



[www.frenchbaroquedancemusic.com](http://www.frenchbaroquedancemusic.com)

La Musique Du Roi is a brand-new online information guide for musicians on the performance and interpretation of French baroque dance music. Explore fifteen different dance types and the relationship between their musical characteristics and choreography from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Learn about Louis XIV's influence on French music, the different settings for performance, and the many difficulties musicians face regarding tempo. Listen to musical examples and download free files to aid your understanding, then apply your knowledge to shape your own historically informed interpretation.

## **Background**

As a recorder player, I am accustomed to playing 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century repertoire, but recently became much more interested in the performance of dance music due to my background in dance and performing arts. My initial research into the topic highlighted a lack of useful resources for musicians online; therefore, I saw the project as an opportunity to make credible information on French baroque dance music more widely accessible, especially for non-professionals who wish to learn more about the music they play or are interested in. I particularly wanted to bridge the gap between musicians and dancers, as this type of art form requires both music and dance to co-exist on an equal level, where neither is more important than the other.

## **Project**

The whole project took place over a period of seven months, from October 2020 to April 2021. My five months of reading a variety of books and articles and watching informative videos allowed me to really understand the topic and gather content for the website. Through working with Philippa Waite, I gained an understanding of the style from the dancers' perspective and the challenges they face in comparison to musicians. I was fortunate enough to attend Philippa's classes on reading Beauchamp-Feuillet notation, whereby I learnt how to read the choreographic notation

published in Raoul-Auger Feuillet's 1700 publication *Chorégraphie, ou l'art de décrire la danse*, how the notation corresponds to the music, and how to translate the notation into dance steps.

The biggest challenge of the project was in producing the recordings featured on the website. I had planned to rehearse in-person with other musicians and work with a sound technician to produce professional recordings. Unfortunately, Covid-19 and the national Lockdown meant that we were all stuck in different parts of the UK and could not rehearse together or be in the same room to record! My solution to this was to create multi-track recordings using the online software BandLab, which allowed us to all collaborate on the same track. Once the bass line was down, we were able to record our own parts in, whilst listening to and playing along with the other parts already inputted. This was a much more efficient way of home-recording in comparison to the traditional method of creating click tracks and recording entirely solo. In doing this, I developed new knowledge in music technology, and gained a new skill in multi-track production, which I did not anticipate prior to this project!

The website took around six weeks to complete, four weeks to write the content, one week to record and edit the musical examples, and one week to upload and design.

Looking into the future, I aim to add further content, including the interpretation of ornamentation, more recordings of dance types, and visual examples staging performances with both musicians and dancers, to help aid readers' perceptions of French baroque dance music.

## **Support**

I am very grateful of the support received from Angel Early Music to help carry this project through to completion. The grant has allowed me to access a range of resources, from books to DVDs and online tuition, which has significantly developed my knowledge of French baroque dance music and allowed me to produce a resource which I hope will benefit musicians and early music enthusiasts for many years to come.

**Beth Toulson**

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