

THE REHABILITATION OF ANDRÉ LORIN

By Lillian & Julian Pilling

DANGEAU, in his diary for Friday 27th October 1684 says, '... they danced for the first time those contredances that an English dancing master called Isaac had taught to all the ladies ...'. This was at the court at Fontainebleau. André Lorin mentions these lessons given by Isaac d'Orléans and a year later, in 1685, Lorin accompanied Maréchal Louis d'Humières to England. D'Humières was a favourite of Louis XIV and his ambassador to James II of England. Lorin says that his intention was to learn the English country dances in order to present them to Louis XIV and his court.

The result of this visit was a book of sixteen contredances dedicated to Louis XIV by André Lorin, 'Accadémicien de sa Majesté pour la Dance'. There is no date to this work but Lorin states therein that no better time could be found for its presentation to His Majesty than at his happy return to health. Louis had been operated on for a fistula and he reappeared in public towards Christmas in 1686. This work has remained in manuscript.

Lorin's second work is dated 1688. It is a superb monograph and obviously destined for the royal library. It consists of one dance only, Les Cloches. The dedication of this dance in the previous work had likened Louis to a 'Bell of Christ', indeed it had been Louis' aim to represent God on earth, he was presumably pleased with this dedication and it may well have inspired this second work. Louis presented this book to the Dauphine and at her death it came again into Lorin's possession. Lorin added a new title page with a new dedication, this time to the young Louis XV and the date on this page is 1721.

In both works Lorin makes the claim of having invented the means of representing dances on paper and he says that he has shown this invention to many people interested in the dance and he recounts their appreciation of his work.

In 1700 or 1701, both dates occur on the copies available for scrutiny, Raoul Feuillet published his 'Choregraphie' which, at least in the second edition, is bound with a 'Receuil de Dances' also by Feuillet and a 'Receuil de Dances' by Pécour. Ifan Kyrle Fletcher considers that this was one indivisible book. This is the first of those works that contain the particular type of choreography associated with the eighteenth century dancing masters. From this date until 1710 there were annual publications of dances by Feuillet and then these were continued to 1720 by Dezais, this apart from Feuillet's treatises. However in 1704 Pierre Beauchamp who had also been dancing master to Louis XIV and a composer of ballets at the Royal Academy from 1671 to 1687 was so moved to present a petition wherein he claimed that Feuillet and Lorin had abused the confidence that he had placed in them when communicating his system of choreography, and that they had pretended that the system was that of their own, and he demanded damages of ten thousand pounds and the destruction of the plates and the cessation of their privileges. A further outburst of Beauchamp was occasioned by an article in a journal which praised the work of Feuillet. Beauchamp said that he had worked on his choreography for the past thirty years and that Feuillet had no right to claim it as his own.

Lorin and Feuillet both countered Beauchamp's petition with those of their own. Lorin demanded damages of twenty thousand pounds and Feuillet

perhaps wisely, of one thousand five hundred pounds. In the event no money changed hands, Beauchamp was given permission to reapply for his privileges as they recognised that he was the inventor of the method used by Feuillet, but then he had not published. However the court stated that the method of Lorin was different to that of Beauchamp.

Lorin's works deal only with contredances whereas Beauchamp is better known as a ballet master, indeed he is quoted as saying that he derived his ideas for his ballets from watching his pigeons at feeding time. It is interesting that contemporaries said that Beauchamp was not an elegant dancer but one of great vigour, as a sidelight on dancing styles of the period. The contredance was the new interest of the court. It is possible that Lorin was actually attached to the house of the Dauphine, one remark in his dedication of *Les Cloches* would suggest this. It seems unlikely that Lorin had been a pupil of Beauchamp as Machabey suggests, nor do we know for certain that Feuillet was though this is often suggested. The evidence is only circumstantial and consists of three items: 1. That Feuillet came after Beauchamp. 2. Feuillet used the choreography that it is presumed Beauchamp invented. 3. Feuillet used the five positions of the foot that received opinion ascribes to Beauchamp. On the other hand there is better evidence for Pécour having been a pupil of Beauchamp and the absence of his name during the polemics of 1704 is interesting when he had been associated with Feuillet in the publications of 1700/01. It should be noted that if Beauchamp was the author of the choreography used by Feuillet and that he had been working on it for thirty years, then that of Lorin, though different as the court rightly judged, came later and is of the same order. Perhaps like many inventions the needs of the time meant several people coming to the same goal and perhaps that accounts for the court's decision proving somewhat of a disappointment to both sides.

That would appear to be all that is known about André Lorin to the present. It is intriguing and one asks for more. Why was his first work of sixteen dances never published? The second was only intended as a single exemplar so there is no question there. Obviously he was well placed and highly thought of but his contemporaries do not mention him, and yet with Isaac he was responsible for introducing the new dance form to France which flowered during the eighteenth century and eventually became the quadrille in the nineteenth, and both had a profound effect on popular dancing in Europe and America.

Description of Lorin's works.

'Livre de contredance présenté au Roy par André Lorin Accademicien da sa Majesté pour la Dance.'

This work is of sixteen dances and of these Nos. 4, 5 & 6 are missing from our film. The first part of the work is devoted to explaining the patterns of the contredances and showing how, as the leading couple progresses down the set the second couple awaiting their turn at the head of the set may commence dancing with the third couple while the first couple are dancing with the fourth; and thus the dance be less boring in duple minor sets and similarly as is appropriate in triple minor sets. (Folk dancers of the present revival generally feel that they have invented this scheme.) Lorin also explains the single couple contredance as being like 'Jumping Joan' (Playford 1685, *Catch that Catch Can*) though he gives no example in his book, this form of the dance did not achieve much popularity in England.

After this comes the table of the signs for the steps. There is no explanation of how the steps were done, presumably all well-bred people knew.

The contredances for the most part are given on two adjacent pages, a page is divided into four squares which each show movements of four bars duration. The music is at the top of the page and directly underneath it the related steps. In each square is the floor pattern and with it the steps are again placed in this relation. This basic pattern is varied according to the dance and the music.

The dances given are:

1. Christchurch Bells; Les cloches de l'Eglise de Jesu Christ.
2. White-hall. Salle blanche; ou le louure.
3. Contredance Nouvelle figuré a huit.
7. Anglois Menuet, Menuet Anglois.
8. Valentine's Day, feste de Saint Valentin.
9. Contredance Nouvelle.
10. The New Bath; Le bain neuf.
11. Windsor Castle, Chateau de Windsor ou des plaisirs.
12. Cupid Garden, Jardin de Cupidon.
13. Excuse my, excusez moy.
14. Irish Tege double Irlandois.
15. Vienna Vienne.
16. Hedge Lane la Ruelle.

Of these Nos. 3, 9 and 14 are probably the compositions of Lorin, Nos. 3 and 14 are extended dances, the rest keep to a small framework of multiples of 6 or 8 bars according to the rhythm. Many of the tunes are a singable type that one recognises as belonging to the corpus of English popular music.

'Livre De La Contredance du Roy Presenté A Sa Majesté Par André Lorin l'un de ses Accadémiciens pour la dance.' 1688.

As has been said this is a magnificent work. The drawings are coloured with water colours and gouache and lined in gold. There are some twelve pages of instructions for dancing contredances and then sixtyfive pages showing the one dance; Contredance du Roy. Bells les Cloches ov le Carillon. Each page shows by means of an illustration of four couples the various stages in the evolution of the dance from the first reverence to the final one given by the first couple to each other when, the dance completed, they have gone down the middle to the bottom of the set in readiness for the next dance which the new top couple will choose. Each couple is dressed in different colours so they may be easily followed and we are shown when the non-dancing couples separate from their talking position to their dancing position in readiness to take part. Thus the pictures show virtually a filmstrip of the dance. The music is given at the top of the page with instructions in words for the part of those dancing and immediately under the music are given the appropriate steps for that part of the tune which will consist of four bars. At the foot of the page is the information for the non-dancing couple, telling them how to stand; immediately beneath are sectioned the four bars again with any steps for that non-dancing couple, i.e. anacrucial movements in bars four or eight.

Although this is the same dance as that which began Lorin's first work it is not here called 'Christchurch Bells'. There are also minor differences in the instructions. This dance appears in two Playford versions, the first in the edition of 1686, and the second in the edition of 1721 as 'Christchurch Bells in Oxon'. Both have been published by the English Folk Dance and Song Society in modern versions. Lorin's dance is similar to the first of these, the second appears to have varied somewhat though we have not seen the original. The differences that Lorin has in his versions are in the clapping and the

casting of the dancing couple to second place, perhaps one can say that the second version is slightly more sophisticated.

The work ends with a collection of dedicatory poems by Lorin which mention various contredances and render each to some person of exalted rank. Perhaps these are also dances that Lorin brought with him from England, some we recognise and some are less familiar. They comprise:

Le Louure	Le Berger fidele	Le Rigaudon
Le Menüet nouveau double	Le Je Vous prie	Le Marché neuf
La Dauphine	La Belle Gigue	Le Trot Irlandois
Contredance nouvelle	Les Bas verds	La Marche des Dragons
Le Menüet anglois	La Gigue de Meusnier	La Rüelle
La feste Valentine	Le Je ne t'aimeray plus	La santé de Jeannot
Contredance nouvelle	Le gay mon Berger	La naissance du
Le Bain nouveau	La belle Cour	Prince de galles
Les Manches Vertes	La Tartiere	Les Joyeaux
La Maison de Plaisance	La chaîne	L'Auanture
Le Retrouse Chapeau	Le petit Jardin	La belle Dançe
La Mascarade	Le double Irlandois	Les fleurs Et la
Le Château des Plaisirs	Le Bâton de Maréchal	Verdure
Le Jardin de Cupidon	La Contredance du Bransle	La Vienne
Le Jardin des Meures	Le Noeud	Le Justaucorps de
La Sirene	La santé de Bellée	Bugle
Le Jeune Prince	Le verre a boire du vin	Le Coureur
L'Anne du Nort	du Rhin	Le bout de la Ville
La Galanterie	La Princesse Allemanov	La Maison de Sion
Excusez moy	La petite Rüe	La Rente de Maréchal
Le Par hazard	Le Boulingrin	

Late Notices of Lorin

The first notice of Lorin in recent times appears to have been by J. Ecorcheville in 'Suites d'orchestre' in 1906. He said that the two works are identical and gave the name of the author as Landrin, a publisher whose works appeared some fifty years after Lorin's. This misinformation served to misguide both Sachs and Nettl.

In 1924 A. Levinson published two articles, 20th and 27th October, entitled 'Un point d'histoire. Querelle de chorégraphes'. It is not known where these articles appeared as they are only known as press cuttings pasted in an exercise book which is in the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal.

Armand Machabey made a brief notice of Lorin in 1966 but he was more concerned with music for the dance and it was left to Jean-Michel Guilcher to provide most of the information that we have today about Lorin and it is to him that we are greatly indebted. His book 'La Contredanse', which is essential reading for all interested in this subject, was reviewed by Lucile Armstrong in the 'Folk Music Journal' for 1970. Her review was a little patronising and she seemed to think that M. Guilcher should have made mention of one of the folklorist's themes of sun magic in the figures of the dance. Fortunately he was dealing with facts and not fantasy. Mrs. Armstrong also seemed to think that d'Humières was also a dancing master, but he was not; like all courtiers he could dance, but he was a soldier.

A second notice of Lorin in the 'Folk Music Journal', the annual 'learned' publication of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, was in the issue for 1978 in an article by Michael Barraclough on the dance 'Excuse Me'. Here he juxtaposes the various notations for this dance from different books and

Lorin's among them. The comment on the notations is a little inconclusive but seems to say that since the dance occurs in several sources with differing instructions then those instructions are of less importance than the style of the dance, i.e. the correct period dress, music and technique. This seems to imply that he sees no pattern to or reason for variations, other than chance, so they are ignored. Perhaps 'technique' includes steps but no mention of this is made and it would seem to be the figure that is the main concern. Barraclough says that the dance has little to account for its popularity other than the tune, but if one ignores the steps then one ignores a goodly part of the dance. Many reels consist of nothing more than reeling and stepping and are yet greatly enjoyed.

The English Folk Dance and Song Society are rather at a disadvantage when considering contredances of the eighteenth century. Their legacy of Playford dances and their belief that country in that context meant dances of people who lived in the countryside, and their fixation that tradition is of necessity rural has led them to interpret all these dances in an unsophisticated way. Thus they are to accept their paradox that the 'folk' are artless when country-dancing and cunning in morris and step-dancing.

The importance of Lorin is not only his part in introducing the English country dance to France but also in giving us a very clear view of how the dances were danced, and also giving this notation of English dances. The problem remains; are these English in style or French or both? Do we see here the English steps or are they French applied to dances of English origin? We know that Mr. Isaac went as an English man to France to teach English dances and then came back as Isaac d'Orléans to teach the French style. (Which also puzzled Lucile Armstrong.)

It would seem unlikely that those dances with the minuet step were done with any other and one of these was Minuet Anglois and unlikely to be one of Lorin's own compositions so perhaps one may presume that Lorin brought all the steps back with him as part of the style of the English court. Certainly this was his avowed purpose in visiting England.

As the French dances developed in those days before the revolution the fashion changed in England and the French dances became good currency in the English ballroom and continued so even to the end of the period of the polka and the waltz. Perhaps, looking the other way, Lorin brings us a step nearer discovering the conventions required in dancing the Playford dances of 1651, for these are rather obscured by revivalists. Once one interprets a dance one creates a reality and many would wish to let it stand there. Levinson in 1924 complained that professors of the dance were content to follow their predecessors and thus condemn the discipline to remain stationary.

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Our thanks are also due to M. Guilcher for his help in answering our queries on this subject. L. & J.P.

Note on punctuation, spelling and diacritics in the dance titles: These are as in the original, if we do not err.