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**The *Livre d'Airs et de Simphonies meslés de
quelques fragmens d'Opéra 1697* of Pierre Gillier:
An Edition and Study.**

**by
Kathleen Gerrard**

VOLUME I

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Abstract

The *Livre d'Airs et de Simphonies meslés de quelques fragmens d'Opéra de la Composition de P. Gillier* (Book of Airs and Instrumental Pieces mixed with some operatic fragments composed by Pierre Gillier) was published in Paris in 1697. Its contents are dedicated to the twenty-three year-old Philippe duc de Chartres (son of Philippe I duc d'Orléans, only brother of Louis XIV).

Of the life of Pierre Gillier (1665- died after 1713), we know only that he possessed an *haute-contre* voice, and was employed as a chamber musician in the households of Philippe I duc d'Orléans and of his son, Philippe II. The Parisian courts of the Dauphin, and of Philippe I supported the secular arts that Louis XIV (self-exiled at Versailles), had rejected.

There was an insatiable appetite for amateur music making in late seventeenth-century France, notably in the broader societal context of airs: the salons. Composers generally wrote individual airs (of the serious and drinking types), complete operas, or theatre works. In such a context, Gillier's publication is unique: his declared aim was to assemble a collection of serious songs linked together tonally in suites with instrumental pieces by means of their keys, for chamber music performance. As a precursor to the arrival in France of the multi-movement sonata and cantata, Gillier's grouping together of instrumental and vocal movements to make larger musical entities has exceptional interest. His procedure has close links with theatrical practice.

The thesis includes a critical edition of Gillier's complete collection made from the copy preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France as F-Pn/ Rés. Vm⁷ 305. The edition is prefaced by a study of performance practices in vocal and instrumental music in late seventeenth-century France.

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