

The Court

Magnificence, extravagance, artificiality, a tiny society in which everyone knew every detail of everyone else's life that was the court of Louis XIV, the Sun King... The allegory was apt, for he was indeed as brilliant and powerful as the sun, and he was to bring honour, grace, victory and fame to France. Among his famous achievements, and still France's finest showpiece, is the Palace of Versailles, where he would give fetes lasting two or three days at a time, with plays, ballets, banquets, fireworks, and all kinds of imaginative diversions for which special theatres and halls were improvised among the magnificent gardens...



Dancing is an elegant and regular movement, harmonically composed of beautiful attitudes and contrasted graceful postures of the body, and parts of thereof.



Fashion, like virtuosity, reaches extremes which are followed by reaction, and the excesses of formal eighteenth-century brocade costumes. They were replaced by high-waisted, soft-flowing Empire styles vaguely inspired by Grecian robes. But then, in due course, weight and pomp gradually reconquered the scene.



"What imagination! What masterly control of the whole paraphernalia of spectacle!.. He was naturally well aware of the power game to which these sumptuous occasions were dedicated."



"The three principal personages of the drama ought to sing five airs each; two in the first act, two in the second, and one in the third. The second actress and the second soprano can have only three, and the inferior characters must be satisfied with a single air each or two at the most."

Битеф театар



Bitef theatre

For the Lovers of Musick, Dance & Coffee

Entirely sensual entertainment

LA REGINA ABBANDONATA

or else

Il trionfo delle passioni

A pasticcio of Musick, Fashion and Mime

as perform d by

*Rodrigo, Giustino, Arsace, Athalia, Berenice, Erminius,
Faramondo, Timotheus, Adriano, Rodelinda, Ariodante, Alcina,
Sosarme and Ottone*

*Musick compos d by Mr Handel, Sig. Scarlatti, Mons. Couperin
and others*



Finest flowers bloom but for a season

La tragédie lyrique

Après 1620 la mode changea et une forme nouvelle, le "ballet à entrées", supplanta l'ancienne. Elle consistait en RÉCTIS, ENTRÉES et VERS. Les RÉCTIS, qui correspondaient au "dialogue du drame et au récitatif de l'opéra", étaient prononcés par des acteurs qui ne dansaient pas. Les ENTRÉES composaient le ballet proprement dit et correspondaient aux actes d'une pièce ou d'un opéra, leurs intrigues, autonomes, n'étaient reliées l'une avec l'autre que par le thème général qui donnait son nom au ballet. Les VERS ne jouaient aucun rôle dans l'exécution, c'étaient des descriptions courtes, parfois impersonnelles, parfois comiques et satiriques, des personnages figurant dans les ENTRÉES. Personne ne les récitait mais ils étaient imprimés dans les "livres de ballet", sorte de programme qu'on vendait au public.

Fashion

"To Court, it being the first time his Majesty put himself solemnly into the Eastern fashion of vest, changing doublet, stiff collar, bands and cloak, into a comely dress after the Persian mode, with girdles or straps, and shoestrings and garters into buckles, of which some were set with precious stones, resolving never to alter it, and to leave the French mode, which had hitherto obtained to our great expense and reproach."



The English King's action was looked upon as a deliberate attempt to break away from French fashions, a step that was hardly likely to please Louis XIV, who was then endeavouring, with considerable success, to make France the arbiter of Europe, not only politically but also in matters of taste.



The extreme width of women's dresses at this period was the cause of some inconvenience, since it was impossible for two ladies to pass through a door side by side or even sit on the same couch. The fashion even had an effect on architecture, for example in the curved balusters of eighteenth-century staircases.

The Courtier

Tall, with handsome features, curly dark brown hair and an incipient mustache, elegant in a black and white costume, he leans lovesick on the trunk of a tree, while a bush of white roses twines around him... He can be taken for any courtly Corydon with "a pair of stockings white as silk upon his legs so tall."

Lady of the Court

Za vladavine Cara Murakamija bješe na dvoru jedna žena poznata kao Carska dama. Još dok je bila mala djevojčica otac joj je davao ovaj savjet: "Prvo moraš naučiti umjeće pisanja, zatim moraš najbolje od sviju naučiti svirati citru na sedam žica, a isto tako moraš zapamtiti sve pjesme u dvadeset svezaka Kokin Shua.

The Courtier

Kad gledate izvana, ljupko je vidjeti mladića u čipkastim tamno grimiznim hlačama i bljeskavom dvorskom ogrtaču, prebačenom preko niza višebojnih slojeva odjeće, dok se naginje prema ženinoj sobi i odmiče zelenu zastirku. Tada on vadi elegantnu tintarnicu i započinje pisati pismo, ili pak moli ženu da mu doda zrcalo te počešlja svoje postranje uvojke: i jedno i drugo je prekrasno.

Budoire

"... the gloom of the little bar in which she entertained... in such a settings she looked as exotic as an orchid in a field of turnips."

Kardinal

Svećenik treba lijepo izgledati, jer ako želimo istinski shvatiti njegove uzvišene osjećaje, moramo ga gledati dok govori: skrenemo li pogled, mogli bi zaboraviti slušati. I tako, neki ručni svećenik lako može postati izvorštem grijeha.

Boudoire

Ponekad začujete nekoliko glasova kako recitiraju kineske ili japanske pjesme. Jedna žena otvori vrata premda nitko nije pokucao. Vidjevši to, nekoliko muškaraca koji nisu ni imali namjeru da je posjete, zaustaviše se u prolazu niz galeriju. U sobi nema mjesta za sve njih, tako da mnogi provedu ostatak noći u vrtu - vrlo dražesno.

texts from:

D. Williamson: Kings and Queens of Europe
E. Salter: E. Sitwell
M. Fonteyn: The Magic Of Dance
R. Strong: The Cult of Elisabeth
G. Hogwood: Handel
C. Knightly: Almanack of Folklore
Sei Shonagoon: Pillowbook
J. Laver: Costume and Fashion
C. Girdlestone: J. P. Rameau
C. Goldoni: Memoirs

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The Young Queen

Everything seemed so clear for a while -
The turn of a head or a deep-seen smile;
Then a smile seen through wide leaves or deep water,
That beauty seemed to the King's daughter,
for a flying shadow passed, than gone
Was the gleam, and Princess was alone.

The Queen

"Next came the Queen, in the sixty-sixth year of her age, as we were told, but very majestic: her face was oblong, fair, but wrinkled; her eyes small, but black and pleasant, her nose a little hooked, her lips narrow, and her teeth black... she had in her ears two pearls, with very rich drops; she wore false hair, and that red."

The King

Francisco was a weak, ineffective, effeminate young man, widely believed that he was impotent. Isabel herself was to write years later: "What can I say of a man, who on his wedding night wore more lace than I did?"

The Queen

Isabel herself was plump with a rather plain face marred by patches of eczema. She was hearty and outspoken in manner, and like most of her family highly sexed.

The King

Henry III is an enigma. He was cultured, well educated, politically astute and physically brave on one hand, on the other, he was extremely effeminate, loving rich clothes, jewels an earrings and delighting in giving entertainments in which he appeared dressed as a woman. He surrounded himself with handsome young male favourites, his mignons... In spite of this, he was on excellent terms with his wife...

The Queen

Queen Louise Elisabeth scandalised the Spanish court by hoisting her petticoats up to her knees and walking about in the rain and was seen running about the gardens clad only in a thin dressing gown which blew up in the wind to reveal her in the state of nature. She indulged her gluttonous appetite at all hours and forced her ladies in waiting to do the same, pinching and slapping them if they refused.

