libretto for *Les Indes Galantes*. "Les Sauvages", scene 3.

³⁴ Baron de Lahontan *New Voyages to North America*, Vol.2. p. 142

³⁵ Fuzelier, Libretto for *Les Indes Galantes*. "Les Sauvages", scene 6.

characters as well. Thus the libretto of *Les Sauvages* echoes, however faintly, the radical social commentary expounded by Lahontan.

Exoticism in *Les Indes Galantes*

For a more detailed look into the way exoticism features within the music and performance of *Les Indes Galantes*, I have decided to limit my focus to two of the four entrées, *Les Incas du Pérou* and *Les Sauvages*. My reasons for excluding the other two, *Le Turc Généreux* and *Les Fleurs* are based in questions of practicality and usefulness for me as an artist.

While the roles of Emilie (*Le Turc*) and Zima (*Les Sauvages*) were both created by Marie Pélissier, modern performances tend to cast a more full-lyric soprano in the role of Emilie. It is thus an impractical approach from an artistic perspective to focus on a role that I am unlikely to perform in the near future. While the entrée of *Le Turc* is certainly intriguing from the perspective of exoticism, it belongs to the more established tradition of Turkish or Janissary style music first explored by Lully in *Le bourgeois gentilhomme* (1670) and continuing past Rameau into works by Gluck and Mozart.³⁶ The musical and dramatic expression of Turkish “Otherness” in Western operatic works has also been explored in more depth by scholars such as Whaples, Locke and Betzwieser.³⁷

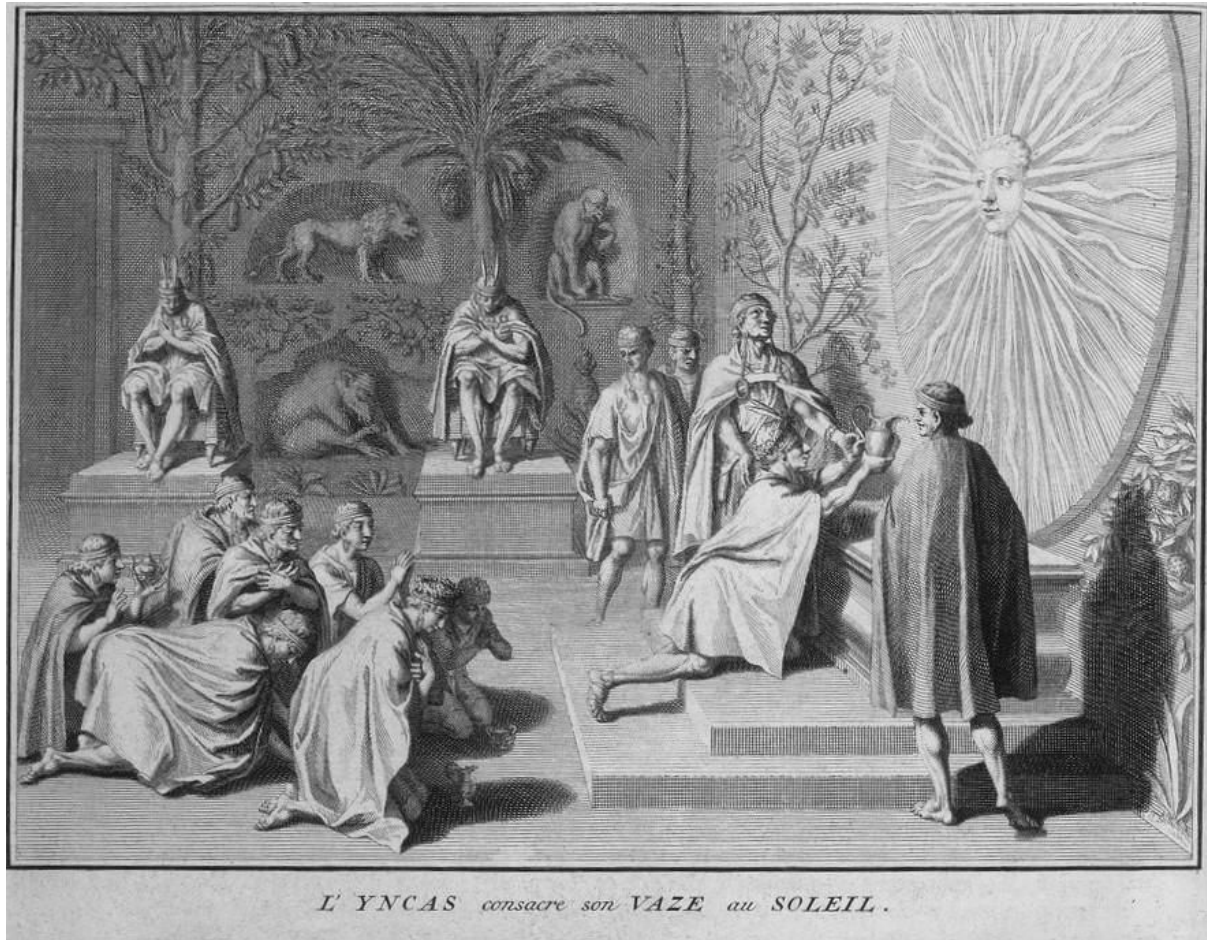
The role of Fatime in *Les Fleurs* is perfectly suited to my voice type, it is indeed her aria *Papillon Inconstant* that I sang in the first project with the Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century that sparked my interest in this opera. However, the entrée of *Les Fleurs* offers many practical difficulties. It is the act which underwent the most extensive revisions, the original plot and music having been rewritten and replaced due to the negative public reception. This raises the questions of which version to use, and the problems of how to find a definitive edition I felt to be outside the scope of this research. From the perspective of examining the role of exoticism in this work, *Les Fleurs* has less to offer than the other entrées. It is the only plot in which all the characters come from the foreign locale, there is no interaction between European and exotic peoples. It was also originally intended to be the ending act of the opera, and was much praised for the *Ballet des Fleurs* which formed the final divertissement. From the review in the September 1735 edition of the *Mercure de France*, it seems evident that the exotic locale in *Les Fleurs* primarily facilitated a lavish and entertaining spectacle, and that this entrée is less in the style of the ballet-héroïque, and more like the conventional opéra-ballet, where dance has a slightly greater importance than the sung plot.³⁸

³⁶ Locke, *Musical Exoticism*. p.111

³⁷ Thomas Betzwieser: *Exotismus und “Türkenoper” in der französischen Musik der Ancien Régime*. Betzwieser’s study of representation of Turks and Turkish music in 17th and 18th Century French opera is quite comprehensive, examining works by Lully, Campra, Gluck, Grétry, as well as Rameau’s *Les Indes Galantes*. However, this work has not been translated from German as of yet, and so my knowledge of his research and only informed through quotation by other authors, such as Locke and Whaples.

³⁸ James R. Anthony. *Opéra-ballet*. *Grove Music Online: Oxford Music Online*

Les Incas du Pérou



Ill. 4: Picart: The Incas Worshipping the Sun, from *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses*.

It has already been established from Fuzelier's Preface to the libretto that one of the intentions behind presenting a story set in Peru was to provide the audience with a new form of spectacle that did not rely on the divine "merveilleux", through the earthquake and volcanic eruption that concludes the *entrée*. While this entertaining spectacle is a notable feature of the act, the overall tone of the drama is much more intense than the other acts of *Les Indes Galantes*. Indeed, Girdlestone goes so far as to argue that it is the only *entrée* with any dramatic interest, and the contrasts of character, variety of passions, and conflicts between personalities and civilisations offered by the libretto inspired Rameau to write some of his most exciting music.³⁹ In form and intensity, *Les Incas* is closer to a Lullian *tragedie*

³⁹ Cuthbert Girdlestone. *Jean-Philippe Rameau: His Life and Work*. pp.330-331

lyrique in miniature, rather than an entrée of an opéra-ballet.⁴⁰ Thus it is not surprising that the singer who first created the role of Phani, Marie Antier, was the *première actrice* of the Académie Royal de Musique, and was known for her leading tragic roles in works by Lully.⁴¹

Like with the Baron de Lahontan and *Les Sauvages*, with *Les Incas* Fuzelier drew upon an existing literary tradition to create the central drama in this entrée. In his Preface, he takes pains to stress that the volcanic eruption is a natural, earthly phenomenon, and urges his audience to look beyond the sacred mantle of religion to question the motivations of religious leaders who exploit the credulity of their followers. In this he echoes Pierre Bayle, who in 1680 published a response refuting arguments that the appearance of a comet was a sign from God predicting calamity:

...were Comets the Sign of any Calamitys different from natural and instituted Signs, t'were fit God should imprint on 'em some peculiar Characters, to discover what they really imported... Now this Almighty God has not done: on the contrary, he has left 'em so destitute of all the true Marks of a significative Prodigy, that one might justly think he rather designed them to check our natural Credulity.⁴²

On the surface, it appears Fuzelier is criticising the corruption of an idolatrous priest, condemning pagan religion. However, as Incan society was seen in eighteenth century France as being more civilised and developed than that of other New World cultures, the condemnation of Huascar and his corrupt actions in the name of religion could be read as an allegory for corruption in the Catholic Church, reflecting the anti-clerical attitudes of some Enlightenment philosophers. As Starobinski explains “By highlighting the formal similarities between pagan and Christian sovereignty (regarding, for example, the structural function of the supreme deity or the role or miracles), one could, without risk, launch a polemic against Christianity (or its superstitious aspects) by pretending to attack only the pagan gods...”⁴³

Rameau's orchestral depiction of the volcanic eruption that concludes the entrée is a particularly famous instance of “nature-painting”. Rameau draws on the conventional rushing string figures, tremolando and repeated figures associated with scenes of thunderstorms and the like, building the harmonic tension degree by degree to a G minor seventh chord with added thirteenth degree in bar 6, as shown in Example 3.⁴⁴

The orchestral figures depicting the earthquake and eruption continue throughout the dialogue in the final scenes of the entrée, the first time this descriptive kind of accompanied recitative had been used in scenes for more than one character. In fact, the orchestra of the Opéra found this section of music too difficult to play, and Rameau was forced to write simpler alternative music, as evidenced by the crossings-out in the manuscript (see Example

⁴⁰ Bouissou. *Les Indes Galantes* [CD Booklet]. Harmonia Mundi, 1991.

⁴¹ Julie Anne Sadie. “Marie Antier”. *Grove Music Online: Oxford Music Online*
http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.access.authkb.kb.nl/subscriber/article/grove/music/01017?q=marie+antier&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit

⁴² Pierre Bayle. *Miscellaneous reflections, occasion'd by the comet which appear'd in December 1680*, Vol. 2. p. 538

⁴³ Jean Starobinski. *Blessings in Disguise, Or the Morality of Evil*. 1993. As cited in Cole, p. 231.

⁴⁴ Girdlestone, p.334

4).⁴⁵ The exotic plot offered Rameau the opportunity to develop and extend his compositional techniques for dramatic effect – even beyond the capabilities of his musicians. As Sadler argues, in this extended scene of three hundred and fifty bars of continuous music, it is hard not to recognise Rameau as the innovator of techniques that were still seen as adventurous in the time of Gluck and Mozart.⁴⁶

Ex. 3 (*Audio 1*): Rameau: *Les Incas du Pérou*, Scene 5, Tremblement de terre, bars 1-7. From *Les Indes Galantes*, ed. N. Sceaux.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.334

⁴⁶ Graham Sadler. “Les Indes Galantes” *Grove Music Online: Oxford Music Online*

Tremblement de terre

Pr dessus

2^e dessus

Hautes-contre

Tailles

Bassons

B.C.

doux

doux

doux

doux

fort

4

fort

fort

doux

6

fort

fort

fort

Ex. 4: Rameau: *Les Incas du Pérou*, Scene 6. From *Les Indes Galantes*, manuscript held in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.



Rameau's musical characterisation of the Incan priest Huascar is complex and multi-faceted, "he has been conceived as a whole, and not just a succession of emotional states."⁴⁷ His domineering and coercive character is illustrated clearly in the aria *Obéissons sans balancer* (Ex.5). Huascar's melody is characterised by short scalar fragments and leaps of fifths, sevenths or octaves, and is doubled by the bass instruments. Miriam Whaples identifies this texture as being a device associated with exotic figures. While it was fairly routine for the continuo to double a vocal bass line, Whaples argues that "in the exotic adaptation...the voice part is "instrumental", usually ungainly and primitive in effect."⁴⁸ In addition to this, the upper strings play an imitative response to Huascar's disjunct melody, illustrating his demand for unhesitating obedience.

While Huascar's dominant character trait is that of a corrupt leader unfit for his position of authority, both Fuzelier and Rameau take moments to explore more nuanced aspects of his personality. In the air which begins the Festival of the Sun divertissement, *Soleil, on a détruit tes superbes asiles*, the dire implications for the Incan culture under colonial rule are emphasised. On the word "détruit" (Ex.6), Rameau adds the dissonant raised fourth to what would otherwise be a fairly straightforward six-three chord, destroying the simplicity of the

⁴⁷ Girdlestone, p.331

⁴⁸ Whaples. "Early Exoticism Revisited". In Bellman, *The Exotic in Western Music*. p.21

harmony just, as the war with the Spanish invaders has destroyed the surrounding countryside. There are striking similarities between this aria and Adario's opening aria in *Les Sauvages*: both are slow, serious airs in minor keys in ABA form, both have expressive instrumental ritornelli and use some of Rameau's most expressive harmonic language to lament the impacts of colonial invasion.⁴⁹

Ex.5 (Audio 2): Rameau: *Obeissons sans balancer*, bars 1-19. From *Les Indes Galantes*, ed. N. Sceaux.

Simphonie

Violons

[HUASCAR]

[B.C.]

O-bé-is-sons sans balan-cer Lors-que le Ciel com-

man-de. O-bé-is-sons sans balan-cer Lors-que le Ciel com-man-de.

Nous ne pou-vons trop nous pres-ser D'ac-cor-der ce qu'il nous de-man-de; Y re-fle-chir, c'est l'of-fen-

ser. Y re-fle-chir, c'est l'of-fen-ser. Lors-que le Ciel com-man-de, O-bé-is-sons sans balan-

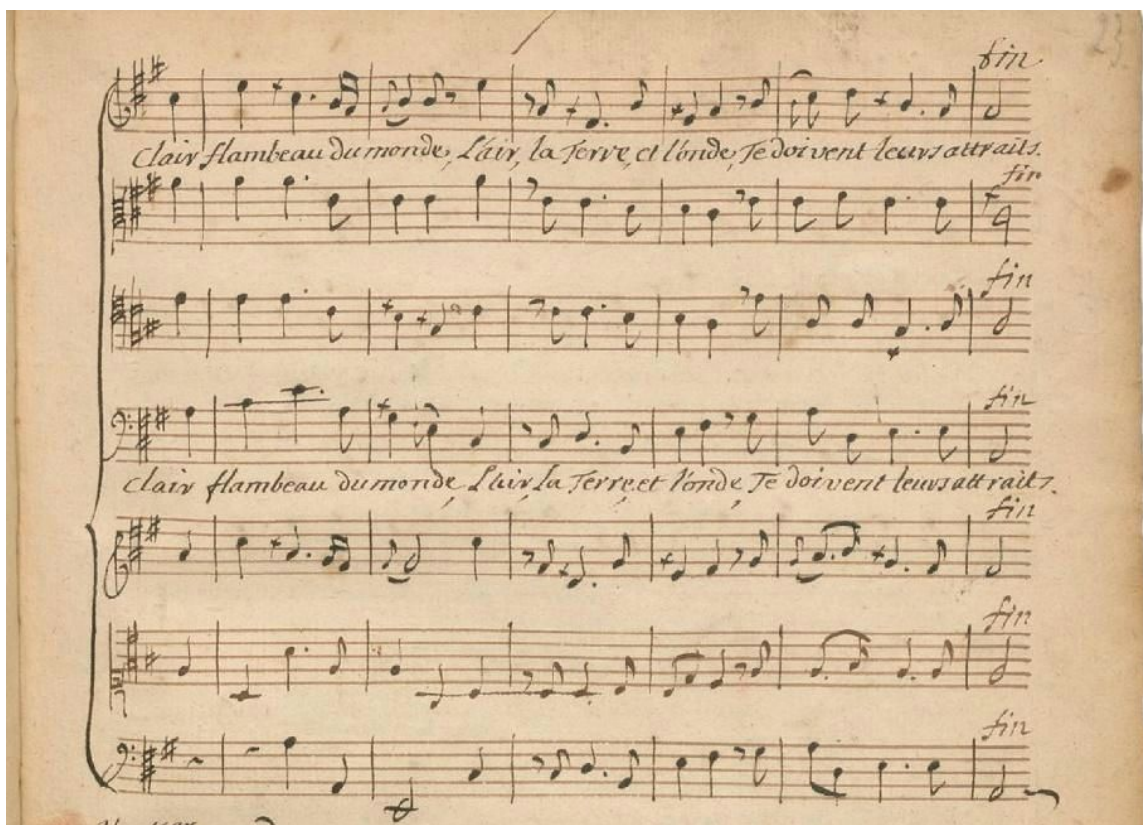
⁴⁹ Catherine Cole. "Nature" at the Opéra: Sound and Social Change in France 1750-1779. pp.260-261

Ex.6 (Audio 3): Rameau: *Soleil, on a détruit*, bars 9-16 From *Les Indes Galantes*, manuscript held in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.



This sympathetic moment, however, lasts briefly. Huascar leads the Incas in their worship of the sun, despite having admitted that his plan to terrorise Phani into accepting him as her husband will engulf them in fire and blood. The hymn-like *Clair flambeau du monde* (Ex.7) is evocative of Christian religious music, and the structure of the chorus repeating the melody after Huascar highlights the relationship of the priest to his congregation. The consonant, homophonic choral texture contrasts strongly with the violence of Huascar's plan, further highlighting his hypocrisy in leading such a show of devotion.

Ex.7 (Audio 4): Rameau: *Clair flambeau du monde* (chorus), bars 7-13. From *Les Indes Galantes*. Manuscript held in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.



Phani's measured and lyrical music is less distinctly characterised. Her aria *Viens, Hymen* uses fairly conventional consecutive thirds and sixths to depict the chains of wedlock she implores to be bound with. The instrumentation of the soprano voice and flute, with the violins serving as the effective bass line is one Rameau had previously used in *Rossignols amoureux* from *Hippolyte et Aricie* – an air also dedicated to the joys of love and marriage. However, when Phani's more tender and lyrical style is juxtaposed against the more dramatic and changeable Huascar, she becomes the dramatic foil for both his corruption and excessive passion.

Just as she is the object of amorous conquest in the struggle between Huascar and the Spaniard Don Carlos, so is she caught between their differing ideological positions. In Phani, the decision to step away from unthinking superstition to the rationality of the Enlightenment becomes a truly human, emotional experience, not just an intellectual shift. As she explains to Carlos:

...Quoi ! Sans inquiétude,
Brise-t-on à la fois
Les liens du sang et des lois?
Excusez mon incertitude!

...What, without concern,
Do we loosen at one time
Both ties of blood and of laws?
Excuse my uncertainty!⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Fuzelier, Libretto to *Les Indes Galantes*. "Les Incas du Pérou", scene 1.

Allegorically speaking, Phani faces the same intellectual challenge that French society was presented with in the eighteenth century: to recognise some of the traditions, beliefs and presumed knowledge of the society as inaccurate, and sometimes deliberately misleading, and to take the individual responsibility to engage with the world in a rational and deliberate way. Both musically and dramatically, Rameau and Fuzelier characterise Phani in such a way that the audience is encouraged to identify with her – she does not embody exotic “Otherness”, but rather illustrates the similarities and parallels between “Us” and “Them”.

Les Sauvages

Like *Les Incas*, the fourth and final entrée, *Les Sauvages*, has amorous interactions between warring native and colonial powers at the heart of its plot. While Fuzelier’s libretto removes any direct references to the political struggle, Rameau opens the entrée with a musical representation that clarifies the struggle for Zima’s hand as a parallel to the struggle for military control in North America.

The D major brass fanfare in the opening ritornello – a motive that returns throughout the entrée – is a musical symbol representing the victory of the Europeans and loss of native liberty. A fragment of this fanfare repeatedly interrupts Adario’s first recitative (Ex. 8), staying resolutely in A major (as the dominant of D major), despite the expressive modulations reflecting his fear of losing Zima.

As Cole explains, “Rameau’s placement of the military trumpets and timpani spotlights the intrusiveness of the conquerors...the ever present fanfares do not let us forget the political stakes at hand. They eloquently point to the savages’ loss of liberty...”⁵¹ With this backdrop in mind, Adario’s aria *Rivaux des mes exploits* (Ex. 9) takes on a significance greater than that of merely an anxious lover, and becomes a protest against colonial dominance.

Rivaux de mes exploits, rivaux de mes amours,	Rivals of my exploits, rival of my loves,
Hélas! dois-je toujours	Alas! must I always
Vous céder la victoire?	Cede victory to you?
Ne paraissez-vous dans nos bois	Do you appear in our wood
Que pour triompher à la fois	Only to triumph at once over
De ma tendresse et de ma gloire?	My tenderness and my glory? ⁵²

Adario’s emotional plight is highlighted by Rameau’s sophisticated musical setting of this aria. The word “rivaux” is emphasised by a 7th chord with an added 9th, and a tonic cadence is delayed until almost the end of the A section. The rhythmic accents alternate between the first and second beats of the bar, creating a sense of instability that mirrors the uncertainty of his position.

⁵¹ Cole, *Nature*. p. 54

⁵² Fuzelier, Libretto to *Les Indes Galantes*. “Les Sauvages”, scene 1.

Ex. 8 (*Audio 5*): Rameau: *Les Sauvages*, Scene 1, Adario's recitative bars 9-26. From *Les Indes Galantes*, ed. N. Sceaux

9

Tous

Parties

Tous

lieux trouve en - cor des al - lar - mes : J'y vois deux Etran-

Tous B.C.

4 6 4 7 4

16

gers il-lus-tres par les ar-mes, E-pris de l'Objet de mes vœux ; Je

Tromp.

Tous

B.C.

22

crains leurs sou-pirs dan-ge-reux, Et que leur sort bril-lant, pour Zi-ma n'ait des char-mes.

On reprend la ritournelle

Ex.9 (Audio 6): Rameau: *Rivaux des mes exploits*, Bars 1-15. From *Les Indes Galantes*, balet réduit à quatre grands concerts avec une nouvelle entrée complete. Ed. Boivin and Leclerc.

The image shows a musical score for a scene from Rameau's *Les Indes Galantes*. It consists of two systems of music. Each system has a vocal line at the top and a string line below it. The vocal line is in a 3/4 time signature and contains the lyrics: "Rivaux de mes exploits, rivaux de mes amours, Hélas! doi je tou = jours vous céder la victoire Rivaux de mes exploits, rivaux de mes a =". The string line is marked "Violons." and "Tous." and features a continuous, energetic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The score is divided into two systems, each with a vocal line and a string line.

In contrast to this emotional depth, Zima's two European suitors are given a simpler characterisation. The Frenchman, Damon, embodies fickleness, an approach to love which in comparison to the native way of following natural laws, is artificial and insincere. This is reflected in Damon's virtuosic vocal style with large leaps and ornamental melismas (Ex.10). This artificial style is further reinforced by the orchestra, with the violins constantly active, playing restlessly energetic patterns which reflect Damon's desire to constantly move on to the next amorous conquest.

Don Alvar has decidedly less musical material than Damon, but his brief aria *L'habitant des bords de la Seine* (Ex. 11) clearly illustrates his controlling, inflexible nature. Everything about his music is square, with the constant march of the crotchets and dotted quavers creating a graceless and pedestrian effect, illustrating his jealous approach to love.

Ex. 10 (Audio 7): Rameau: *La terre, les cieux et les mers*, bars 6-36. From *Les Indes Galantes*, ed. N. Sceaux

6

doux

La Ter -

12

re, les Cieux, et les Mers

Nous of-frent tour-à-

7 7

18

tour cent spec-ta - cles di - vers ; Les plus beaux jours en-tr'eux

23

ont de la dif-fe - ren - ce ; N'est- il deffen - du qu'à nos cœurs De gou-

29

ter les douceurs Que ver-se par tout l'in-cons-tan - ce. N'est- il deffen - du qu'à nos

Ex. 11 (Audio 8): Rameau: *L'habitant des bords de la Seine*, bars 32 -45. From *Les Indes Galantes*, ed. N. Sceaux.

32

lors-que l'Hy-men l'en - chaî - ne ; Il se fait un plai - sir de

7 6 9 6 7 5

36

sa le - ge - re - té. Et pour l'E-pou - se la plus bel - le Il rou-gi - roit d'ê - tre fi -

6 6 7 6 7 6 7

41

fort *doux* *fort* *doux*

del - le, Il rou - gi - roit Il rou - gi - roit d'ê - tre fi - del -

6 6 5 6 5 6 5 6 7

In contrast to these two excessively stylised characterisations, Zima's music is straightforward, elegant and graceful. Girdlestone goes so far as to state that "Rameau gives

[Zima] the most bewitching music in the whole opera...”⁵³ Harmonically, she is immediately differentiated from the other characters by being allocated the first aria of the entrée set in a major key. In *Nous suivons sur nos bords* (Ex. 12), as in Phani’s aria *Viens, Hymen*, Rameau alters the orchestral texture by removing the bass line and continuo section, leaving the violins to accompany Zima’s explanation of natural love with long chains of parallel thirds. The effect is one of simplicity, innocence and honesty, which the Europeans with their distorted concept of love completely misunderstand.

Ex.12 (Audio 9): Rameau: *Nous suivons sur nos bords*, bars 29-50. From *Les Indes Galantes*, ed. N. Sceaux.

29

Sous cette nais-san - te ver - du-re, S'il é-clate un soupir, s'il é - chape un regard, C'est du

36

cœur qu'il part. Nous sui-vons sur nos bords l'inno-cen - te na - tu - re, Et nous n'ai-

44

mons que d'un amour sans art, Et nous n'ai-mons que d'un a - mour sans art.

In Zima’s final aria *Régnez plaisirs et jeux*, her vocal style changes radically to become exuberant and virtuosic. Rameau incorporates the trumpet and timpani of the military fanfare

⁵³ Girdlestone, p. 342

into this aria, fusing the symbol of European victory with the native expression of natural love. Cole believes this musical “Europeanising” of Zima is Rameau deliberately creating a harmonious conclusion to the opera that renders the social criticism of the themes in the libretto less obviously subversive.⁵⁴ However, I would suggest that the brass and timpani are more strongly associated with victory than with Europe, and so Zima’s appropriation of these orchestral colours reinforces her moral superiority and victory over the immoral Europeans, rather than undermining it.

Ex. 13 (Audio 10): Rameau: *Régnez plaisirs et jeux*. From *Les Indes Galantes*, *balet réduit à quatre grands concerts avec une nouvelle entrée complète*. Ed. Boivin and Leclerc.

The image shows a page of a musical score, page 217, from Rameau's *Les Indes Galantes*. The score is for the aria "Régnez plaisirs et jeux" by Zima. It features a vocal line for Zima and an orchestral accompaniment. The vocal line is in G major and 3/4 time. The orchestral accompaniment includes strings, woodwinds (flutes, oboes, bassoons), brass (trumpets, horns), and timpani. The score is marked with various dynamics and articulations, including "doux", "fort", "Triomphez", and "danse noce bois, tri-om-pez". The page number "217." is in the top right corner.

Les Sauvages and the Question of Musical Authenticity

By far the movement most often addressed by scholars in *Les Sauvages* is the rondo *Forêts Paisibles* which forms the centre of the divertissement. Rameau adapted this piece from an earlier harpsichord piece, also called *Les Sauvages*, published in *Nouvelles Suites de Pièces de Clavecin* in 1726/27. In a letter from October 1727 to Houdar de la Motte, Rameau describes this piece as “characterising the song and dance of the savages who appeared at the Théâtre-Italien a year or so ago.”⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Cole, p.84

⁵⁵ As quoted in Roger Savage: *Rameau's American Dancers*. p.444

Rameau is referring to a performance given by two Native American tribesmen, brought to Paris from Louisiana. The September 1725 edition of the *Mercure de France* gives an in depth account of the spectacle:

Two Savages recently arrived from Louisiana, tall and well-made, around 25 years of age, danced three kinds of dances, together and separately, and in a manner to leave no doubt that the steps and leaps which they make, they have learnt far from Paris. What they claim to represent is without doubt very easy to understand in their country, but here nothing is more difficult to comprehend: here is what we have been able to understand.

The first dancer represented a Chief of his nation, clothed more modestly than they are in Louisiana; but in a way that the nudity of his body was noticeable enough. He had on his head a sort of crown, not rich but very wide, ornamented by feathers of different colours. The other had nothing to distinguish him from a simple warrior. By his manner of dancing and by his rhythmic attitudes, the first made clear to the second that he came to propose peace, and presented the *Calumet* or peace standard to his enemy. Together they danced the dance of peace. The second war-dance expressed an assembly of savages, where they decide to wage war against such and such a people, and one illustrates all the horrors of doing so. Those who agree with this sentiment join the dance. In the third, the warrior goes first to discover the enemy, armed with a bow and quiver full of arrows, while the other sits on the ground beating a drum or type of kettledrum not bigger than a hat block. After having discovered the enemy, the warrior returns to inform his chief. He next acts out the combat in which he is supposed to have defeated the enemy. After which they dance together the victory dance.⁵⁶



Ill. 5: Montanus: Native American dancers, from *America: Being an accurate description of the New World*.

⁵⁶ *Mercure de France*, "Spectacles" September 1725, pp.2274 - 2276 Translation by the author. Accessed from Gallica: Bibliothèque Nationale de France

The fact that Rameau's harpsichord piece was inspired by a genuine Native American ceremony he witnessed has led many scholars and musicologists to search for traces of transcription or appropriation of what he may have heard. Savage argues that Rameau chose a bare, two-part texture with moments of dialogue between the parts of characterise the Louisianans' choreography, with considerable harmonic and enharmonic strangeness reflecting the many turnings, motions and contortions described in accounts of native ceremonies. The consistent minim pulse and descending scales in the right hand he interprets as Rameau attempting to evoke the descending arcs of vocal monody supported by insistent drumbeats that are key features of much Native American music.⁵⁷

Ex. 14: Rameau: *Les Sauvages*. From *Nouvelles suites de pièces de clavecin*. Ed. Boivin and Leclerc.

Les Sauvages. 25

The musical score for 'Les Sauvages' is presented in four systems. Each system consists of a treble and bass staff joined by a brace. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 2/4. The right hand (treble staff) plays a continuous minim pulse with descending scales, while the left hand (bass staff) provides a harmonic accompaniment. The piece is marked 'Allegretto' and ends with a repeat sign. The number '25' is written in the top right corner of the first system.

Rameau incorporated *Les Sauvages* into the divertissement of the fourth entrée of *Les Indes Galantes* where it provides the musical backdrop for the *Danse du Grand Calumet de la Paix*. The structure of the rondo remains the same, ABACA, initially played by the orchestra, and repeated as a vocal duet and with the chorus in the refrain. Whaples argues that the rondo is

⁵⁷ Savage, *Rameau's American Dancers*. p. 447-449

so different from anything else in the opera that it is impossible not to read exotic intent in the “luxuriant combination of chromaticism, sinuous melody and long unresolved dissonances.”⁵⁸

Ex. 15 (Audio 11): Rameau: *Forêts Paisibles*, bars 49-64. From *Les Indes Galantes*. Ed. N. Sceaux

49 Duo

[ZIMA]
Jou - is - sons dans nos a - - zi - les, Jou - is -

[ADARIO]
Jou - is - sons dans nos a - - zi - les, Jou - is -

6 7 6 7 7 6

54

sons des biens tran - quil - les : Ah ! peut - on être heu-

sons des biens tran - quil - les : Ah ! peut - on être heu-

7 6 7 6 4 5 6 6

⁵⁸ Whaples, as quoted in Pisani: *Imagining Native America in Music*. p.39

60

reux Quand on for - me d'au - tres vœux ?

reux Quand on for - me d'au - tres vœux ?

5 +4 6 9/7 6/5 7/#

On reprend le chœur
forets &c

Pisani believes that the entire structure of the divertissement in *Les Sauvages* follows that of the peace pipe ceremony described by Louis Hennepin in *New Discovery of a Vast Country in America* (1683)⁵⁹:

Ceremony as described by Hennepin

- Preludium: accompanied by singing, the dancers blow smoke over the *Manitoa* and pass the calumet from person to person.
- Scene I: the leader begins the dance, offering the peace pipe to the sun and to the spectators to smoke
- Scene II: while the drums beat, the leader acts out a fight with one of the warriors, he then give a speech recounting his victorious battles and receives a gift, passing the calumet to the next person. This sequence continues until all the calumet returns to the leader.
- Conclusion: the leader presents the peace pipe to the visiting nation and begins the feast.

Rameau and Fuzelier's structure

- Instrumental prelude followed by the arias and chorus *Bannissons nos tristes alarmes*.
- *Danse du Grand Calumet de la Paix* (Forêts paisibles rondo)
- *Deux menuets for the Guerriers et les Amazones* – the return of the timpani corresponds with the descriptions of drums.
Régnez plaisirs et jeux – instead of recounting victorious battles, Zima sings of the triumph of nature's laws in Native lives.
- Chaconne - Rameau's use of a drone to imitate the sound of the musette evokes a pastoral sound that reflects the exotic location and peaceful conclusion of the ceremony.

⁵⁹ Pisani, p.40-41. Description taken from Pisani, side by side comparison done by author.

While it is interesting that Pisani is able to draw parallels between the traditional structure of a calumet ceremony and the structure of the divertissement in *Les Sauvages*, I find the link too tenuous to be able to agree that Rameau and Fuzelier deliberately followed this plan in order to accurately represent an American Indian ceremony onstage. I have the same hesitancy accepting the arguments presented by Savage to support his reading of certain musical elements in *Forêts Paisibles* as imitating an authentic indigenous style. The fact that Rameau witnessed the performance at the Théâtre-Italien and wrote a piece which characterised what he experienced is not convincing proof that he was concerned with transcribing or imitating what he heard. Rather, instead of trying to recreate this music, he manipulates the traditional conventions of his own time and place to create a sense of difference, that in context we find a convincing characterisation of an exotic locale and culture.

Rameau's act of self-quoting a piece already well known in France and associated with Native American culture encourages the audience to interpret this music as the genuine voice and expression of these characters. The music is European, but unusual enough in its use of chromaticism, angular melodic figures and repeated rhythmic cells to convey "imagination, difference, and a strong feeling of empathy."⁶⁰ As Cole explains, "Rameau's conception of native culture was necessarily translated into terms comprehensible to his audience...the question of musical authenticity is not what determines realism."⁶¹ Nor does it determine impact or effectiveness.

The Artistic Process and Implications for a Modern Performer

Reflections on the International Rameau Summer School 2015

When I began my research into exoticism in *Les Indes Galantes*, I planned to document my personal artistic practices involved by recording a selection of arias from the opera appropriate to my voice type: once at the beginning before going in depth into the research, and again at the end, and compare and contrast the results to determine what had changed in my vocal approach and interpretation as a result of my research. I had already recorded *Papillon Inconstant*, Fatime's aria from *Les Fêtes des Fleurs* in 2014 in concert with the Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century, and in late 2014 I also made a recording of *Sur nos bords*, one of Zima's arias from *Les Sauvages*.

However, as I did my reading into how exoticism functions in this type of opera, it became apparent to me that this approach was not going to yield the most relevant results. Ralph P. Locke's writings on the full context approach to exploring the function of exoticism made me realise that narrowing the focus to only isolated moments of music, and ignoring the

⁶⁰ Strohm. "Les Sauvages, Music in Utopia and the Decline of the Courtly Pastoral." *Il Saggiatore Musicale*, Vol. 11, no. 1. p.49

⁶¹ Cole. p.88

interaction between music, drama and staging, was an approach that didn't reflect the key aspects of examining exoticism in an 18th Century opera.

At the suggestion of my research coach Charles Toet, I contacted Lisete da Silva, a flute player and Rameau expert based in London, to discuss the significance of Enlightenment philosophy in Rameau's operatic works. She is a member of the International Rameau Ensemble, who hold a yearly Summer School in London exploring French Baroque music for instrumentalists and singers. The 2015 Summer School would include preparing and performing excerpts from *Les Indes Galantes*, directed by Dionysios Kyropoulos, a stage director and specialising in historical acting techniques. While not a fully staged performance, I decided that performing an excerpt from the opera in a semi-staged concert version would provide a more relevant performing experience in which to explore the considerations and challenges that could arise from my research topic.

The 2015 International Rameau Summer School was held on the 3rd and 4th September in London. The extract from *Les Indes Galantes* I was involved in was scenes VI and VII from *Les Incas du Pérou*, singing the role of Phani. In preparation, we were sent a list of drama exercises to complete before the beginning of the course, which I have included in an appendix. These exercises were designed to encourage the singers to develop their own dramatic motivations for their characters, as well as to ensure that we were well prepared before the intensive two days of coaching, staging and performance.

I was very satisfied that the director valued the drama and felt there was justification to do this kind of dramatic preparation in a work that is often dismissed as being of poor quality poetry and dramatic intensity. Yet what struck me was that this modern "method acting" approach to developing these characters relied entirely on our own imaginations and personal experiences – in essence I found myself creating a twenty-first century character within an eighteenth century plot. Around this time in my research process I had started to come across the idea that these plots and stories could, to certain receptive members of the Opéra audience, have been read as allegories to the social situation in 18th Century France.

During my time working on these scenes at the IRSS, I found that the modern dramatic approach to developing these characters, whilst giving me many interpretive choices, obscured the clarity of these roles in regards to how they functioned as broader archetypes. In turn, the relationship between the three main roles and their function in illuminating the positive and negative sides of each other's personality traits was diminished, creating less dramatic tension. Musically speaking, Rameau's subtle distinction between the characters through the style of vocal writing was also lessened, as I found myself making dramatic choices which encouraged a sharper vocal delivery that didn't match the lyricism and warmth of much of Phani's music.

Historical Acting and Further Developments

After this experience, I became curious as to how a modern performer could present this work in a way that enhances the often overlooked significance of the drama, while still

satisfying a modern audience. After my brief experience in London working on Baroque gestures and postures with Dionysios Kyropoulos, I became interested in how these roles would have been performed physically and dramatically in Rameau's time – an aspect of historical performance practice extremely relevant to singers, but one that is often overlooked.

As this is an area not routinely taught, and to do an in depth research into the area was simply beyond the scope of this paper, I got in contact with João Luís Veloso Paixão, a member of the Amsterdam Historical Acting Collective, who in addition to his role as a singer of Early Music is a researcher and lecturer on historical gesture and declamation. After the Summer School in London introduced me to the concept that there existed a natural set of postures that reflected a person in equilibrium, and certain adjustments to those – such as clenching the hands or altering the curve and angles of limbs – could reflect when a character's situation or emotions had taken them out of this natural state of balance, I was interested in his opinion whether the use of gesture could highlight the allegorical aspects of the characters in *Les Incas du Pérou* and *Les Sauvages*.

João explained that in the 18th Century theatre, gesture, including the types of facial expressions depicted by Le Brun, was a codified and amplified portrayal of the physical reactions the human naturally experiences under the influence of a particular emotion. Thus, it was not so much a depiction or clarification of the character's personality, but a way of expressing clearly to the audience the various passions that character moved through. However, there was also a physiognomic element that influenced how an audience would receive and respond to a certain character. It was explained to me that it was standard when a character entered the stage for the first time for the singer to hold a posture for a few moments, in order for the audience to fully appreciate his physical aspects, such as his costume, posture, and facial features. From this external depiction, audiences could draw conclusions as to the character's social position and basic personality.

For me, this offers particularly interesting insights, particularly in regard to *Les Incas du Pérou*. Locke argues that in the 18th Century, profound character flaws were unacceptable in the ruling classes of any well-ordered society, and that "a true aristocrat or leader must...display emotional self-control (be slow to anger) and act with appropriate generosity in a given circumstance."⁶² For the role of Huascar, the audience could be led to expect from his physiognomy a character of nobility and emotional control. Over the course of the entrée however, this expectation would be subverted by the depiction of a man completely driven and controlled by his unreasonable passions, an effect that could be strongly enhanced by the use of gesture.

In a more comic situation, such as the entrée *Les Sauvages*, it is possible that this highly dramatic use of grand gesture was toned down to a more varied and naturalistic style.⁶³ Particularly considering Zima's vocal and musical characterisation, the use of the highly rhetorical declamatory style might appear incongruous and unconvincing. However, I believe it is likely that contrasting a more naturalistic style of acting for the characters of Zima and

⁶² Locke, *Musical Exoticism*, p. 94

⁶³ Jennifer Montagu, *The Expression of the Passions*. p.52

Adario against a stylised, rhetorical approach for the Europeans characters of Don Alvar and Damon could further enhance the musical characterisations, and bring out the social commentary implied in Fuzelier's libretto.

After my experience developing the role of Phani at the IRSS, I was also curious to ask João Paixão how he deals with the issue of creating a character and making dramatic decisions that work with the context and concept that the librettist may have had, but still being convincing to a modern audience. I believe that in works that are often dismissed as frivolous, it is important for singers to have a process that encourages them to explore all the possibilities and options that may be present in the work. However, in my experience, a modern approach to developing a character does not always work coherently with the musical and dramatic conception. A suggestion that João Paixão made was to conceptualise the characters according to the theory of the four temperaments, and determine whether the character is sanguine, melancholic, phlegmatic or choleric. The work that a singer usually does to explore the objective of a particular sentence or scene remains the same, but the decision of which objective to express is then influenced by the dominant temperament of the character. This also ensures that the actions and personality remain consistent over the course of the work, preventing internal contradictions from scene to scene.

With this in mind, I returned to the dramatic preparation I had done for Phani. I decided she was primarily a phlegmatic character – calm, logical, and in favour of thinking things through before taking action. In order to illustrate how this would change my interpretation of this character, I have created a comparison between my initial approach and my revised approach for a selections of scene 6 and 7.

First approach

Scene 6

Huascar, Phani

Huascar

(to Phani, who is fleeing across the stage)

Stop! Through these flames the heavens
have informed me
That you must surrender
And the marriage...

Phani

What are you going to tell me now?

(to challenge/to mock/to defy)

O terrible day! Should I believe

That heaven, mindful of its glory

Only speaks to humans by making them
tremble?

(to reject/to spite/to deride)

Revised approach

Scene 6

Huascar, Phani

Huascar

(to Phani, who is fleeing across the stage)

Stop! Through these flames the heavens
have informed me
That you must surrender
And the marriage...

Phani

What are you going to tell me now?

(to reject/to fear/to avoid)

O terrible day! Should I believe

That heaven, mindful of its glory

Only speaks to humans by making them
tremble?

(to question/to doubt/to wonder)

Huascar
(*stopping her again*)
You flee when the Gods deign to call on you!
Well, then, cruel one! You will learn to know me!
Follow jealous love!

Scene 7 – Trio *Pour jamais*

Phani, Carlos
For ever may love unite us.
No, no, nothing is equal to my happiness.
(to cherish/to love)

Ah! My heart has well deserved
The bliss it now shares with you.
(to judge/to condemn Huascar)
For ever may love unite us.
No, no, nothing is equal to my happiness.
(to gloat over Huascar)

Huascar
(*stopping her again*)
You flee when the Gods deign to call on you!
Well, then, cruel one! You will learn to know me!
Follow jealous love!

Scene 7 – Trio *Pour jamais*

Phani, Carlos
For ever may love unite us.
No, no, nothing is equal to my happiness.
(to cherish/to love)

Ah! My heart has well deserved
The bliss it now shares with you.
(to thank/to release/to be relieved)
For ever may love unite us.
No, no, nothing is equal to my happiness.
(to revere/to honour/to treasure)

The significance of dramatic motivation cannot be underestimated for a singer. Particularly in opera, nearly all expressive vocal and musical elements are driven by why you want to say something. Musical elements such as dynamics, tone, colour, timing, stress, and duration are the technical manifestations of the dramatic objective – they are how a singer communicates their dramatic intention. Thus for me, exploring the roles of Phani and Zima from the perspective of exoticism has led me to a more nuanced understanding of what their characters represent, and how they reflect on the philosophical and literary context of the early 18th Century. This in turn has shaped my dramatic decisions in regards to portraying these characters onstage, which necessarily results in a subtly, but distinctly different musical and vocal interpretation.

Conclusion

Exoticism in Rameau's *Les Indes Galantes* serves three primary purposes:

- Firstly, it provides the operatic stage in 18th Century France with new spectacles and entertainments that do not rely on the conventional marvels associated with the gods. Fuzelier's preface to the libretto shows that he was concerned with presenting novelty drawn from the real world, particularly in a scene such as the volcanic eruption in *Les Incas du Pérou*.
- Secondly, it enabled Rameau to extend the musical expression beyond what was considered appropriate for the Lullian operatic model. As indicated by the first hand

responses to *Les Indes Galantes*, the music was seen by many as a break with tradition, and even heard as exotic by the fact that it was so different in comparison to what had come before. As we see in the manuscripts, the dramatic possibilities occasioned by the exotic locales inspired Rameau to write music that pushed the orchestral musicians beyond their limits.

- Thirdly, by engaging with the literary and philosophical trends regarding exotic cultures, portions of *Les Indes Galantes* are able to act as veiled social commentary on the contemporary French society, reflecting the developing Enlightenment thought and social change.

I would argue that this final point is the most significant to have come out of this research. The imagination and inventiveness of Rameau's music is one of the key reasons of the continuing success of this work, and the entertainment value and opportunity for spectacle is clearly apparent from the fusion of the music, libretto and genre of the opéra-ballet. I am not suggesting that *Les Indes Galantes* is in fact a misunderstood political commentary, indeed the elements of inventiveness, novelty and entertainment are critical to both its conception and performance. However, through my own experience preparing and performing excerpts of this opera, it has become clear to me that understanding and embracing this aspect of social criticism can have a profound impact on the interpretation and performance of this work. By gaining a greater understanding of the context in which *Les Indes Galantes* was written and performed, we can expand our own interpretive possibilities. The painting does not change, there is merely the addition of a new colour which can create a more complete and satisfying picture.

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Appendix

International Rameau Summer School Drama Exercises

Bethany Shepherd

Character: Phani (Les Indes Galantes, Rameau)

Exercise 1: Character Building

Answer the following questions in the first person

- a) **Who am I?** (Personality (introvert/extrovert), appearance, age, sex, background, beliefs, prejudices, interests and the four basic traits: physical characteristics, emotional state, psychological profile, morals.)

b)

I am an Incan princess, about 19 years old. I am tall and slim, but have clearly spent an active life, and am therefore quite strong. I am quite striking, but not at all vain. I am loyal and trusting, and very honest. I am intelligent, and this has drawn me to the Spanish conquistadors, with their rationality and science. Sometimes I struggle being caught between two cultures, as I want my people to achieve the kind of learning and knowledge that the Spanish possess, but I don't want to be a traitor to my own people. I am curious and enjoy being around people

- c) **When and where am I?** (Century, year, season, month, and the setting, whether it's inside

or outside, slum or mansion, city or country or suburbs. The environment and the atmosphere you are in, the furniture, colours, smells, textures and sounds.)

I live near Cuzco in Peru, and it is the year 1530. Our land is incredibly fertile and green, rich in all kinds of plants and animals. Recently, there has been a lot of fighting between not only the Incas and the Spanish, but also within the Inca ruling families. The land is not as green as it was before, and there is less food to go around. The ground is drying up, and beneath everyday smells there is a tinge of sulphur and burning.

- d) **Where do I come from?** (Just before the beginning of the opera. What are your given circumstances? Your recent past and how this has affected you and brought you to where.)

My father was supposed to become the chief of the Incas in our area, but he was usurped by Huascar and banished. I was kept as a hostage to prevent any backlash from my family and their supporters, but also eventually to marry Huascar and consolidate his power.

I wasn't ever fully aware of the political power play going on behind the scenes, I was always too busy going out amongst everyone, getting to know other kids my age and their families, and take part in daily life. While I'm perhaps a bit naïve when it comes to politics, I'm an excellent judge of character and always try to come to logical understandings.

When the Spanish invaded, I was both frightened for my people and intrigued by the foreigners. Huascar had up to this point allowed me a fair amount of freedom, fearing revolts if I was treated badly. It was while I was out one day that I met Carlos, a Spanish conquistador. He seemed as interested in me and my culture as I was in his, and we meet often now.

- e) **What are my relationships?** (Your relationships with other characters, events and things around you.)

Huascar is both my captor and replacement father figure. When I was younger, he was content to allow me to go about as I pleased. Lately though he has become more possessive and paranoid, demanding to know where I've been and who I've met. He has become more concerned with my appearance, and I always feel uncomfortable around him now. Carlos is my friend, and if I dare admit it, my crush. I feel a bit guilty about having a thing with one of the soldiers taking over my country, but he's teaching me so many things about the world and opening my eyes up to truths I never imagined, that I believe that once things settle down, my people could learn a lot from the Europeans.

Exercise 2

- i) **What is my objective?** (What do you want to achieve during the scene. What is your main or overall goal across. The objective should be action-oriented, as opposed to an internal goal.)

My objective is to escape Huascar.

- ii) **What is my obstacle?** (The problem that is stopping you from getting your objective, what you need to overcome to reach your goal.)

The obstacle is the erupting volcano that threatens to kill us all if I don't give in to Huascar.

- iii) **What is my action?** (What you do to overcome your obstacle and attempt to reach your goal.)

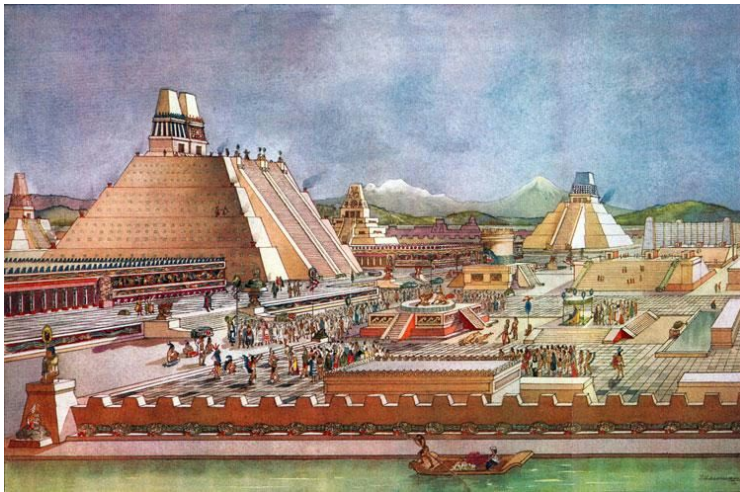
My actions are to defy him and accept the love and help of Carlos.

Exercise 3 - Images

Search in books or the web for images and attach them to the document.

- a) One or two photos or paintings of the setting you imagine your character exist. It doesn't need to be directly related to the opera, but it needs to represent and convey what you think is the environment in which your character lives in.
- b) One picture of your character. Again it can be anything from a photo of a statue, to a portrait of a person that looks like your character. Someone that captures as closely as possible the age, expression, and aura of your character.
- c) One image that captures your character's feelings in your scene. This can be something abstract and represent a point of your character's consciousness. Please note which point of the scene this picture represents.

a) Setting:



b) Phani



c) Character's feelings



This represents Phani's feelings just before Carlos arrives. She is overwhelmed by the contradictions between her intuition and the lies Huascar is telling her. She is confused, torn between her the strength of Huascars arguments, drawing on her whole culture and upbringing, and the rationality encouraged in her by the foreigner she loves.

Exercise 4

For the non-native French speakers, produce a literal, word by word translation of your text and that of your partner in the scene.

Produce a translation of the same text, but now try to use every day colloquial language, capturing the meaning of the phrases and expressing it in a modern, personal way. Don't shy away from strong or rude language if it the situation needs it.

Literal translation

Huascar:

Stop! By these fires Heaven has just told me
That you must obey its ruling

And the marriage...

Phani:

What will you still reveal to me? O fateful day!
Must I believe that heaven, jealous of his glory,
Only explains itself to humans by making them tremble?

Huascar

You flee, when the Gods deign to call you!
Well then, cruel one, you will know me!
Obey jealous love!

Phani:

Your crime dares to show itself!

Huascar:

Oh, one is criminal when one doesn't please!
At least in following me you will evade death!

Here I see everywhere the dreadful death following a formidable blaze
Every instant of your life can become the last moment.

What! More than peril my love surprises you?
It is too much to resist me...

Phani:

O heaven, hear my wishes!

Huascar:

It is at my wishes that heaven abandons you.

Carlos:

You fool yourself, barbarian!

Phani:

Ah Carlos! I shudder
The sun, to the depths of the deepest caverns,
Just lit up the earth,
And its rage predicts...

Carlos:

Princess, what a mistake!
It is heaven that it insults.
This dangerous blaze is not the work of the sun
It is the work of his (Huascar's) rage.
A single rock thrown in these dreadful chasms
Waking there the passion of its terrible fires,
Suffices to excite such a fatal havoc.
The traitor hoped to mislead you in this day
And that your fear would serve his love.

On these mountains my soldiers punish his accomplices.
They will find in these black precipices the tombs worthy of them.

To Huascar

But you need more cruel tortures.

To Phani

Grant your hand to his fortunate rival
That is his punishment.

Huascar:

Heavens! It is severe.

Phani; Carlos:

Forever love binds us
No, nothing is equal to my happiness.
Ah, my heart has well deserved the fate it shares with you.

Huascar:

No, nothing is equal to my rage
I am witness to their happiness.
Must my irritation not be revenged
On such a cruel insult?

Colloquial translation:

Huascar:

Stop! Don't you see? These fires are heaven's way of telling you that you must marry me!

Phani:

What else are going to say to convince me? Am I really supposed to believe that heaven is so petty that it has to make us all tremble just to communicate?

Huascar:

Arrogant fool, how dare you turn your back on the gods when they deign to speak to you?
You give me no choice but to force you to love me...

Phani:

Oh, now your real criminal plan comes to light!

Huascar:

Oh, so now it's a crime not to be attractive to someone!

For God's sake, open your eyes! Marrying me is the only way to avoid certain death!

Death is what comes of this explosion, any moment could be your last.

What, do you fear my love more than dying? It's useless to resist...

Phani:

God, somebody help me!

Huascar:

The gods are on my side, you're all alone.

Carlos:

Filthy liar!

Phani:

Ah! Carlos, I'm so scared! The sun just lit up the whole earth, right to the very centre of it!
It's a warning, I have to...

Carlos:

Princess, you're wrong.

This explosion has nothing to do with heaven, it's all been planned by this man! He made sure to set off the volcano, hoping that he could scare you into giving in to him. My soldiers are at this moment out killing his accomplices.

But you, Huascar, deserve a far more brutal punishment.

Phani, let's make him see that which he fears the most: the woman he'd kill to possess happy in the arms of his rival.

Huascar:

Go to hell, Spaniard!

Phani, Carlos:

We'll be together forever, I've never been so happy!
Everything will be alright now, because we have each other.

Huascar:

God, I've never been so furious!

Am I supposed to just sit here and take it while they flaunt their happiness in front of me?