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INTRODUCTION

Élisabeth-Claude Jacquet de La Guerre (1665–1729) was an admired composer of vocal music and had herself studied singing. Her extant vocal music consists of two printed collections of sacred cantatas and one of secular cantatas, as well as nine airs preserved in several printed collections. The works that appeared in print were certainly not Jacquet de La Guerre's only compositions for voice; she is reported to have written a Te Deum to celebrate the recovery of Louis XV from smallpox in 1721, but the music for this work is lost. The present volume brings together all of her extant sacred vocal music.

Jacquet de La Guerre's two collections of sacred cantatas were published by royal music printer Christophe Ballard. The first, *Cantates françoises, sur des sujets tirez de l'Ecriture; à voix seule, et basse-continue; partie avec symphonie, & partie sans symphonie, Livre premier*, contains six cantatas; it appeared in 1708. The second collection, *Cantates françoises, sur des sujets tirez de l'Ecriture; à I. II. Voix, et basse-continue; partie avec symphonie, & partie sans symphonie, Livre second*, also containing six cantatas, followed in 1711.¹ Both volumes were printed from movable type, a process of music printing on which Ballard held the monopoly in France. There is evidence that interest in the sacred cantatas continued long after the date of their publication: according to Anik Devriès, catalogues from the publisher and dealer Jean-Pantaléon Leclerc list Jacquet de La Guerre's first two books of cantatas for sale "à la Croix d'Or" from 1734 to 1737 (at a price of 5 livres), in 1742 (at 6 livres), and in 1751 (at 5 livres).²

At the time her first book of cantatas appeared, Jacquet de La Guerre was already well known as a composer and well established at court.³ Born in 1665, she received her early musical training at court, where she learned to sing and to play the organ and harpsichord. She had been a protégée of Mme de Montespan, who was an active patron of the arts and whose circle included Racine, Quinault, and Boileau. In 1684, Élisabeth married Marin de La Guerre, organist at Saint-Louis des Jésuites and later at Saint-Séverin and Sainte-Chapelle.⁴ It is likely that she wrote several dramatic works for performance at court in the mid-1680s—the marquis de Dangeau reported in his journal that at the age of twenty [1685] Jacquet de La Guerre took part in a "petit Opéra" for which she had written all of the airs—but these works have been lost.⁵ Jacquet de La Guerre's earliest extant compositions are her *Pièces de clavecin*, engraved by Henri de Baussen, dedicated to the king, and published in 1687. A ballet, *Jeux à l'honneur de la Victoire*, was performed at court in 1691; unfortunately, only the *livret* of this work survives.⁶ A *tragédie en musique*, *Céphale et Procris*, with text by Duché de Vancy, was performed at the Académie Royale de Musique in 1694. It was not successful but was nevertheless published in *partition réduit* by Ballard in the same year.⁷ A number of instrumental works, the composition of which cannot be dated, survive in manuscript.

¹ The address of Ballard's shop is given in all extant copies of both books as "Rue Saint Jean de Beauvais, au Mont-Parnasse."

² *Édition et commerce de la musique gravée à Paris dans la première moitié du XVIII^e siècle: Les Boivin, les Leclerc* (Geneva: Minkoff, 1976), p. 201.

³ For a biography of Jacquet de La Guerre, see Catherine Cessac, *Élisabeth Jacquet de La Guerre: une femme compositeur sous le règne de Louis XIV* (Arles: Actes Sud, 1985).

⁴ Further on Marin de La Guerre, see Cessac, *Élisabeth Jacquet de La Guerre*, pp. 99–103, and idem, "Les La Guerre: une dynastie d'organistes à la Sainte-Chapelle de 1633 à 1739," *Histoire, humanisme et hymnologie. Mélanges offerts au Professeur Édith Weber*, ed. Pierre Guillot and Louis Jambou (Paris: Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1997), pp. 77–90.

⁵ Cessac, *Élisabeth Jacquet de La Guerre*, pp. 35–36, mentions a *petit opéra* by Jacquet de La Guerre that was performed at court in July 1685 and a *pastorale* performed the same year. Further on the journal of the marquis de Dangeau, see Chantal Masson, "Journal du marquis de Dangeau, 1684–1720," *Recherches sur la musique française classique* 2 (1961–62): 198; James R. Anthony, *French Baroque Music from Beaujoyeux to Rameau*, rev. and expanded edition (Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1997), pp. 347–48; and David Tunley, *The Eighteenth-Century French Cantata*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 5–6.

⁶ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms. fr. 2217. On the date of *Jeux à l'honneur de la Victoire* and the composer's other musical compositions at court, see Catherine Cessac, "Les *Jeux à l'honneur de la Victoire* d'Élisabeth Jacquet de La Guerre: premier opéra ballet," *Revue de musicologie* 81 (1995): 237, 240.

⁷ For a full list of Jacquet de La Guerre's works, including those not known to be extant, see Cessac, *Élisabeth Jacquet de La Guerre*, pp. 191–92. A list of works also appears in Edith Borroff, "Élisabeth-Claude Jacquet de La Guerre," *The New Grove Dictionary of Women Composers* (London: Macmillan, 1985), pp. 236–38, and in Catherine Cessac, "Élisabeth Jacquet de La Guerre," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 2001), 12:743–44. More complete biographical information will appear in the introduction to vol. 1 of the present edition.

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

The French texts below are those underlaid beneath the music in the edition; they retain the spelling and punctuation of the sources. The English versions of the text provide, insofar as possible, line-for-line renderings of the French texts; they are conceived not as poetry or for singing but merely for the convenience of readers and performers unfamiliar with French.

CANTATES FRANÇOISES, SUR DES SUJETS TIREZ DE L'ECRITURE, LIVRE PREMIER

ESTHER

Recit.

Par la souveraine Sagesse
Esther fut amenée au trône des Persans;
Seule, par ses charmes puissans,
Du cœur d'Assuerus elle avoit la tendresse:

Mais que luy sert l'éclat d'un si haut rang?
Dans ce moment fatal quel danger la menace?
Elle apprend que des Juifs on a proscrit la race,
Et le fer dans dix jours doit verser tout leur sang.

Air.

Ah! quelle affreuse image
Se trace à ses esprits?
Que de pleurs! que de cris!
Quel horrible carnage!

Le barbare courroux
Opprime l'innocence;
La Vieillesse et l'Enfance
Expirent sous ses coups:
Ciel! prenez leur deffense,
Les abandonnez-vous?

[Recit.]

De vôtre Epoux, Esther, il faut chercher l'appuy.
Mais vous tremblez? du Temeraire,
Qui sans son ordre ose approcher de luy,
Le trépas est le prompt salaire.

Eh quoy n'osez-vous faire un genereux effort?
C'en est fait. Elle part, et le Ciel la rassure.
En vain de sa vertu se trouble la Nature,
Elle va pour les Juifs s'exposer à la mort.

Elle approche; à l'aspect du Trône redoutable
Elle tombe, et d'effroy son cœur se sent glacer:
Mais son Epoux touché du trouble qui l'accable,
Luy fait grace, et vient l'embrasser.

Air.

Venez, bannissez ces allarmes,
Et ranimez-vous à ma voix.
Esther, vos vertus et vos charmes
Vous ont mise au dessus des loix.

ESTHER

Recit.

By sovereign Wisdom
Esther was brought to the Persian throne;
Alone, by her powerful charms,
She softened the heart of Ahasuerus.

But what use to her is the luster of such a high rank?
In this fatal moment what danger threatens her?
She learns that the Jewish race has been condemned,
And in ten days the sword will spill the blood of them all.

Air.

Ah! what a hideous scene
She imagines!
What tears! what cries!
What horrible carnage!

The angry barbarian
Oppresses the innocent;
Youth and Age
Expire under his blows:
Heaven! come to their defense.
Do you abandon them?

[Recit.]

Esther, you must seek the support of your spouse.
But are you trembling? For the reckless one
Who without his order dares to approach him,
Death is the prompt reward.

But what, do you not dare to make a generous effort?
It is done. She leaves, and Heaven reassures her.
In vain does Nature worry about her virtue,
For the Jews she is going to risk death.

She approaches; at the sight of the formidable throne
She falls, and feels her heart freeze with terror;
But her spouse, touched by the trouble that overwhelms her,
Spares her and comes to embrace her.

Air.

Come, banish these alarms,
And revive at the sound of my voice.
Esther, your virtues and your charms
Have put you above the law.

ESTHER

Premiere Cantate à Voix seule

Livre premier, pp. 2–11

RECITATIF.

Par la sou- ve- rai- ne Sa- ges- se Es- ther fut a- me- né- e au trô- ne des Per- sans;

BASSE-CONTINUE

$\sharp 7$
9

$\left[\begin{smallmatrix} 2 \\ \flat 6 \end{smallmatrix} \right]$ 5

4

Seu- le, par ses char- mes puis- sans, Du cœur d'As- su- e- rus el- le a- voit la ten- dres- se:

$\flat$

$\frac{6}{4}$ 6 6 5

$\sharp 4$ 6 4 3

7

Mais que luy sert l'é- clat d'un si haut rang? Dans ce mo- ment fa- tal quel dan- ger la me- na- ce?

$\flat$

$\frac{6}{\flat}$

$\sharp 4$ 6 $\sharp$

10

El- le ap- prend que des Juifs on a pros- crit la ra- ce, Et le fer dans dix jours doit ver- ser tout leur sang.

$\sharp 7$
 $\flat 5$

[6] $\sharp$ $\flat$ $\sharp 6$ 4 $\sharp$

M. 3.1, Bc: figure $\flat$, followed by figures $\frac{2}{6}$ aligned with second eighth note. M. 10.2, Bc: figure $\sharp 6$ on fourth beat.