

Pierre-Denis Corru, a professional serpentist in *Nouvelle-France*: Expanding the narrative of ecclesiastical musical performance during the ancien régime in Québec.

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Abstract

(English)

Several documents from the Seminary of Québec, dating from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries mention Pierre-Denis Corru, a Parisian serpentist and pedagogue who arrived in the colony in 1729 and was ordained at the Seminary on September 20, 1732. Corru, who has not been thoroughly studied in over a century, was likely pivotal in establishing the role of the serpent in *Nouvelle-France*, as he is the only documented serpentist in the colony originating from the musical nucleus of the Île de la Cité.

Aspirant serpent players were selected by their singing masters at choir schools, known as *maîtrises*, during adolescence and performed until they left the institution in search of a vocation. Some of these serpentists, however, chose to take up the serpent as their profession in early adulthood, providing additional musical expertise to the plainchant choir. Serpentists of this period frequently employed performance techniques adapted from improvisatory practices over plainchant, such as faux-bourdon and *chant sur le livre*, applying them to the serpent with techniques like *basse syllabique* and *improvisations sur le plain-chant*.

This document presents an analysis and discussion of the pedagogical systems used for singing plainchant and enhancing its solemnity, followed by an exploration of the music through the process of research-creation. It investigates how performance traditions for the serpent might have been applied to the plainchant regularly used in the colony, aiming to provide new insights into Corru's legacy and the performance of sacred music in Québec.

Abstract

(Francais)

Plusieurs documents du Séminaire de Québec, datant du XIXe et du début du XXe siècle, mentionnent Pierre-Denis Corru, un serpentiste et pédagogue parisien qui est arrivé dans la colonie en 1729 et a été ordonné au Séminaire le 20 septembre 1732. Corru, qui n'a pas été étudié en profondeur depuis plus d'un siècle, a probablement joué un rôle clé dans l'établissement du serpent en *Nouvelle-France*, étant le seul serpentiste documenté dans la colonie originaire du noyau musical de l'Île de la Cité.

Les aspirants serpentistes étaient sélectionnés par leurs maîtres de chant dans les écoles chorales, connues sous le nom de maîtrises, durant l'adolescence et jouaient jusqu'à ce qu'ils quittent l'institution à la recherche d'une vocation. Certains de ces serpentistes, cependant, ont choisi de faire du serpent leur profession au début de l'âge adulte, apportant une expertise musicale supplémentaire au chœur de plain-chant. Les serpentistes de cette période employaient fréquemment des techniques de performance adaptées des pratiques improvisatoires sur le plain-chant, telles que le faux-bourdon et le chant sur le livre, les appliquant au serpent avec des techniques comme la basse syllabique et les improvisations sur le plain-chant.

Ce document présente une analyse et une discussion des systèmes pédagogiques utilisés pour chanter le plain-chant et en rehausser la solennité, suivies d'une exploration musicale à travers le processus de recherche-crédation. Il examine comment les traditions de performance pour le serpent ont pu être appliquées au plain-chant utilisé régulièrement dans la colonie, dans le but de fournir de nouvelles perspectives sur l'héritage de Corru et la performance de la musique sacrée au Québec.

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I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisors, Linda Pearce, Stephen Huebner, and Edward Klorman, for their invaluable guidance and support in bringing this document to life.

Introduction

Following the Council of Trent (1545–1563), plainchant began to be revised and composed in the Neo-Gallican tradition. Subsequently, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century plainchant idioms came to represent the proud rejection of ultramontane supremacy.¹ These reforms to plainchant coincided with the development and adoption of the serpent as the predominant instrument for plainchant accompaniment throughout the Gallican Church. The heightened zeal of French sacred music-making placed the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century serpentist in one of two distinct roles: the first, serving as an occasional Sunday musician who was drawn from the laity and given the simple task of sustaining plainchant during Mass; and the second, being selected from among boy choristers to become a professional musician and taught an oral tradition derived from centuries of cornett practice (since the serpent, serving as the functional bass of the cornett family, inherited its performance traditions). The Parisian serpentist, pedagogue, and author Pierre-Denis Corru falls into the latter category. Though largely unexplored in modern scholarship, Corru's activities in *Nouvelle-France* made significant contributions to the colony's musical record. Documentation chronicling his presence in and disappearance from Québec, and later his reappearance in France as chaplain of the Chateaufort of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, adds significantly to the existing narrative of the musical life of colonial Québec. Corru, whom researchers have overlooked for over a century, appears to have played an important role in solidifying the presence of the serpent in *Nouvelle-France*. Serpentists were documented in the colony only during the first half of the eighteenth century, suggesting not only geographical but also generational proximity, which strengthens the likelihood of their acquaintance and potential collaboration. Although many of these serpentists were likely expert musicians, it was Corru who was explicitly given the title of *Chantre*, denoting a considerable degree of status and seniority, and thus influence over the colony's serpentists.

¹ Peter Bennett, ed., "Accession: The Coronation, the Holy Spirit, and the Phoenix," in *Music and Power at the Court of Louis XIII: Sounding the Liturgy in Early Modern France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 46–87.

This document consists of three chapters. The first explores the world of the church serpentist of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Chapter two describes the environment of the professional serpentist through an analysis of Pierre-Denis Corru and his musical contemporaries in *Nouvelle-France*. Chapter three explores the repertoire that a professional serpentist in *Nouvelle-France* may have performed and contains some of my own compositions over plainchant. The plainchant I have used is sourced from documents that were present in *Nouvelle-France*: the subsection – the *Ordre pour la visite de Monseigneur l'évêque*, from the *Rituel de Québec*,² (1703, c.1713) and a popular plainchant treatise by François de La Feillée, the *Méthode nouvelle pour apprendre parfaitement les regles du plain-chant*.

All translations in this document are my own. Original French text is located in Appendix C.

² There are two versions of the *Rituel* published by Simon Langlois, both dated 1703. The first version was accused of containing Jansenist rhetoric. Jansenism was a seventeenth century religious movement within Catholicism which emphasized predestination and the necessity of divine grace, in opposition to the perceived moral laxity of the Catholic Church, particularly as advocated by the Jesuit Order. Jean-Baptiste de La Croix de Chevrières de Saint-Vallier, the second bishop of Québec was accused of Jansenism by the Jesuit Martin Bouvart, leading Saint-Vallier to appeal to the Sorbonne to expunge and republish a new version of the *Rituel* with the original date of publication. For further information on this subject see: La Charité, Claude “*Les deux éditions du Rituel du diocèse de Québec de Mgr de Saint-Vallier, datées de 1703: de l'édition janséniste à l'édition revue et corrigée par la Compagnie de Jésus*”. *Revue de Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec* no. 3 (2011), 74–85.

Chapter 1. *THE SERPENT IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES*

1.1 *LE SERPENT D'ÉGLISE*

But the true bass of the cornett is performed with the Serpent, so that one can say that one without the other is a body without a soul...

This instrument is capable of supporting twenty of the strongest voices, and it is so easy to play that a fifteen-year-old child can produce a sound as loud as that of a thirty-year-old man. Furthermore, the sound of this instrument can be softened to the extent that it is suitable for blending with the gentle voices of chamber music, imitating their delicacies and diminutions, and capable of producing thirty-two notes per measure.

—Marin Mersenne³

The serpent is a member of the lip-vibrated aerophone family, known as the labrosomes, and is the ancestor of the modern valved low-brass instruments. From its inception in the sixteenth century until the modern day, the serpent was most commonly made from two halves of wood, typically walnut, bound together with hide glue and a fine leather or parchment covering, thus ensuring that the instrument's seams are airtight.⁴ Known formally as the *serpent d'église*, it sports six tone-holes that are located at the instrument's third and fourth bends. Curiously, the spacing and size of these tone-holes differ compared to the construction of other Western wind instruments. The serpent's tone-holes are spaced to accommodate finger reach, forcing the performer to adopt a specialized lip technique that differs from that used to play other brass instruments. The embouchure shape must be altered for all but the fundamental notes in the serpent's harmonic series.

Mersenne's description of the serpent's capabilities in the above quotation is reminiscent of the virtuosity of more esteemed instruments from the end of the Renaissance, yet it took well over a century after the publication of Mersenne's oeuvre for the first serpent methods to appear. In the interim, France rose to ascendancy in Europe and its religious institutions became a cradle

³ Marin Mersenne, *Harmonie universelle*, Tome II, Book V, (Paris: S. Cramoisy, 1636), 276–282.

⁴ Walter Hillsman, "Instrumental Accompaniment of Plain-Chant in France from the Late 18th Century," *The Galpin Society Journal* 33 (1980), 8–16.; Mersenne, *Harmonie universelle*, 278.

for an expansive body of skilled serpentists who achieved the same level of musical ability as their colleagues who played other instruments in secular music contexts, a phenomenon demonstrated by the considerably high salaries of some of these individuals, which will be discussed further below.

The importance of the serpent in France is scarcely documented in the music of this period, as only a small body of purely instrumental music for the serpent survives from the height of its use (1590–1789) in the Gallican Church during the ancien régime. The serpent was instead most often used to perform the choral bass line, due to its association with the singing of plainchant.⁵ While the serpent would later perform the bass function in wind ensemble music, in the French Baroque it was associated with ecclesiastical singing, and taught almost exclusively to choirboys at the onset of adolescence. It is likely that the serpent was taught to boys who were expected to develop into baritones or basses, as payroll documents often place serpentists alongside the list of singers as *Basses joueurs de Serpent*.⁶ These documents also contain records of serpentists receiving extra pay for teaching the older *enfants de chœur*.⁷

The tradition of vocal-instrumental doubling with singers playing an instrument of the greater cornett family that matched their voice type appears to have been an established French practice. In 1587, just three years before Edmé Guillaume invented the serpent (according to the Abbé Jean Lebeuf),⁸ an order by Henry IV titled “*L’Ordre que la Roy veut estre suivy et observé désormais pour le service Divin...*” specifies that two *dessus-muez* would be part of the Chapelle Royale, alongside six *basse-contras*, *tailles*, *haute-contras*, and *enfants* each.⁹ Although some scholars suggest that the *dessus-muez* at this time were countertenors, they were later

⁵ Hostiou, Volny, “Le serpent un instrument sacré?”, *Musique d’église autour de N. Pacotat maître de psaltes à Poitiers, actes du colloque de Poitiers*, 14 février 2007, Paris, 2010, Publibook, 46.

⁶ Lionel Sawkins and Jacqueline Waeber, “En Province, à Versailles et Au Concert Spirituel: Réception, Diffusion et Exécution Des Motets de Lalande Au XVIIIe Siècle,” *Revue de Musicologie* 92, no. 1 (2006), 13–40.

⁷ Bernard Dompnier, Isabelle Langlois, and Bastien Mailhot, “Serpentiste d’Église: Une Profession au XVIIIe Siècle,” *Musique, Images, Instruments, Le Serpent: Itinéraires Passés et Présents* 14, (2013), 69.

⁸ Jean Lebeuf, *Mémoires Concernant l’histoire Civile et Ecclésiastique d’Auxerre et de Son Ancien Diocèse*, (1743).

⁹ Bennett, “Accession.”, 56.

categorized with the cornet and serpent, indicating that they doubled on these instruments. The origins of this phenomenon may have centered around the Chapelle musicians Jacques Andre and Pierre Ferrier, as they are listed as *dessus-muez* vocalists and as cornett players prior to 1670 and serpentists thereafter.¹⁰ This shift also helps explain why performance traditions specific to the serpent (which will be explored in chapter three) only begin to be documented at the end of the eighteenth century.

The diversity of serpent precursors, including both surviving irregularly shaped bass cornetts and detailed iconographic depictions of the serpent, has sparked debates about the instrument's origins. For example, depictions of early sixteenth-century serpent-like instruments in Italy continue to confound scholars. This instrument, of which at least one specimen from early-sixteenth century Italy survives, is known today as the "serpentino," (small serpent) since it is pitched a perfect fourth higher than the serpent.¹¹ Sabine Klaus argues that the bent form of the serpentino provided the basis for further development in France, where serpent playing was concentrated until the late eighteenth century, at which point it began to spread more widely to the rest of Western Europe.¹² Contemporary serpent maker Stephan Berger has been able to successfully produce reproductions of this instrument.¹³

While the serpent could be heard in all forms of French sacred music with a choral bass voice, its primary use was in the performance of plainchant and its derivative traditions, in which its specialized harmonics are best utilized.¹⁴ In seventeenth- and eighteenth-century plainchant, the serpent's role was simple: the serpent played the line of chant following certain rules regarding articulation. The Abbé Nicolas Oudoux explains in his *Méthode nouvelle pour*

¹⁰ Shirley Thompson, *New Perspectives on Marc-Antoine Charpentier* (Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2010), 140.

¹¹ Sabine Klaus, "Serpent Precursors in Italy and Elsewhere; the Serpent in the Low Countries and in Germany," *Le Serpent: Itinéraires Passés et Présents* 14 (2013), 153.

¹² Klaus, 152.

¹³ This research was presented at the Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz in Basel, Switzerland, from October 17 to 21, 2022.

¹⁴ The serpent occupies a specialized harmonic niche that requires an ambient acoustic space that offers sufficient reverberation. When in ideal conditions like that of a cathedral, the serpent produces sound that is below one kilohertz in depth. See: Volny Hostiou and Sandie Le Conte; "La « voix » Du Serpent : Étude Des Complémentarités de Timbre Entre Chanteur et Serpent," *Le Serpent: Itinéraires Passés et Présents* 14 (2013), 139–140.

apprendre facilement le plain-chant (1772) that instruments accompanying plainchant should omit the rearticulation of notes on the same pitch when either the antecedent or subsequent note is short. Instead, he instructs, the musician should hold through the combined duration of the two notes.¹⁵

Information on this instrument is readily obtained from administrative documents, which clearly detail the instrument's use and spread, and in the abundance of iconography from the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries found in French churches and cathedrals. Notable depictions of the serpent include engravings on the organ and surrounding pillars at the Chapelle royale at Versailles, and on the trophy of the gradual of Notre-Dame de Paris.¹⁶ In Québec, the serpent's most notable iconographical representation was featured in the second Notre-Dame de Québec, which was destroyed by arson in 1922. An unknown author who signed off only as "Lot" described this piece of iconography, and others like it, in the February 1929 issue of the *Bulletin des Recherches Historiques*:

QUESTION

Was the "serpent", a wind instrument once used to support church singing, ever in vogue on the lecterns of Canadian churches? Before the Basilica of N. D. de Québec burned down, it appeared with other ecclesiastical attributes in a sculpture that dominated the lectern of this church, and it is still found in pieces of sculpture in some of our older churches.¹⁷

Fortunately, photographs of Notre-Dame's *lutrin* (lectern) have survived.

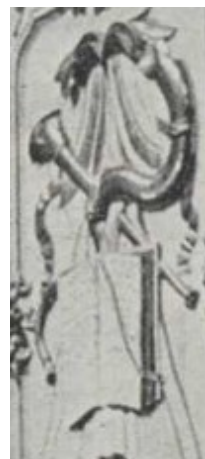
¹⁵ Oudoux, "Méthode Nouvelle Pour Apprendre Le Plain-Chant," (1772).

¹⁶ *Gradualis de Tempore Ecclesiae Parisiensis Pars III Incipiens a Dominica Resurrectionis Usque Ad Festum Corporis Christi Exclusive* (1669–1819).

¹⁷ *Bulletin Des Recherches Historiques: Bulletin d'archéologie, d'histoire, de Biographie, de Numismatique, Etc.*, (February 1929), 74.

1.2 NOTRE-DAME DE QUÉBEC – OLD LUTRIN

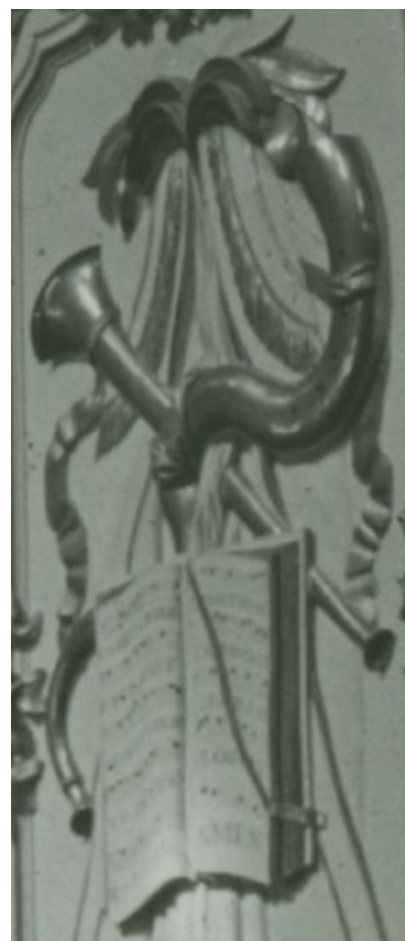
Figures 1a., 1b., and 1c. show the only known high-resolution images of the object that “Lot” describes in the *Bulletin*: the sculptural bas-relief of Notre-Dame de Québec’s old *lutrin*.¹⁸ The bas-relief was likely designed by Gaspard-Joseph Chaussegros de Léry (the elder) and installed in the late eighteenth century by the Baillairgé family after the cathedral was rebuilt following its destruction during the Siege of Québec. The sculptor captures two key elements of the musical and ecclesiastical experience of the time: the trumpet, with its unmistakable biblical importance, and the serpent, representing French plainchant tradition.



1c.



1a.



1b.

Figures 1a, 1b, 1c. Old *Lutrin*. The lower resolution example (top right) is found in the 1925 book “*Les vieilles églises de la province de Québec*.”

¹⁸ For images 1a. and 1b., see: *Musée de la civilisation, fonds d'archives du Séminaire de Québec*, PH2016-162; For image 1c., see: *Les vieilles églises de la province de Québec*, (1925), 10.

The serpent's use in Québec continued after the change of regime and into the nineteenth century, lending credence to the iconographical clues left by "Lot." On October 31, 1791, a letter from John Hale, the military secretary of Prince Edward Augustus, to the Society of the Priests of Saint Sulpice of Montréal reveals that Gabriel-Jean Brassier, the superior of the order, had successfully requisitioned a new serpent from the Prince.¹⁹ As late as 1836, Étienne Montminy, a member of the militia band named the Musique Canadienne, is listed as performing on the serpent.²⁰ Two years later, on January 9, 1838, James Ziegler Jr., the bandmaster and brass instrument virtuoso of the 66th Regiment of Foot, sold a serpent and a *basson russe* (a serpent in the form of a bassoon) to Abbé Joseph-Fortunat Aubry, who was teaching at the Seminary of Québec.²¹ The serpent was still in use in Québec as late as 1896, when the newspaper *Le Réveil* reported the following about an event in support of the politician Louis-Olivier Taillon, who was running for a federal seat.

The Honorable L.O. Taillon will sing next Sunday, accompanied by the serpent played by the incomparable virtuoso, the priest Tassé, the part of the collective mandate—set in plainchant for the occasion, which indicates the manner of voting. The ceremony will take place in Longueuil.²²

The priest in question is undoubtedly Maximilien Tassé, who, in 1883 pushed his parishioners to submit a formal request to the Archbishop of Montréal at the time, Edouard-Charles Fabre for the construction of the Co-Cathedral of Saint-Antoine-de-Padoue in Longueuil.²³ Such high praise for the serpent is quite rare in the late nineteenth century, as the instrument's popularity rapidly declined after the French Revolution. Walter Hillsman notes:

The influx of lay members into the choirs would have also included the addition of keyed serpents that were highly in vogue across Europe for military use. These post-revolution lay musicians were far from the serpentists of the Ancien Régime who were taught singing and counterpoint from childhood. Ironically, the increased accessibility and

¹⁹ Archives of the Séminaire de Saint-Sulpice, P1:21.58-08.

²⁰ *Le Canada*. (February 17, 1938). Collections de BAnQ.

²¹ SME-Fonds Séminaire de Québec / SME4-Les livres de comptes, les fondations et les donations / Document / Séminaire 131, no 188.

²² "*Le Réveil : Revue Politique et Littéraire.*," (June 1896), 240.

²³ Odette Lebrun-Lapierre, "*Si Longueuil m'était Conté... Saint-Antoine-de-Pade*" (Société d'Histoire de Longueuil, 1976), 4.

approachability to the instrument was what finally killed off the virtuoso serpent in France.²⁴

By the second decade of the nineteenth century, these improvised traditions had been out of fashion for so long that they had effectively become an embarrassment. In 1816 M. G. Hermenge, the *Ancien premier Serpentiste* of Saint-Germain l'Auxerois, wrote in his serpent method that "Our modern [the second post-revolution generation] serpentists stopped disfiguring it [chant] with insipid cadences, and even more ridiculous ornaments."²⁵ Hermenge is one of several *ancien régime* serpent pedagogues who were responsible for tempering the first generation of post-Revolutionary serpentists, products of the Paris Conservatoire's newly established serpent class, whose members had little to no experience in the French cathedral school system under a *maître*.

1.3 THE ROLE OF THE MAÎTRE

The position of *maître* in France was one devoted to the singing of plainchant and, by extension, the various traditions of augmenting its performance. The conditions for employment of François Pain (1695) at the cathedral of Poitiers demonstrate this phenomenon:

The said Master of Ceremonies shall ensure that Mr. Pain sings in fauxbourdon on Saturdays during the first Vespers of trunk feasts [In Poitiers, important feasts required the cantor to use a staff, called a Tronc, which comes from the Byzantine "Truncus," a type of military officer], and on Sundays and feasts, the Mass and the Magnificat in music, and on cantor[ial?] feasts the Mass in music, together with the Non nobis from In exitu in fauxbourdon; likewise, he shall ensure that the introit of the high Masses is *sung on the book* [*Chant sur le Livre*] every Sunday; the Te Deum in music on the feasts of the treasurer, dean, and cantor, and feasts of Our Lady; ... and he shall have the antiphon and Magnificat *sung on the book*, along with the last three responsories of each nocturn at Matins, and the hymns on the feasts of Our Lady and on the feasts of the treasurer, dean, and cantor, the introits, post-communions, and the responsories of the preface during Lent; he shall have the Mass sung in fauxbourdon three times a week, according to custom, unless there are double feasts, semi-doubles, namely on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday; and he shall have them sung on the three days of Rogations, small and great, and other processions and ceremonies, both ordinary and extraordinary.²⁶

²⁴ Walter Hillsman, "Instrumental Accompaniment of Plain-Chant in France from the Late 18th Century," *The Galpin Society Journal* 33 (1980): 8–16

²⁵ Thierry Maniguet, "L'usage Du Serpent à l'époque Révolutionnaire.," *Le Serpent: Itinéraires Passés et Présents* (14), 215–221.

²⁶ (Poitiers, Archives de la Vienne, G. 513), 193.

The continuation of this tradition in *Nouvelle-France* is apparent from many musical and textual sources preserved in the archives of Québec. In the eighteenth century, the parishes of Notre-Dame de Québec and Notre-Dame de Montréal employed professional ecclesiastics who accompanied Mass with organ and serpent and occasionally used other instruments to perform petits motets.²⁷ Women's religious institutions expressed their devotion through music, among them the Ursulines, who fostered a rich tradition of composition.²⁸ Additionally, the Abenaki Manuscripts produced by the Jesuits Joseph Aubery and Claude-François Virot have left a corpus of French sacred music that was translated into the Abenaki variant of the Algonquin language family.²⁹ This music and its variants for serpent will be explored in chapter three.

1.4 THE PROFESSIONAL SERPENTIST

In the French *maîtrises*, serpentists' duties and expertise varied greatly. In smaller parishes, a serpentist might have performed only on Sundays, and would likely have been a former *enfant serpent* who left the ecclesiastical life for a trade as a young adult. In some circumstances, a serpentist might have been a musically inclined adult who was asked to learn the instrument from a serpentist in another village, as was the case for Edme Michel Trouvé. In 1781, Trouvé was hired by the cathedral of Toucy at the age of twenty-one to play the serpent and “*conduire le lutrin*” (“drive” the lectern), despite needing to immediately begin lessons on the instrument, and upon reaching a certain degree of mastery, to teach a choirboy who might eventually replace him. Trouvé, who had no serpentist to teach him as an adolescent, was unable to fully pursue the instrument.³⁰

²⁷ *La vie musicale en Nouvelle-France*, Cahiers des Amériques (Sillery (Québec): Septentrion, 2003), 175–228.

²⁸ Elizabeth Kathleen Norah MacIsaac, *A Rich Musical Legacy from Québec: Baroque Motets of the Ursuline and Hôtel-Dieu Monasteries of New France*, (University of Washington, 2018).

²⁹ Paul-André Dubois, *Musique et Dévotion Dans La Mission Jésuite Du Canada. Sources, Histoire et Répertoire Du Petit Motet et Du Cantique Spirituel Savant Chez Les Abénaquis de Nouvelle-France* (Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2023).

³⁰ Edme Michel TROUVÉ, (1760 ca-1785 Ap.) / Notices / MUSEFREM - Base de Données Prosopographique Des Musiciens d'Église En 1790 / Bases Prosopographiques / Publications / Accueil - Portail PHILIDOR,” accessed April 26, 2024, [https://philidor.cmbv.fr/Publications/Bases-prosopographiques/MUSEFREM-Base-de-donnees-prosopographique-des-musiciens-d-Eglise-en-1790/Notices/TROUVE-Edme-Michel/\(from\)/search](https://philidor.cmbv.fr/Publications/Bases-prosopographiques/MUSEFREM-Base-de-donnees-prosopographique-des-musiciens-d-Eglise-en-1790/Notices/TROUVE-Edme-Michel/(from)/search).

The preferable option for a church was to employ a professional serpentist, individuals who were admitted to the *maîtrise* as *enfants de chœur*, taught the serpent when their voices broke, and offered paid cantorial positions after leaving the cathedral school system. These serpentists, whose age usually ranged between twenty-five and forty-five, typically took minor religious vows, often becoming deacons or *sous-maîtres*.³¹ Many eventually reached the rank of *maître*. This class of serpentist could also perform on other instruments such as the bassoon, thereby allowing them the opportunity to become professional musicians in secular spaces.

A professional serpentist's musical duties supported those of the *maître*. They played the bass in *chant sur le livre*, and could perform virtuosic *variations*, a style unique to serpentists that is an offshoot of *chant sur le livre*. In addition to performing the same functions in the performance of faux-bourdon, they also had to compose (or perhaps improvise) harmonic accompaniments below chant, called *basse syllabique*. Both *variations* and *basse syllabique* will be featured in chapter two. Alexandre Hardy, one of the last ancien régime serpentists and a contemporary of Jean-Baptiste Métoyen, was even required to perform a motet of his own composition on the serpent while auditioning for the position of serpentist at Notre-Dame de Chartres.³² Preserved in the *Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque de Rouen*, Hardy's compositions for voice(s) and serpent or bass accompaniment, listed below, reflect the duties required of a serpentist who provided auxiliary support to the *maître*:

1. Laetatus sum. Motet by M. Hardy, for one voice, with accompaniment of bass and serpent.
2. Motet for a basse-taille, by M. Hardy, with accompaniment of serpent and bass.
3. O salutaris, for three voices, by M. Hardy.
4. Motet for the Feast of the Holy Spirit, by M. Hardy; solo for haute-contre; accompaniment of bass.
5. O salutaris, for three voices, in F, by M. Hardy.
6. Tantum ergo, for two voices, by M. Hardy.
7. O salutaris, for four voices, by M. Hardy.
8. O salutaris, for three voices, with accompaniment of bass. (Attributed to Hardy).
9. Small mass, for three voices, by M. Hardy, with accompaniment of serpent and bass.

³¹ Dompnier, Langlois, and Mailhot, "Serpentiste d'Église : Une Profession Au XVIIIe Siècle."

³² HARDY, Alexandre Antoine (ca 1752-1821), "MUSEFREM - Base de Données Prosopographique Des Musiciens d'Église En 1790 / Bases Prosopographiques / Publications / Accueil - Portail PHILIDOR", accessed April 26, 2024, <https://philidor.cmbv.fr/Publications/Bases-prosopographiques/MUSEFREM-Base-de-donnees-prosopographique-des-musiciens-d-Eglise-en-1790/Notices/HARDY-Alexandre-Antoine>.

10. Domine, by M. Hardy, arranged for three voices, with accompaniment of serpent and bass.
11. Credo, by M. Dumont, with accompaniment of serpent, for a tenor or dessus (Attributed to Hardy).
12. Credo, by M. Dumont, arranged for two voices, with accompaniment of serpent or cello. (Attributed to Hardy).³³

Edme Trouvé's requirement to "*conduire le lutrin*" attests to the role of the eighteenth-century serpentist in larger churches—to assist in the direction of rehearsals and supplement the *maître*'s expertise and responsibilities.

Modern serpentist and musicologist Volny Hostiou provides valuable insights about the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century French serpent tradition. Hostiou reveals that the greatest cathedrals of France employed full-time serpentists with the pay grade of *beneficiers* at Notre-Dame de Paris, *gagistes* at the Saint-Chapelle, and *chantres officiers* at the Chapelle royale.³⁴ Expert serpentists at wealthy cathedrals were paid handsomely, receiving a yearly salary ranging from 700 to 1330 livres, which was comparable to the pay of organists at smaller institutions.³⁵ One of the most important serpentists in the mid-seventeenth century was Guillaume Poitevin, whose skill from a young age allowed him to rise through the ranks at the cathedral of Saint-Sauveur d'Aix. The chronicle of Poitevin's hiring speaks to his talent at a young age: "On November 17, 1663, "a young foreign boy" showed up to play the serpent. "given that he plays it very well, he will be retained in the service of the chapter at the salary of 18 escus per year."³⁶

Between November 1664 and May 1665 at Aix, Poitevin received several raises for his skill at performing on the serpent, and he had taught at least one choirboy how to play the instrument before being promoted to *maîtrise*. His pay peaked at 100 livres for playing the serpent, more than five times the salary of 18 livres that was the norm at the time for a regular

³³ France Ministère de l'éducation nationale, *Catalogue général des manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques de France: Départements ...* (Plon, Nourrit et Cie., 1888), 252.

³⁴ Hostiou, Volny, "Le serpent un instrument sacré?," *Le Serpent : Itinéraires passés et présents* (14), 47.

³⁵ Dompnier, Langlois, and Mailhot, "Serpentiste d'Église : Une Profession Au XVIIIe Siècle." *Le Serpent : Itinéraires passés et présents* (14), 69.

³⁶ Raugel, F. "Une maîtrise célèbre au grand siècle: la maîtrise de la cathédrale d'Aix-en-Provence." *Revue des études du XVIIe siècle* (21-22) 1954, 429–431.

church musician.³⁷ Poitevin was so highly regarded for his musical ability and skill as a pedagogue that he was promoted to the rank of *maître de musique* at the exceptionally young age of twenty, a provisional appointment made following the sudden departure of François Gal, the previous *maître*.³⁸ When his position became official one year later, Poitevin's salary increased to 150 livres. Since most of his written legacy has been lost, his influence is most recognizable in the accomplishments of his pupils.³⁹ Poitevin's tutelage at Aix formed the musical foundation for composers such as André Campra, Jean Gilles, and Esprit Antoine Blanchard.

1.5 CONCLUSION

In France and its sphere of influence, the serpent was, from its inception until the dawn of the French Revolution, an instrument tasked exclusively with augmenting the music of the ecclesiastical world. Its use was so quotidian, restricted as it was to the everyday tasks of sacred singing, that the instrument was seldom mentioned at the height of its use and, arguably, the peak of the skill of its practitioners. For this reason, the serpent is thought to have possessed an insular and predominantly oral pedagogical tradition.⁴⁰ Surviving sources that refer specifically to the serpent date from two distinct periods: the period of its inception and early dissemination (1590-1640), and generations later, in the decades before, during, and after the French Revolution.⁴¹ This leaves researchers with a paradox: while the "golden age" (1650-1789) of the serpent is evinced by rich iconography and lucrative pay stubs for serpentists from this period, no documentation describing serpentist's performance practices in this era has survived.

Additionally, the height of the serpent's popularity coincides with the collapse of its reputation. Although traces of its use are found throughout Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the serpent was still treated as a curiosity in this period. The French Revolution and subsequent Napoleonic Era resulted in the serpent's dissemination throughout Europe as a military instrument, as the collapse of the *ancien régime* left French serpentists

³⁷ John Hajdu Heyer, *The Lure and Legacy of Music at Versailles: Louis XIV and the Aix School*, 2014, 49–65.

³⁸ Raugel, 430.

³⁹ Heyer, 128.

⁴⁰ Dompnier, Langlois, and Mailhot, "Serpentiste d'Église : Une Profession Au XVIIIe Siècle."

⁴¹ Cécile Davy-Rigaux, "Jouer Le Plain-Chant": "Le Serpent à l'unisson de La Voix Des Chantres Dans La France d'Ancien Régime," *Musique, Images, Instruments*, "Revue Française d'organologie et d'iconographie Musicale," (2013), 85–101.

without recourse. Many of these musicians flocked to the nascent Conservatoire de Paris, which trained an immense inaugural serpent class of fifty pupils.⁴² It was during the Revolution and subsequent Napoleonic Era that one of the last *ancien régime* serpentists, Jean-Baptiste Métoyen, produced the only surviving detailed examples of a once vibrant tradition of virtuoso serpent performance practices. These traditions will be explored in the compositions featured in chapter three.

⁴² Frederic de La Grandville, “Le Serpent Au Conservatoire de Paris : Un Enseignement Manqué,” *Le Serpent: Itinéraires Passés et Présents* (14), 221–222.

Chapter 2. *ACROSS THE ATLANTIC: PIERRE-DENIS CORRU AND HIS SERPENT PLAYING CONTEMPORARIES.*

2.1 *THE EARLY LIFE OF PIERRE-DENIS CORRU*

Relatively little can be known for certain about Corru's early life. The necrology that records the death of his father, Pierre Corru, on May 26, 1725 reveals that Pierre-Denis, who was nineteen at the time, was the elder Corru's only (surviving) child. The Corru family, who belonged to the bourgeoisie, resided in the parish of Saint-Pierre-des-Arcis on the historical Rue aux Fèves in Paris. Pierre's profession is listed as *marchand-mercier*, a lofty occupation operating outside of the guild system, whose members sold *objets d'art* and decorated the interior of buildings with imported finery.⁴³ Saint-Pierre-des-Arcis, a modest church in the center of the Île de la Cité, stood in the midst of many of France's grand cathedrals, renowned for the exceptional education provided by their choir schools, known as *maîtrises*. As Saint-Pierre-des-Arcis did not have a *maîtrise* of its own until 1735, Pierre-Denis would have been educated at Notre-Dame or the Sainte-Chapelle.⁴⁴ At some point during his education, most likely during his adolescence, Pierre-Denis would have started learning to play the serpent, and at the time of his father's death he may have been a *spé*—a term for the eldest choirboys at the *maîtrise* of Notre-Dame.

At some point while he was working in Paris, Corru became acquainted with Pierre Hazeur de l'Orme, the representative of the cathedral chapter of Québec from 1722 to 1757. Amédée Gosselin writes that Corru made the voyage across the Atlantic in 1729, and that he was promised a cantor's position in the colony to "play" for 100 livres.⁴⁵ Corru must have made a positive impression on Hazeur de l'Orme, who expressed his exasperation at the Seminary's initial rejection of the young aspirant in correspondences with his brother Joseph-Thierry. One such correspondence read:

I am upset that Sieur Corru is not suitable for the Chapter. I wish, however, that he could be given something to live on, i.e. that he be made a priest, if he is capable, and that he be

⁴³ Registre de clôtures d'inventaires après décès fait au chatelet de Paris de 1725 à 1736, 11.

⁴⁴ Philippe Lescat, "Les Maîtrises parisiennes", IReMus (2018), 15.

⁴⁵ Musée de la civilisation, collection du Séminaire de Québec, fonds Amédée Gosselin, P12/49/1, 1.

given a cure. I know it is more natural to bring up young local clergymen; however, as he can play the serpent quite well, I thought he might be useful to the Church.⁴⁶

Corru arrived in Québec at the height of a period of discontent with the Church following the death of Jean-Baptiste de La Croix de Chevrières de Saint-Vallier (1653–1727), the second bishop of Québec.⁴⁷ According to Amédée Gosselin (1863–1941), whose biographical entry on Pierre-Denis Corru has not previously been discussed, Corru’s value was soon reassessed. Gosselin states that Corru was granted a salary of 400 livres for assisting the choir only a few days after his presence was confirmed in the annals of the seminary. This salary is significantly higher than what was paid to most musicians active in *Nouvelle-France*. This wage is in line with the footnote on Corru in 1912, which states that Corru was “*le fameux joueur de serpent de l’époque*.”⁴⁸ Such high wages seem to have been reserved for serpentists in particular, as seven years prior the salary of another serpentist, Perin, was increased to 100 ecus (300 livres) at Notre-Dame de Québec.

2.1.1 CHARLES BERTHELOT

Another likely associate of Corru was the Parisian merchant Charles Berthelot, who owned a flageolet, a tambourine, a flute, and a serpent. Berthelot also possessed didactic material for these instruments, including a *Tablature de Serpent*. The *Tablature* is an introductory guide that explains the basic function of the serpent and contains a fingering chart for the instrument. These pedagogical works, along with a large collection of dance movements Berthelot collected, were compiled in an expansive collection known as the known as the *Manuscrit Berthelot* by his grandson, Charles Berthelot III, and donated to the Seminary of Québec at the end of the

⁴⁶ “Bulletin Des Recherches Historiques : Bulletin d’archéologie, d’histoire, de Biographie, de Numismatique, Etc.,” (June 1910), 163.

⁴⁷ This thirteen-year period (1727-1740) was only alleviated with the diplomacy of the sixth and final bishop from the French regime, Henri-Marie Dubreil de Pontbriand (1708-1760), who had the task of disentangling the growing resentment between French leadership and the regionally powerful *Canadiens*.

⁴⁸ Auguste Gosselin, *Eglise du Canada depuis Monseigneur de Laval jusqu’à la conquête.... Partie 3* (typ. Laflamme et Proulx (Québec), 1911), 246.

eighteenth century. Berthelot's instruments were auctioned off in the years following the change of regime.⁴⁹

Berthelot's *Tablature* (Figure 2.) appears to be one of the earliest fingering charts created for the serpent, if not the very first. The fingerings it prescribes are quite unusual, however, as it suggests fingerings for certain notes differ greatly from those found in other sources, including Mersenne's *Harmonie universelle*, and from fingerings found in the post-revolutionary serpent methods.⁵⁰ For example, Berthelot's fingerings labelled 1, 4, and 7 in Figure 2 are forked versions of the standard fingering for these notes. Using forked fingerings for these notes raises the pitch, which counteracts the instrument's natural tendency to err flat on these notes. Berthelot's fingerings 2, 3, and 4 receive special mention in the *Tablature*. He states that "the circles that have a line crossing them are the ones that need to be beaten."⁵¹ This recommendation likely refers to the technique of shading or half-holing, also known as venting, where one manipulates the pitch of a wind instrument by only partially covering one or more of its tone-holes and compensates for any further discrepancies with the embouchure. Fingering 4 is particularly different as it is both forked and vented, which has the effect of greatly altering the *la* in question.

Berthelot's fingering 6 is, however, the most striking, as the standard serpent does not have a natural *ut dièse*. All but one other fingering chart states that the *ut dièse* must be "bent" down with the lips from the *re*. This is one of the most significant hurdles for beginners learning the serpent, as producing the note requires a highly trained ear and precise lip control working together. Berthelot's *Tablature* indicates that his serpent instead produced the *ut dièse* in tune when all of the instrument's tone-holes were uncovered.⁵² This effect is achieved by altering the placement of the first three tone-holes, resulting in most of the instrument's other notes tending sharp outside of those produced using the entire resonating column of air of the instrument's harmonic series (all holes covered). While serpentists can manipulate the pitch of the unstable

⁴⁹ Archives of The Université Laval, Québec, Fonds Claude Galarneau.

⁵⁰ Mersenne. *Harmonie Universelle*. Part II (8), 279–280.

⁵¹ Charles Berthelot, *Manuscrit Berthelot*, *Tablature Du Serpent*, (circa 1750).

⁵² The other fingering chart is found within the *Encyclopédie* by Diderot: D'Alembert, Paris, 1751, 514. This fingering chart prescribes the same fingerings for adjacent notes by half-step, which could be indicative of the author's unfamiliarity with the instrument.

notes with their lips and with alternate fingerings, the *ut dièse* is without a doubt the most difficult note to play in tune on the instrument and can often ruin a performance if improperly sounded. It is possible that the maker of the Berthelot serpent received a request to produce an instrument whose fingering system would, in theory facilitate the production of difficult notes, at the expense of others.

Excepté la clef d'effut fa, que l'on joue au naturel²¹
 aussi Bien, que la musique
 Doigté pour faire toutes les Notes

main gauche
 main droite
 Pedale

1 2
 re ut re mi fa sol la si ut

3 4 5
 re mi fa sol la si ut re mi

Doigté des
 Dièzes
 6 7
 Si font en haut
 Comme en bas # fa ut sol re la re den haut

Quand il se trouve de si ou mi dièzes qui est fort rare
 pour lusi on fait l'ut naturel, de même pour le mi dièze
 on fait le fa faible

Figure 2. *Doigté pour faire toutes les notes*- Manuscrit Berthelot. Second quarter of the eighteenth century. Annotations in red have been added by the author.

2.1.2 JEAN GIRARD

The Sulpician Jean Girard's musical upbringing was likely similar to that of Corru. Girard was accepted to the *maîtrise* of the Sainte-Chapelle of Bourges at the age of seven, where he received instruction in all aspects of ecclesiastical singing. On May 6, 1712, the sixteen-year-old Girard was authorized to learn the serpent, and six months later he received a sum of thirty livres to pay for a serpent he had ordered.⁵³ Girard is best known as an organist and for compiling the largest extant collection of French organ works, the *Livre d'Orgue de Montréal*. He may have played serpent in addition to his primary duties as organist at Notre-Dame de Montréal, though no record of his serpent playing services survives.

Girard's and Corru's duties also included educating *maîtrise* pupils. Corru's initial role likely involved the continuous supervision of his pupils at the Petit Séminaire. Amédée Gosselin reveals that Corru excelled in the humanities and, while his charges initially disliked him for his severity,⁵⁴ he eventually earned recognition for his zeal as a teacher once his tasks did not involve the constant guardianship of his pupils. According to the directors of the Séminaire,

M. Corru is very helpful to those who have mastered their humanities; our students have seemed to be as attached to him this year as he has only focused on their studies, which they had distanced themselves from in previous years. He is equally devoted to his students, and he loves his profession.⁵⁵

Girard also appears to have been a capable pedagogue, as he is described as teaching various subjects "with zeal and success."⁵⁶ One of these subjects, singing plainchant, placed the young Corru and Girard at the head of their battalion of pupils in their roles as *maîtres*, their selection for the role in all likelihood bolstered by their expertise on the serpent.

⁵³ Elisabeth Gallat-Morin, *Jean Girard, musicien en Nouvelle-France: Bourges, 1696-Montréal, 1765* (Sillery, Québec); Paris: Septentrion; Klincksieck, 1993), 325.

⁵⁴ Musée de la civilisation, collection du Séminaire de Québec, fonds Amédée Gosselin, P12/49/1, 3.

⁵⁵ Gosselin, *L'instruction Au Canada Sous Le Régime Français (1635-1760)*, ed. Typ. Laflamme & Proulx (Québec, 1911), 410.

⁵⁶ Gallat-Morin, *Jean Girard, musicien en Nouvelle-France*, 96.

2.2 CORRU'S DISAPPEARANCE AND RETURN TO FRANCE

In the autumn of 1734, Corru was appointed priest of the parish of Saint-Joachim, a farming community downstream from Québec City. He performed curial functions there until April 24, 1735, after which no further documentation survives of his presence in the colony. It is possible that the bishop Dosquet, wishing to exert more control, used every ecclesiastical professional available to him as diocesan priests. In his entry on Corru, Gosselin attributes the following quote from May 20, 1733 to the *Msrs. de Paris*: “We do not know why the bishop does not want Mr. Corru to be responsible for the care of the *petit séminaire*. According to our letter he is very useful there—perhaps the bishop will change his mind?” A few months later, the seminary leaders praised his work at the seminary.⁵⁷

Gosselin posits two possible outcomes for the young priest.⁵⁸ The first is that he left in October 1750 as is documented by his contemporaries, but for which Gosselin found little corroboration. The second is that Corru may have left aboard the *Héros* with Dosquet in 1735, when the latter left the colony with his retinue.⁵⁹ Although Corru's name does not appear on the passenger manifest, he may have boarded when the *Héros* passed Saint-Joachim. It is probable that Corru left on some other date. According to the testimonies of ecclesiastics who were points of contact for a critical edition of St. François de Sales's correspondences, Corru was present in France again as early as June 1748.⁶⁰ This is the period during which he contacted the archives of certain religious orders in France that held de Sales's correspondences, as the Saint was a fixture in Corru's academic work.

Although the precise date of Corru's return to France is unknown, his appointment as chaplain of the Chateau-Neuf de Saint-Germain-en-Laye is confirmed by a will dated November 18, 1754 which he later revoked via codicil. In a manuscript dating from 1772, Abbé Drapeyron (Clapeyron in some sources), a colleague of Corru's at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, describes retrieving a manuscript copy of Jean Bodin's *Heptaplomeres* from Corru, an extremely

⁵⁷ Musée de la civilisation, collection du Séminaire de Québec, fonds Amédée Gosselin, P12/49/1, 1.

⁵⁸ Fonds Amédée Gosselin, P12/49/1, 5.

⁵⁹ Fonds Amédée Gosselin, P12/49/1, 5.

⁶⁰ F. de Sales, *Lettres de S. François de Sales*, Lettres de S. François de Sales, v. 4 (Claude Herissant, 1758), 295.

controversial work from the sixteenth century. The Abbé Corru died on November 29th, 1789 at the Chateau-Neuf de Saint-Germain-en-Laye, which no longer exists.⁶¹ He is known to have possessed a small, albeit formidable collection of books and manuscripts, which included a significant manuscript of six grands motets by Jean-Baptiste Lully.⁶²

2.3 CONCLUSION

All secondary sources about Corru's presence in the colony predate Québec's Quiet Revolution (1960–1970) by several decades. As such, most of the individuals who contributed articles to the *Bulletin* on the history of ecclesiastics in *Nouvelle-France* were priests with access to many of the primary resources that have not been catalogued in any currently useful form, which has created a hurdle for potential investigations on handwriting and paper dating. These resources include the remaining holdings of the Québec Seminary, many of which are within walking distance of Saint-Joachim. One of these holdings is the Domaine du Petit Cap, a summer residence for the Seminary that features buildings built between 1777 and 1781. Of even greater interest is its predecessor, La Petite-Ferme at Cap Tourmente, which lies only one and a half kilometers east of the Domaine du Petit Cap. The Petite-Ferme was a summer residence for the Petit Seminaire established by the Bishop Laval in 1680 and active until 1748. Additionally, Gallat-Morin mentions that Charles Berthelot III, the compiler and donor of the *Manuscrit Berthelot* chose to leave his grandfather's music to La Canardière, now the Domaine de Maizerets. One cannot help but question if Corru, who lived only three kilometers away in Saint-Joachim had a hand in writing the *Tablature*, as well as many of the other little-studied works from this period of Québec's history.

⁶¹ Archives notariales, GOBIN Nicolas Jean-Baptiste (Liasses). “[AN ET-X-787] - Paris (Paris, France).” June 1, 1790 - July 31, 1790. Archives nationales, Paris.

⁶² Jean-Baptiste Lully et al. *Motets à deux chœurs pour la chapelle du roi, mis en musique par M. de Lully*, Manuscript, 1670.

Chapter 3. *IMPROVISATORY TECHNIQUES OF THE PROFESSIONAL SERPENTIST: CONTEXTS FOR SERPENT PERFORMANCE IN NOUVELLE-FRANCE*

3.1 *RESEARCH-CREATION*

Research-creation is understood as an approach applied to an individual or multiple-agent project combining research methods and creative practices within a dynamic frame of causal interaction (that is, each having a direct influence on the other), and leading to both scholarly and artefactual productions (be they artistic or otherwise).⁶³

This definition for Research-Creation by Sophie Stévanec and Serge Lacasse outlines a process that was integral to this project. Enhancing ecclesiastical musical performance was a complex task entrusted to those responsible for its execution during every important service of the liturgical calendar. Exploring this task, the increasing of musical *solemnité*, was fundamental to this research as the intangible nature of musical enhancement through improvisation can only be observed through an analysis of this ephemeral performance practice. By utilizing the resources and methods available to *maîtres* and professional serpentists, I was able to produce musical works in the form of composed examples of musical improvisation, a performance of these works (the lecture recital that accompanies this document), and the analysis that follows in this chapter.

In his posthumous work, *Dictionnaire universel* (1690), Antoine Furetière defines solemnité as “Pomp, magnificence, ceremonies. When bishops say Mass, they officiate with great solemnity.”⁶⁴ In a practical musical context however, *solemnité* takes on two distinct meanings. The first refers to specific liturgical occasions, which were categorized by their importance. The more solemn an occasion, the longer the duration of each sung note in a measure.⁶⁵ The second musical definition of *solemnité* refers to the enhancing musical elements that could be added to a ceremony, as is described by the following carte-blanc for increasing

⁶³ Sophie Stévanec and Serge Lacasse, *Research-Creation in Music and the Arts: Towards a Collaborative Interdiscipline* (London: Routledge, 2016), 152.

⁶⁴ Antoine Furetière. *Dictionnaire universel, contenant généralement tous les mots françois tant vieux que modernes, et les termes de toutes les sciences et des arts*, (1690), 1925.

⁶⁵ Xavier Bisaro, *Guide Historique et Pratique Du Plain-Chant et Du Faux-Bourdon France XVIIe-XVIIIe Siècles*, (Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles, 2017), 98.

the *solemnité* through the enhancement of plainchant and the addition of instruments is described in the Cathedral of Québec's *Statuts* of 1687:

[One should use] the organ, singing, [figured] music, fauxbourdon, and instruments suitable for this purpose, and of the manner which must be observed in all this... On all the Days on which there will arise an occasion to celebrate with solemnity some considerable [event], or to perform some extraordinary ceremony.⁶⁶

The need to sing and embellish plainchant and its derived musical practices is made clear.

3.2 MUSIC FOR A BISHOP

Training for church musicians in *Nouvelle-France* involved learning a large corpus of standard chant, a smaller corpus of votive chant, and a handful of popular chants written in the *plainchant musical* style. The chants found in the *Rituel de Québec*, particularly those found in the subsection titled *Ordre pour la visite de Monseigneur l'évêque*, fall into the second of these categories, while the chants sung for great occasions often fell into the third. The *Ordre* proved vital for many of the religious institutions of *Nouvelle-France* in 1741, when Henri-Marie Dubreil de Pontbriand, the sixth and final bishop of the French regime, visited the colony for a series of pastoral visits.

Pontbriand, who arrived in Québec in August 1741, knew about the affairs of his new diocese from the time he spent at the Sulpician Seminary in Paris in the months preceding his departure.⁶⁷ It was probably there that he learned of the ecclesiastical discord that had plagued the colony since Bishop St-Vallier's death in 1727, as Pontbriand's predecessors either never left France (Louis-François Duplessis de Mornay), were barely present in the colony (Pierre-Herman Dosquet), or died twelve days after arrival (François-Louis de Pourroy de Lauberivière).⁶⁸ Before embarking on his journey, Pontbriand learned of the political climate of *Nouvelle-France* from individuals such as the Abbés de l'Isle Dieu and Hazeur de l'Orme. The young bishop had to contend with growing disagreement between *Canadiens* and the authorities in France, especially within the Church.⁶⁹ Pontbriand's first order of business was to visit as many major settlements

⁶⁶ *La vie musicale en Nouvelle-France*, Cahiers des Amériques (Sillery (Québec): Septentrion, 2003), 458.

⁶⁷ Henri Têtu, *Notices biographiques: les évêques de Québec* (Québec, 1889), 219–57.

⁶⁸ Paul Marie Du Breil de Pontbriand, *Le dernier évêque du Canada français, monseigneur de Pontbriand 1740-1760* (Paris: H. Champion, 1910), 2.

⁶⁹ *Revue catholique d'histoire, d'archéologie et de littérature de Normandie*, 1913, 451.

as possible in his first years as bishop so that he might ease the doubts that some of the religious establishments had with church authorities in France.

Pontbriand's first visit, announced in a letter dated December 9, 1741, was to the parish of Québec.⁷⁰ The letter resembles the preface to the *Ordre* in the *Rituel de Québec*'s second edition, which was influenced by Council of Trent decrees that called upon bishops to be more present in their respective domains. Therefore, it is likely that Pontbriand possessed a copy of the *Rituel* while preparing for his voyage. On June 22, 1742, Pontbriand issued a pastoral letter informing residents of the regions between Québec City and Montréal of his upcoming visit. Three days after issuing this letter, Pontbriand arrived in Montréal. In 1743, he visited the settlements of Beaupré and the Île d'Orléans, and traveled to Bécancour, a settlement near Trois-Rivières. In 1744, he concluded his first tour by visiting Cap-Saint-Ignace in Côte-Sud. Pontbriand also visited the women's religious orders in Québec City: the Ursulines in January and December of 1742, and the Augustinians at the Hôtel-Dieu in the spring, and the Hôpital Générale in the autumn. In 1749, Pontbriand toured even more widely, travelling as far south as Île Lamothe (now known as Isle La Motte in Vermont) and westward to the Fort de La Présentation (now the town of Ogdensburg in New York).⁷¹

Church musicians of *Nouvelle-France* would have needed to prepare the appropriate music to receive Pontbriand, both according to the *Ordre*, and for the Masses that he would participate in during his stays. The serpentists of Québec would also have contributed to these festivities. Individuals like Jean Girard, M. Perin, and Pierre-Denis Corru (if he was still in the colony) counted among the top tier of musicians in *Nouvelle-France*, and would have been expected to oblige the bishop with their talents.

3.3 FAUX-BOURDON

In the sixteenth century, the term "faux-bourdon" ceased to refer to the specific technique associated with the fifteenth-century Burgundian School and instead becomes a catch-all term for

⁷⁰ Henri Têtu and Charles-Octave Gagnon, *Mandements, lettres pastorales et circulaires des évêques des Québec* (Québec: Chancellerie de l'Archevêché, 1887), 9-12.

⁷¹ Jean-Guy Lavallée, "DUBREIL DE PONTBRIAND, HENRI-MARIE," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 3, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed August 20, 2024, https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/dubreil_de_pontbriand_henri_marie_3E.html.

homophony based on plainchant. Most examples from this later period are three- to six-voice (most often four-voice), isochronous polyphonic compositions with plainchant in the tenor.⁷² It is more likely that this style was exclusively composed, either in parts or with formulae composed for harmonizing psalms. Faux-bourdon is described in the *Cérémonial de Toul* (1700), which states that singing *en musique* is performed in one of three ways: as *chant sur le livre*, faux-bourdon, or as figured music.⁷³ Some scholars have tried to clarify between these two definitions by employing the terms “faux bourdon” for the fifteenth-century Burgundian practice and the hyphenated “faux-bourdon” for seventeenth- and eighteenth-century practices. This document will use the hyphenated version for the sake of clarity.

3.4 FAUX-BOURDON IN CONTEXT—THE DUTY OF THE MAÎTRE

François Pain’s contract for the position of *maître* at the Saint-Pierre de Poitiers mandated that he frequently incorporate faux-bourdon and improvised counterpoint above plainchant, referred to as *chant sur le livre*. Additionally, he was obligated to arrange for his musicians to perform “*en musique*,” that is, presenting figured music of his own composition. The life of a cathedral *maître*, particularly of a large cathedral like Saint-Pierre de Poitiers, was quite different from that of village choirmasters, who typically had to make do with smaller budgets and sub-optimal facilities.⁷⁴ The *maîtrises* were an invaluable asset to their communities, and for many parents, they provided the only opportunity to educate their children. A *maîtrise* education also provided the potential for class mobility since pupils from the third estate (peasants and bourgeoisie) could continue on a career path to the first (clergy). The most important musical training that the village *maître* provided after initial instruction in plainchant was in the singing of faux-bourdon.⁷⁵

Figure 3 shows an example of typical eighteenth-century faux-bourdon, which demonstrates a formula for harmonizing the *Sixième Ton Royal*, a special faux-bourdon

⁷² Deborah Kauffman, “Fauxbourdon in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: ‘Le Secours d’une Douce Harmonie,’” *Music & Letters* 90, no. 1 (2009), 68–93.

⁷³ *Cérémonial de Toul dressé par un chanoine de l’église cathédrale, et imprimé par ordre d’illustrissime Monseigneur Henry de Thyard-Bissy, évêque de Toul*. Toul: Imprimerie de A. Laurent, (1700).

⁷⁴ Xavier Bisaro. *Chanter toujours*. (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2010), 19–49.

⁷⁵ Xavier Bisaro, *Guide Historique et Pratique Du Plain-Chant et Du Faux-Bourdon France XVIIe-XVIIIe Siècles*, (Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles, 2017), 115.

associated with the Chapelle royale, with the Vulgate translation of Psalm 19: *Domine salvum fac regem*. Such formulae apply to a specific type of congregational singing, in which the *peuple* (laity) joined the *enfants* (boy choristers) and the *choeur* (low singers and serpent) in singing faux-bourdon.⁷⁶ Curiously, the range of the *enfants* is an octave too low for the vocal range of a child chorister. The example thus provides evidence of singing in parallel octaves in some of the French cathedrals in this era, since the *enfants* would have sung the line an octave higher while the choir's tenors doubled them an octave below (i.e., at pitch).⁷⁷



Figure 3. *Office de l'Église, noté pour les festes et dimanches, à l'usage des Laïcs*, Paris, Aux dépens des Libraires associés, 1760, cxxxij.

⁷⁶ Peter Bennett, ed., "Accession: The Coronation, the Holy Spirit, and the Phoenix," in *Music and Power at the Court of Louis XIII: Sounding the Liturgy in Early Modern France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 82.

⁷⁷ François de La Feillée, *Méthode nouvelle pour apprendre parfaitement les regles du plain-chant*, 1754, 80.

The only extant faux-bourdon formulae from *Nouvelle-France* are in four voices. Along with examples found in the Abenaki Manuscripts copied from the plainchant method by the Abbé Demoz de La Salle, these formulae represent only a fraction of the techniques used to harmonize psalms in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁷⁸ Figure 4 reproduces a four-voice faux-bourdon of the seventh tone found in the Ursuline Manuscripts, which I have set to the psalm *De Profundis*.

Soprano
Fi-ant au- res tu- æ in- ten- den- tes in vo- cem de- pre- ca- ti- on- is- me- æ

Alto
Fi-ant au- res tu- æ in- ten- den- tes in vo- cem de- pre- ca- ti- on- is- me- æ

Tenor
Fi-ant au- res tu- æ in- ten- den- tes in vo- cem de- pre- ca- ti- on- is- me- æ

Bass
Fi-ant au- res tu- æ in- ten- den- tes in vo- cem de- pre- ca- ti- on- is- me- æ

Figure 4. Example of faux-bourdon set to the formulae from *Les quatre parties du septième ton*. Schwandt ref. 50, Ursuline cantiques spirituels: C xxxiii.

Although most of the surviving examples of faux-bourdon from *Nouvelle-France* are formulae for harmonizing psalms, examples of other genres have also been found. The most striking of these is the prose *Inviolata* (Figure 5) from the Aubery and Virot manuscripts, a motet in faux-bourdon that was sung by the congregation of the Odanak mission (in both Latin and Algonquin), in which the soloist intones the *Inviolata* in alternatim with four-voice faux-bourdon.⁷⁹ Paul-André Dubois has argued that this setting does not correspond to any known

⁷⁸ *La vie musicale en Nouvelle-France*, Cahiers des Amériques (Sillery (Québec): Septentrion, 2003), 272.

⁷⁹ While most of the extant faux-bourdon in the colony was based on the *style psalmodique*, which uses a formula to add parts to plainchant, many of the faux-bourbons from the Jesuit mission, including the *Inviolata*, are what the ecclesiastics of *Nouvelle-France* often called “motets.” These motet-style faux-bourbons, which are new compositions, are homophonic

Inviolata setting from France. Dubois, the foremost authority on these two manuscripts, explains that according to the Jesuit Jacques Bigot (Aubery's predecessor), the Abenaki women sung the top three lines in faux-bourdon, while the missionaries and men of the tribe sung the bass.⁸⁰ This tradition is reminiscent of the practice, described above, of adult tenors and *enfants* singing in octaves in faux-bourdon formulae.

Figure 5 shows two systems of musical notation for the *Inviolata* setting. The first system features four staves: Soprano, Tenor 1, Tenor 2, and Bass. The Soprano and Tenor 1 staves contain a single note on a whole rest. The Tenor 2 staff contains a melody of eighth notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4. The Bass staff contains a single note on a whole rest. The lyrics "In vi- o- la- ta in- te- gra et cas- ta es Ma- ri- a" are written below the Tenor 2 staff. The second system features four staves: S (Soprano), T1 (Tenor 1), T2 (Tenor 2), and B (Bass). All four staves contain the same melody of eighth notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4. The lyrics "quae es eff- ec- ta ful- gi- da coe- li por- ta" are written below the B staff.

Figure 5: *Inviolata* example in modern notation. For the original facsimile, see Paul-André Dubois, *Musique et dévotion dans la mission jésuite du Canada*, Annexe 3.

settings of plainchant that are typically composed around a line of chant, which may be faithful to or somewhat altered from the original.

⁸⁰ *La vie musicale en Nouvelle-France*, Cahiers des Amériques (Sillery (Québec): Septentrion, 2003), 274-279.

3.5 CHANT SUR LE LIVRE

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, *cantare super librum* in Latin, or, *chant sur le livre* in French, *singing on the book* in English, and *contrappunto alla mente* in Italian referred to the technique of improvising counterpoint at sight. Voices or instruments improvised above and/or below a cantus firmus according to a predetermined set of rules intended to prevent dissonances and contrapuntal errors. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in France, however, this practice transformed into an improvisational tool used specifically in sacred music contexts.⁸¹ In this document, the term *chant sur le livre* will refer to the more specific seventeenth- and eighteenth-century practice. Significant sources about the practice in this period include Louis-Joseph Marchand's *Traité du Contrepoint Simple, ou Chant sur le Livre* (1739), Henry Madin's *Traité du contrepoint simple, ou du Chant sur le Livre* (1742), and Pierre-Louis Pollio's *Principes de Chant sur le Livre* (1771).

⁸¹ Jean-Paul Montagnier, "Le Chant Sur Le Livre Au XVIIIe Siècle: Les Traités de Louis-Joseph Marchand et Henry Madin," *Revue de Musicologie* 81, no. 1 (1995), 37–63, <https://doi.org/10.2307/947349>.

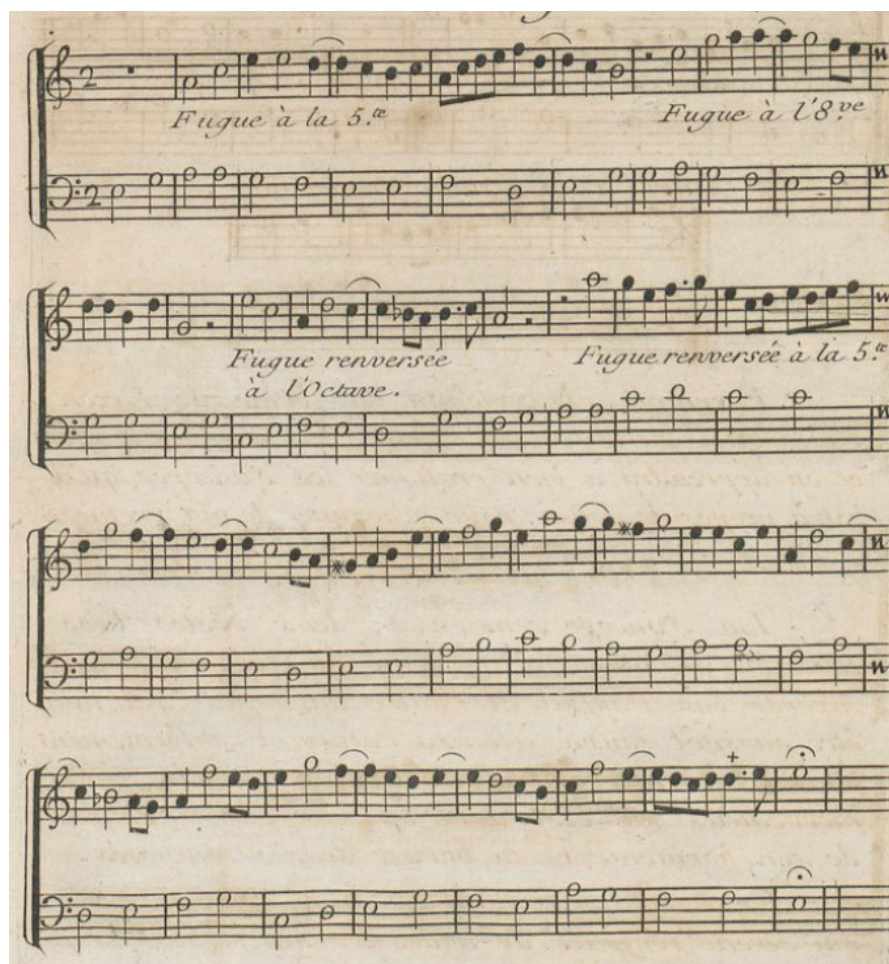


Figure 6: Henri Madin, *Traité du contrepoint simple ou chant sur le livre*, Paris, Au Mont Parnasse, 1742, 23.

The Cantus Firmus.

In *chant sur le livre*, the line of chant that is used as a cantus firmus is always in the bass voice, and is sung slowly with each note assigned the same rhythmic value. This strictness of tempo is necessary for improvising over the cantus firmus, as its predictability provides a stable framework for the improvisers to follow.⁸² The other voices could then use standard Baroque embellishment and ornamentation techniques to improvise their lines without breaking the rules of counterpoint. The serpent's role was to double the cantus firmus, at the octave below if possible. *chant sur le livre* of this period was taught both in "simple" form—mostly note-against-

⁸² Louis-Joseph Marchand, *Traité du contrepoint simple, ou chant sur le livre*, (1739).

note—and fugal form.⁸³ Fugues allowed improvisers to add multiple voices in imitation, but were also particularly susceptible to contrapuntal errors. In Figure 6, Madin demonstrates fugues at the fifth, octave, inverse octave, and inverse fifth.⁸⁴

In their treatises, Madin, Marchand, and Pollio treat *chant sur le livre* as a means to approach a style that, according to them, was often overzealously sung by most of its practitioners.⁸⁵ This form of improvisation was the most basic technique available to church musicians. As with the use of the serpent, *chant sur le livre* was likely considered so standard that it did not merit any special mention unless it was performed either very well or very poorly. In Québec, sources never explicitly mention *chant sur le livre*, but based on the education that the colony's clergy are known to have received, one can assume that this improvisation technique was a fundamental part of their musical training. The most convincing piece of evidence comes from the Augustinian Mother Marie-André Duplessis de Ste Hélène's *Musique spirituelle ou l'on peut s'exercer sans voix* (1718), a short pedagogical treatise that describes the musical functions that were expected of the clergy, albeit through veiled witticisms. For example, in the fifth chapter of her treatise, she describes the importance of singing in counterpoint: "Fugues: It's when one loses some of their own peace to serve and assist others, which is sometimes more pleasing to God than deep [personal] peace."⁸⁶

Fugal *chant sur le livre* was considered the most advanced form of this practice, since it involved simultaneous improvisation in multiple voices. Jean-Jacques Rousseau writes in 1768 that:

Singing on the Book requires a great deal of knowledge, skill, and ear in those who perform it, especially since it is not always easy to relate the Tones of Plainchant to those

⁸³ Henry Madin, *Traité du contrepoint simple ou du chant sur le livre*, (Paris, Au Mont Parnasse...: Mme Boivin : Le Sr. Leclerc, 1742).

⁸⁴ Imitative counterpoint involves one voice or instrument echoing a melody at a different pitch level. When this imitation occurs at specific intervals—such as the fifth, octave, inverse octave, or inverse fifth, the imitative voice replicates the original melody either at the same pitch class but in a different register or with the intervals inverted.

⁸⁵ Abbé Jean Prim, "Chant Sur Le Livre' in French Churches in the 18th Century," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 14, no. 1 (1961), 37–49.

⁸⁶ Erich Schwandt, "Musique Spirituelle (1718): Canada's First Music Theory Manual," in *Musical Canada*, ed. John Beckwith and Frederick A. Hall (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 50–59.

of our Music. However, there are Church Musicians so well-versed in this type of Chant that they start and even continue Fugues when the subject allows, without confusing or crossing the Parts, nor making mistakes in the Harmony.⁸⁷

Chant sur le livre, although impressive when sung by adept improvisers, was a notoriously difficult practice to master. As this practice formed the core of ecclesiastical singing in many parishes, inexperienced singers garnered the ire of the professionals who had mastered the craft. Pierre-Louis Pollio, a *maître* from Dijon and reformer of *chant sur le livre* was incensed with the heedless approach to this music he witnessed among many singers of his day. In an attempt to reform the practice, he wrote in his treatise *Principes de Chant sur le Livre* (1771):

As for the singing in parts on the Book, done impromptu, my opinion is that it is almost impossible to do it well... I argue that it is impossible to avoid a thousand occasions of charivary. I have just heard a fugue, I am about to respond to it, I start it, and at the same time I hear one of the musicians starting a series of dissonances, I must abandon my fugue and try to accompany it. I want to make syncopations of fourths on my plainchant, will the musician who sings with me know how to adapt his singing to it, will he continue his singing, me mine, the third another, a fourth maybe a fifth, a sixth, all on different principles. If this is called music, I call it a horrible charivary, unworthy of the majesty of the place where we serve our God, even more unworthy of that benevolent creator, who gave us the use of reason only to learn to serve Him worthily, and not to abuse it, so this singing in parts on the book done impromptu has been condemned by several provincial councils.⁸⁸

French eighteenth-century *chant sur le livre*, particularly that of Pollio's day, is a topic of much interest and ongoing research among scholars. His corpus of over one thousand individual works, many of which have yet to be analyzed, carries much potential for changing our understanding of eighteenth-century *chant sur le livre*.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Dictionnaire de musique ... Écrits sur la musique*, His Oeuvres (Paris: A. Belin, 1817).

⁸⁸ Pierre-Louis Pollio, *Principes de chant sur le livre*, B-Br Ms. II 3092. Mus., Koninklijke Bibliotheek van België, 1771.

⁸⁹ Key researchers in this area include: Erik Kocevar, Jean-Christophe Revel (CRR de Paris), Jean-Christophe Candau (Vox Cantoris), Yannick Lemaire (Harmonia Sacra), Nathalie Berton-Blivet, Achille Davy-Rigaux, Céline Drèze, Alban Framboisier, Fabien Guilloux, and Thomas Bottini. For further information on Pierre-Louis Pollio, see "Pierre-Louis Pollio (1724-1796)," IReMus, accessed August 24, 2024, <https://www.iremusc.cnrs.fr/fr/programme-de-recherche/pierre-louis-pollio-1724-1796>.

3.6 ECCE SACERDOS MAGNUS. *Chant sur le Livre.*

The musical score is written in 4/4 time. The Tenor part (T) is on a treble clef and the Bass part (B) is on a bass clef. Both parts have a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are in French and are written below the notes.

Tenor (T):

8 Ec-ce e -e sa- cer do -os mag -nu-

Bass (B):

E -cce e e Sa -ce -er -do -o -os mag -nu-

Tenor (T):

7 u- us qui i- in die- bus su-

Bass (B):

7 u- -us qui i- in die- bus

Figure 7: *Rituel de Québec*, Alexander Belser

In the example shown in Figure 7, I composed a new tenor over the cantus firmus of the antiphon *Ecce sacerdos magnus* by following the rules of *chant sur le livre*. Because this antiphon is particularly long, I only set the first strophe. According to the *Ordre*, *Ecce sacerdos magnus* marks the beginning of the procession for receiving the bishop:

When the clergy arrives at the church door or at the house if it has been prepared, while Monsignor the Bishop is putting on his pontifical vestments, they will wait under the canopy with a carpet and cushion. Monsignor the Bishop will kneel there to kiss the cross, which will be presented to him by the priest, who will then return it to the clergy with a deep bow to the Bishop. The clergy will receive his blessing while kneeling, then rise, greet him, and proceed to the church in the same order they maintained on arrival, with the clergy immediately in front of the canopy, and the people following... They will begin the procession by singing the responsory “*Ecce Sacerdos magnus*.”⁹⁰

Singing this antiphon as *chant sur le livre* adds to the *solemnité* of the occasion while conserving a parish’s resources.

⁹⁰ Jean-Baptiste de la Croix de Chevières de Saint-Vallier, *Rituel du diocèse de Québec* (A Paris: Chez Simon Langlois ..., 1703), 611.

3.7 SACERDOS ET PONTIFEX. *Variations.*

Sacerdos et Pontifex explores the most erudite and complex style of serpent playing. Jean-Baptiste Métoyen explains that this style, which he calls *variations sur le plain chant*, was a tradition popular among serpentists of France's great cathedrals.⁹¹ Imbert de Sens, a Burgundian serpentist who published the first serpent method in 1780, also provides examples of serpent *variations*, and Alexandre Hardy, who was active in Chartres, composed at least one piece of similar complexity. It is therefore likely that this style was familiar to the musicians of large cathedrals with the means to employ a large choir and several serpentists. Métoyen gives examples of the *variations* style for *Audi benigne Conditor*, *Regina Coeli*, *Haec dies*, and *Creator Alme Siderum*, while Imbert gives examples for a "Kyrie, Pange lingua, Verbum, Sacris, Ave verum, &c. *avec variations*."⁹² Of these, Métoyen's *Regina Coeli* and *Haec dies* provide the most insight into the expected skills of a top-tier ancien régime serpentist. As in the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century diminution studies by Giovanni Bassano and Francesco Rognoni, Métoyen's variations adhere strictly to the cantus for the root note.⁹³ Exceptionally, the serpentist may introduce agogic accents at cadences, where the supporting singer can more readily follow metric irregularities. All of the passagework in this small but formidable repertoire requires mastery of both liping and finger memory, since it includes notoriously difficult notes such as C-sharp, G-sharp, and D-sharp.

⁹¹ Jean-Baptiste Métoyen, Benny Sluchin, and Alain Poirier, *Ouvrage complet pour l'éducation du serpent* (Paris: Éditions musicales européennes, 2002).

⁹² Jean-Baptiste Métoyen, *Etude du Serpent par J. B. Métoyen*, (early 19th century).

⁹³ Francesco Rognoni Taeggio, *Selva de varii passaggi secondo l'vso moderno, per cantare, & suonare con ogni sorte de stromenti, ... essempli con canti diminuiti, con la maniera di suonare alla bastarda* (Milano: Filippo Lomazzo, 1620); *Motetti, Madrigali, et Canzoni Francese diminuiti di diversi eccellentissimi autori*, 1591.

These variations, or *improvisations*, manipulate harmony more extensively than diminutions in the older Renaissance style. Since the accompaniment is entirely monophonic, the serpentist can arpeggiate at will and should do so frequently, as Métoyen's examples regularly advocate for leaps greater than an octave. In *Regina Coeli*, Métoyen uses sextuplet figurations with large leaps to great effect (Figure 8).⁹⁴ The sextuplets double the chant notes an octave below the singers on the down beats and then leap up a tenth to create the effect that the serpentist is performing two parts: the plainchant in the lower register, and ornamentation more than an octave higher. It is also worth noting that Métoyen's *Regina Coeli* is among the most technically challenging pieces in the serpent's (admittedly small) solo repertoire, requiring the performer to play as high as D-5 (Figure 9),⁹⁵ which lies well beyond the tessitura used for the instrument's more typical role as a supporting instrument.

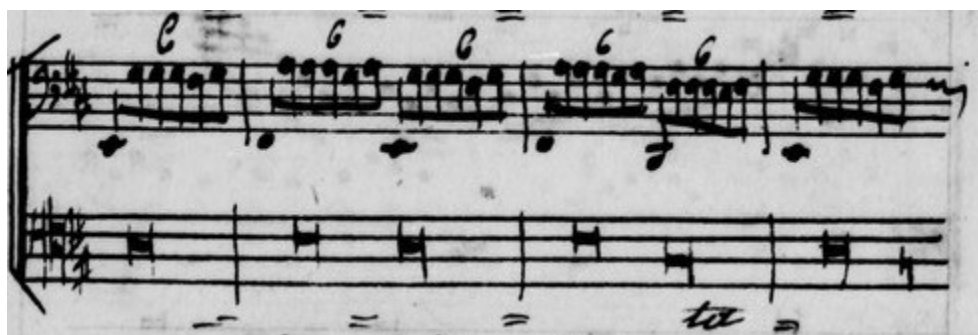


Figure 8: Etude du Serpent par J. B. Métoyen, 107.



Figure 9: Etude du Serpent par J. B. Métoyen, 109.

⁹⁴ Métoyen, *Etude du Serpent par J. B. Métoyen*, 107.

⁹⁵ Métoyen, 109.

The example by Imbert⁹⁶ shown in Figure 10 bears some resemblance to the Kyrie from *Cunctipotens genitor Deus*, one of the most popular Masses in France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Imbert's variations are in the same style as but noticeably simpler than Métoyen's, the former Versailles and Notre-Dame serpentist. Imbert does not explore the extremes of the serpent's register or use rhythmic values shorter than the breve (Figure 11).



Figure 10: Imbert de Sens, *Nouvelle méthode, ou Principes raisonnés du plein-chant, dans sa perfection, tirés des élémens de la musique : contenant aussi une méthode de serpent.. par Imbert, 11.*

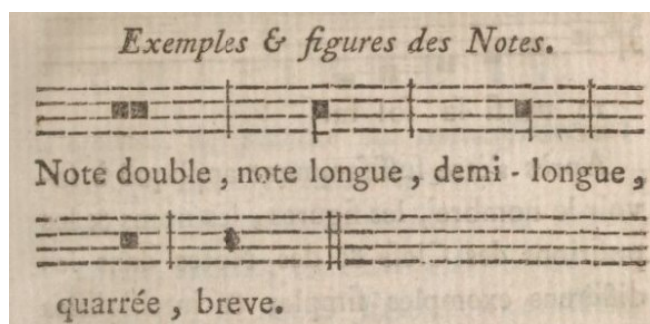


Figure 11: Imbert, *Nouvelle méthode*, 245.

⁹⁶ Imbert, *Nouvelle methode: ou principes raisonnees du plainchant, dans sa perfection, tirés des élémens de la musique: contenant aussi une méthode de serpent ... les maitres toruveront dans ladite méthode, toutes sortes de pieces de chant choisies, comme: duo, trio, quatuor, messes, proses, hymnes ... pour enseigner à leurs élèves. Par M. Imbert ...* (Paris: La veuve Ballard & fils, 1780).

Figure 12 shows a musical score for the antiphon *Sacerdos et Pontifex* from the *Rituel de Québec* by Alex Belser, measures 1–6. The score is in 4/4 time. The top staff, labeled 'Serpent', features a melodic line with lyrics 'et vir tu -u -u' and includes triplets. The bottom staff, labeled 'Bass', provides a harmonic accompaniment with lyrics 'um op -i -fe -ex pa'.

Figure 12: *Sacerdos et Pontifex*, *Rituel de Québec*, Alex Belser, mm 1–6.

Figure 13 shows a musical score for the antiphon *Sacerdos et Pontifex* by Alex Belser, measures 13–16. The score is in 4/4 time. The top staff, labeled 'Spt.', features a melodic line with lyrics '-cu -i -sti -i' and includes a triplet. The bottom staff, labeled 'B', provides a harmonic accompaniment with lyrics '-i do -mi -no'.

Figure 13: Belser, mm 13–16.

I have composed a serpent variation in Métoyen's style on the antiphon *Sacerdos et Pontifex*. The variation begins after the intonation, a common feature in variations set to antiphons (Figure 12). Performing this chant as a variation would extend the duration of the *Sacerdos et Pontifex*. The *Ordre* indeed expresses concern over the length of processions, advising the singing of the hymn *Veni Creator Spiritus* and the hymn of the patron saint if the

procession is longer than anticipated.⁹⁷ The first edition of the *Ordre* also recommends the performance of the canticle *Benedictus* in such situations.⁹⁸ My variation on *Sacerdos et Pontifex* in the style of Métoyen follows a typical compositional structure in which episodes of melodic activity are separated every few measures by sections with less virtuosic playing. At the end of the variation (Figure 13), melodic movement slows further until the final cadence, which features an arpeggiation over the final “domino.”

3.8 BASSE SYLLABIQUE

The *Manuscripts de la Bibliothèque de Rouen* contains a setting by Alexandre Hardy of the Credo from Henry Du Mont’s *Messe Royale* with serpent accompaniment. Hardy’s is one of several harmonizations with serpent of Du Mont’s Credo, owing to the Mass’s popularity in general and familiarity among serpentists, and to the suitability of the Credo in particular for such harmonizations.⁹⁹ Métoyen calls this style of harmonization *basse syllabique*. It functions as the inverse to *chant sur le livre*, with the serpent harmonizing below the plainchant instead of above it. Although it might be thought of as contrary to the serpent’s standard use, *basse syllabique* forms the foundation of Hardy’s style of accompaniment.

Both Métoyen’s *basse syllabique* on Du Mont’s Credo¹⁰⁰ (Figure 14) and the harmonization by his contemporary Imbert de Sens¹⁰¹ (Figure 15) demonstrate an irregular approach to the rule of the octave that frequently breaks the rules of eighteenth-century counterpoint. Were it not for the rest of his oeuvre—which includes, among other works, thirty Masses, ten *grands motets*, and a treatise on harmony—Métoyen’s often haphazard serpent writing might be disregarded for a supposed lack of compositional integrity. As a characteristic style of serpent music of this era, however, *basses syllabiques* puts these works into perspective.

⁹⁷ Jean-Baptiste de la Croix de Chevreières de Saint-Vallier, *Rituel du diocèse de Québec* (A Paris: Chez Simon Langlois ..., 1703), 623.

⁹⁸ Saint-Vallier, (1703).

⁹⁹ Jean-Yves Hameline, “Les Messes de Henry Du Mont,” in *Le Concert Des Muses : Promenades Musicales Dans Le Baroque Français*, Éd. Jean Lionnet. Versailles, Éditions du CMBV (Paris: Klincksieck, 1997), 221–31.

¹⁰⁰ Métoyen, *Etude du Serpent par J. B. Métoyen*, 113.

¹⁰¹ Imbert, *Nouvelle methode*, 257.

In concordance with the *Statuts* of 1687, these harmonizations seek to increase the *sévérité* and *solemnité* of the chant.

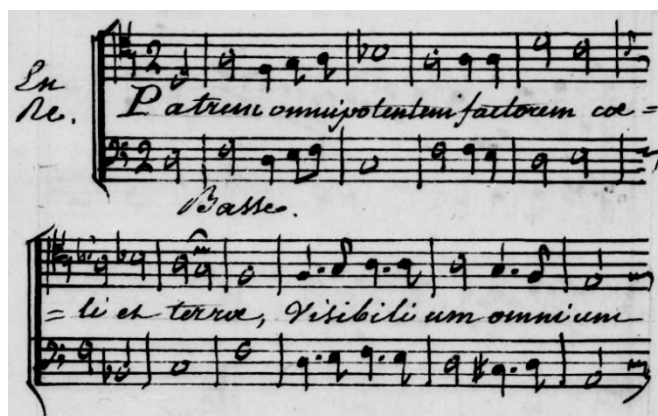


Figure 14: Métoyen, *Etude du Serpent*, 113.



Figure 15: Imbert, *Nouvelle méthode*, 257.

In *basse syllabique*, the serpentist has the choice to either compose (or perhaps improvise) *parole-pour-parole* (note-against-note) counterpoint, create a moving bass line, or incorporate sections of both. In Métoyen's Credo, the serpent evokes *chant sur le livre*, albeit

without the strict metric regularity described above. The serpentist must therefore be intimately familiar with the ornamental tendencies of the style. Another *basse syllabique* setting of Du Mont's Credo appears in Imbert de Sens's serpent method (1780), the first known tutor for serpent. De Sens's treatise unfortunately lacks thorough descriptions of serpent playing and would be difficult to decipher had Métoyen never published his own method.

The Du Mont Credo harmonization that is attributed to Hardy in the *Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque de Rouen* (Figure 16b) is currently being analyzed by scholars in France.¹⁰² The manuscript's contents may have been copied in the 1780s, when Hardy was employed at Notre-Dame in Chartres.¹⁰³ Hardy is known to have composed and performed a motet as part of the audition for his position of serpentist at the cathedral. If the manuscript indeed dates from Hardy's time in Chartres during the 1780s, then the manuscript would provide an invaluable record of the performance style of the last generation of *ancien régime* serpentists.



Figure 16. Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque de Rouen.

Hardy's setting of Du Mont's Credo departs in some ways from *basse syllabique* tradition. Hardy puts the serpent at the forefront of musical performance by heavily embellishing

¹⁰² Volny Hostiou describes his work on the Hardy's manuscripts in this Radio France excerpt from October 22, 2012: <https://www.radiofrance.fr/francemusique/podcasts/le-matin-des-musiciens/quel-est-ce-serpent-qui-siffle-sur-nos-tetes-avec-volny-hostiou-et-francois-menissier-7119301>

¹⁰³ Alexandre Antoine HARDY, (1752-1821) / Notices / MUSEFREM - Base de Données Prosopographique Des Musiciens d'Église En 1790 / Bases Prosopographiques / Publications / Accueil - Portail PHILIDOR, accessed April 26, 2024, <https://philidor.cmbv.fr/Publications/Bases-prosopographiques/MUSEFREM-Base-de-donnees-prosopographique-des-musiciens-d-Eglise-en-1790/Notices/HARDY-Alexandre-Antoine>.

the line of chant. Hardy's Credo also incorporates the serpent prelude tradition (Figure 16).¹⁰⁴ As in Imbert's setting, Hardy includes only the odd verses, which resembles the tradition of *Messes musicales*, in which *plain-chant ordinaire*, the standard plainchant of the Neo-Gallican tradition sung using French square neumes alternates with *plain-chant mesurée*, an eighteenth-century development in which new chants were composed using measured square neumes whose depicted values were usually restricted to the composer that "invented" them. This advanced form of serpent accompaniment may have served as a precursor to later chromatic developments in brass-wind music. As noted above, it is also possible that a vibrant aural tradition of serpent playing existed well before these practices were first recorded in the second half of the eighteenth century.

3.9 *SUAVI JUBILO. Florid Basse syllabique.*

The final example of this document, *Suavi Jubilo*, is a motet by François de La Feillée first published in 1751 in the *Supplément à la Méthode de M. de La Feillée*. La Feillée's success is attributed to his scrupulous attention to detail when compared to many of the methods of his day as he provides the reader with clear, definitive rules for the length of notes in French square notation (Figure 23.), and because of the variety of music that is contained within the many versions of his plainchant method that were released both during and after his lifetime.¹⁰⁵ La Feillée was an influential figure in Québec's musical life from the last decades of the French Regime into the nineteenth century. The manuscript *Hymnes, motets en latin*, held at the Hôpital Générale of Montréal, and the manuscript *Musique choisie*, are written in La Feillée's style of measured chant notation.

¹⁰⁴ Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque de Rouen.

¹⁰⁵ La Feillée apologizes in his 1754 edition for the speed at which the first edition of 1748 was purchased by the public, mentioning that it was even sold in other countries. This phenomenon continues after his death, as his hymns set to his music appear in The English Hymnal.

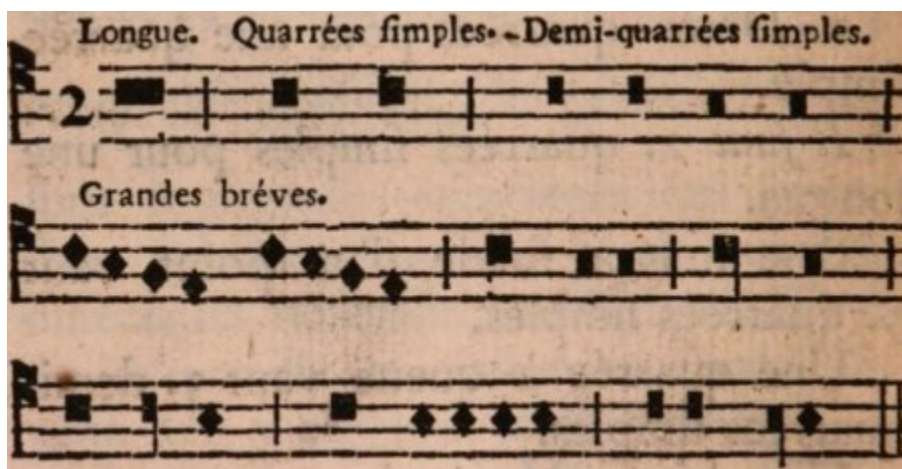


Figure 17: François de La Feillée, *Méthode nouvelle* 1754, p. 110.

La Feillée, despite his fame, remains shrouded in mystery. This fate is an unfortunate reality of numerous other composers of plainchant treatises, despite the popularity of his plainchant tutor that lasted over a century.¹⁰⁶ Xavier Bisaro suggests that La Feillée's *Messes musicales* were a way for a parish priest to add some nuanced “civility” to parish life, in the same way that an otherwise spartan chapel might contain a few pieces of nice furniture.¹⁰⁷ La Feillée is also a pioneer in the use of expressive text that until then was only used in figured music, which had an important place in certain forms of *plainchant musical*. The examples he gives for tempo markings for *plainchant musical* are: *très-lent*, *lent*, *modérément*, *gravement*, *animé*, *marqué*, *soutenu*, *gracieux*, *uniment*, *adouci*, *faiblement*, *pesamment*, *gai*, and *vîte*.¹⁰⁸ The defining characteristic of La Feillée's most ornate style of *plainchant musical* is an adherence to a compositional form in which standard, ordinary plainchant is composed in alternatim with measured (*mesurée*) plainchant that is written as music. Nearly every eighteenth-century edition of La Feillée's *Méthode Nouvelle* is preserved in Québec, and some are still preserved in their original institutions.

¹⁰⁶ Xavier Bisaro. “Méthode Nouvelle Pour Apprendre Parfaitement Les Règles Du Plain-Chant (1747).” *Cantus Scholarum*. January 29, 2017. Accessed 8/22/2024. <https://www.cantus-scholarum.univ-tours.fr/ressources/sources/methodes-faciles-de-plain-chant/la-feillee/>

¹⁰⁷ Bisaro, *Cantus Scholarum*.

¹⁰⁸ François de La Feillée, *Méthode nouvelle pour apprendre parfaitement les règles du plain chant et de la psalmodie, avec des messes et autres ouvrages de plain-chant figuré et musical*, (Poitiers: Jean Faulcon, 1748), 108.

I have composed an accompaniment for *Suavi Jubilo* that is modeled after Alexandre Hardy's Credo. I chose this motet for its parallels with the Credo: its melody is tuneful and easily sung by a soprano, and it has an alternative text for the celebration of a bishop.¹⁰⁹ The short, four-measure introduction I added to the beginning of *Suavi Jubilo* references the standard musical form of many Ursuline *petits motets*, as well as the preludes in Credo settings by Imbert de Sens. Furthermore, I adhere to the same range as Hardy's Du Mont Credo setting, using the serpent's light and flexible tenor register and avoiding the instrument's more cumbersome first octave. These choices not only take advantage of the instrument's strengths, but also fit the motet's style, since La Feillée was a champion of light and sweet voices.¹¹⁰

Suavi Jubilo is in triple meter with an "ABCA" form, which allows for a varied serpent part that evokes several features of Hardy's Credo. Throughout Hardy's Credo, sections of homophonic *basse syllabique* are interspersed with more active passages, and my accompaniment to *Suavi Jubilo* emulates this pattern in the "A" and "B" sections. My A section is further inspired by Hardy's final *et vitam* section (a surprise ending), which Hardy recomposes in G Major (Figures 17 and 18). My B section is modelled on Hardy's first *et vitam* in G minor (Figures 19 and 20). My C section, which is marked *Lent*, is based on the doleful *Grave* section of Hardy's setting of *Et iterum venturus* (Figures 21 and 22). The "C" section of *Suavi Jubilo* becomes highly melismatic beginning in measure 69, to which I add the serpent in homophony three measures later. This moment parallels the passage from the third beat of measure three in Hardy's *Et iterum venturus* until the end of the section. Although the level of rhythmic activity is swapped between the soprano and the serpent part, the overall effect is similar between the two settings.

¹⁰⁹ The work is titled, "*Autre Motet pour la fête d'un St Patron*" followed by the description: "*Si c'est pour un Evêque, au lieu de dire Patrono dans le cours de la pièce, on dira Pastori.*"

¹¹⁰ La Feillée, *Méthode nouvelle pour apprendre parfaitement les règles du plain-chant*, (1754), 112.

Soprano

Serpent

Et vi- tam ven-

S

tu- ri se- cu- li a- me- n a- men Et vi-

Spt.

Figure 18: Alexandre Hardy, *Credo de M. Dumont avec accompagnement de serpent pour un tenor ou Dessus*, Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque de Rouen, Modern edition by Alexander Belser, 2024.

Soprano

Serpent

Su a- vi ju- bi-lo,

S

can-tu pi- is- si- mo e- xul-te- mus et lae- te- mur, et lae-te- mu ur in

Spt.

Figure 19: Suavi Jubilo from François de La Feillée, *Supplément à la Méthode de M. de La Feillée*, (1751), 41-44. Modern edition and serpent accompaniment by Alexander Belser.

43

S

il- li-si-mi-lis qui stu- di- o pu-ri ta- ti is, non su- it il- li-si-mi

43

Spt.

lis qui e- xem- plo pi-e- ta- tis pla- cu- e-rit Re- gi re- gum, prop- ter- e- a

Figure 20: Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque de Rouen, Modern edition by Alexander Belser.

Soprano

Et vi- tam ven- tu- ri se- cu- li

Serpent

7

S

a- men a- men a- men a- men

7

Spt.

Figure 21: Suavi Jubilo, La Feillée, Modern edition by Alexander Belser.

Soprano

Serpent

Et i-te-rum ven-tu-rus est cum

4

S

4

Spt.

glo-ri-a ju-di-ca-re vi-vos et mor-tu-os cujus re-gni non

10

S

10

Spt.

e-rit fi-nis.

Figure 22: Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque de Rouen, Modern edition by Alexander Belser.

Lent ♩=60

Suavi Jubilo

3

64

S

64

Spt.

To-tus a-ma-bi-lis, to-tus ad-mi-ra-bi-lis, ô N.

Repos. ♩=54

71

S

71

Spt.

ô N sanc-tis-si-me: ô ô

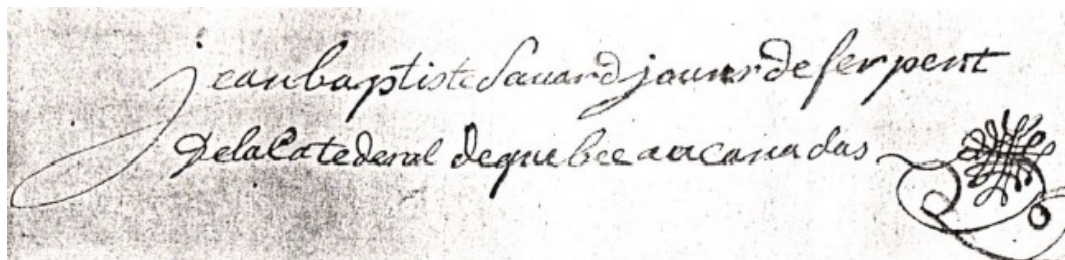
Figure 23: Suavi Jubilo, La Feillée, Modern edition by Alexander Belser.

CONCLUSION

The performance aspect of this project, represented by the examples contained in part three, sought to demonstrate every form of sacred music that could have been heard in the colony that did not feature the organ, and did not contain “instruments.” As this project unfolded, it became evident that French colonial Canada, despite having a population of between 55,000 and 60,000 at its peak, was a place where the serpent was appreciated and in high demand.

There is abundant potential for further research in this field, as are the performance opportunities that pertain to this repertoire.

1. The *tablature* found within the Berthelot Manuscript remains a compelling organological puzzle that I am investigating. I will continue exploring the fingerings prescribed by this document and will share my discoveries.
2. Further archival research may lead to the identification of the serpentist named Jean-Baptiste Savard. All Jean-Baptiste Savard’s of this timeframe appear to be illiterate, and I remain unaware of any public official that could have left this type of paraph. A successful match will facilitate researchers in determining his identity. One cannot help but notice the resemblance between the handwriting of the inscription on Campa’s Motets (Figure 22.) with that of Corru’s pen. (Figure 23.)
3. The municipal archives of Yvelines may contain more information about Pierre-Denis Corru’s presence in Canada. The codicil to Corru’s will of 1754 (Figure 32) that could provide researchers with new knowledge, and with a larger quantity of textual specimens for use in comparing handwriting examples. The contents of the codicil suggest that archives in Yvelines and/or Rochefort/La Rochelle may contain records that help pinpoint the date of Corru’s return to France.

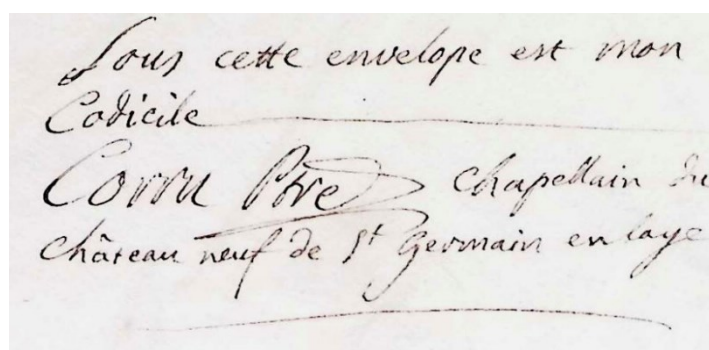


Jean Baptiste Savard joueur de serpent
de la Catedral de Quebec au Canada

Figure 24: Université Laval, Rare Books Collection.

Translation:

Jean-Baptiste Savard serpent player of the Cathedral of Québec in Canada.



Sous cette enveloppe est mon
Codicile
Corru Ptre chapelain du
Château neuf de St Germain en laye

Figure 25: The Codicil of Pierre-Denis Corru.

Archives notariales, Paris, France (Liasses) (1749-1824).

[AN MC/ET/IV/1096]

Translation:

Under this envelope is my codicil—

Corru Priest chaplain of the Château-Neuf of Saint-Germain-en-Laye

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SME-Fonds Séminaire de Québec / SME4-Les livres de comptes, les fondations et les donations / Document / Séminaire 131, no 188.

The Codicil of Pierre-Denis Corru. (Paris, France) - Archives notariales (Liasses) (1749-1824).

Appendix A: Glossary

Chantre: A cantor of a church who possessed a senior position in the Choeur.

Choeur: A plainchant choir, consisting of chantres, sous-chantres, enfants, and serpent.

Enfant, *Enfan* (historical spelling): A Choirboy.

Faux-bourdon: The French tradition of harmonizing plainchant in many parts. From the sixteenth century onward this term ceases to refer to the technique popularized by Dufay of harmonizing a cantus firmus with a sixth and a perfect fourth below. Faux-bourdon became the appellation for all sacred music written in homophony at the turn of the sixteenth to the seventeenth centuries.

Grand Chantre: An important dignitary of a cathedral who had the *maîtrise* under his jurisdiction. On important holidays he would direct the choir with a staff.

Maître: The musical master of a church or cathedral, equivalent to the German *kapellmeister* and Italian *maestro di capella*. The maître oversaw the education of choirboys.

Maîtresse: The most important choir nun of a monastery. Equivalent to the maître.

Maîtrise: The choir school of a church or parish.

Montréal (Formerly Ville-Marie), Tiohtià:ke: The second largest permanent settlement of *Nouvelle-France*. Montréal was primarily a fort town until the opening of the Lachine Canal in 1825 caused rapid economic development and urban expansion.

Nouvelle-France: New France. A former colony of France in North America that sought to appropriate a large swathe of land stretching from the modern-day Gulf of Saint-Lawrence [Terre-Neuve (Newfoundland)] to the Gulf of Mexico (New Orleans). Ceded to Great Britain in 1763 at the end of the Seven Years War. The largest settlements were Québec and Montréal.

Solemnité: Solemnity. Singing in faux-bourdon, performing with instruments, and improvisation over plainchant added to the solemnité of an occasion.

Sous-chantre: A sub-cantor, a less-senior adult participant of a choir.

Québec (Québec City): The cultural and economic nucleus of *Nouvelle-France*.

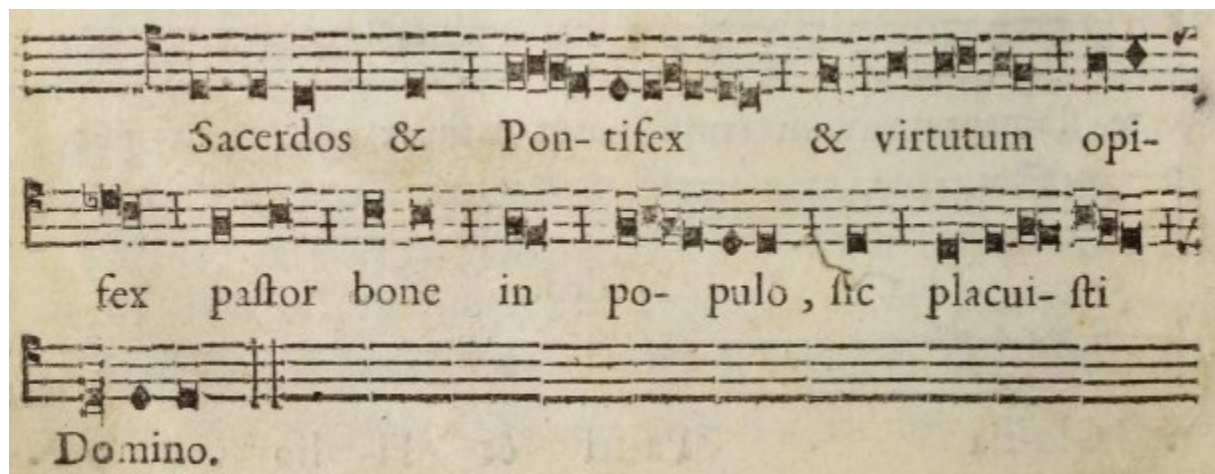
Appendix B: Musical Examples

Rituel de Québec (second edition c.1713), Ecce Sacerdos Magnus, Page 611.

E C- ce Sacerdos magnus qui in die- bus
 fu- is placuit De- o : * I- deo
 jure- ju- ran- do fecit illum Do- minus crescere
 in plebem fu- am. *ψ*. Benedi- ctio- nem
 omnium gentium de- dit il- li &
 te- stamentum suum confirmavit super ca- put
 e- jus. * I- deo.
ψ. Glo- ria Pa- tri & Fi- lio & Spi-
 ritui

611

Rituel de Québec (second edition c.1713), Sacerdos & Pontifex, Page 612.



François de la Feillée, Méthode nouvelle pour apprendre parfaitement les règles du plainchant (1754) Suavi Jubilo, pg. 399-402.

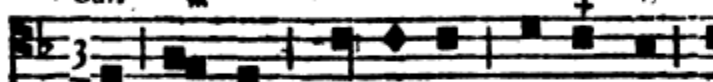
399



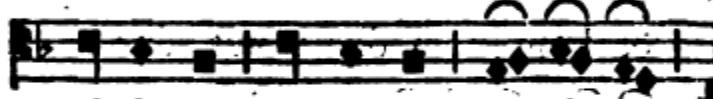
Autre Motet pour la fête d'un St Patron.

Si c'est pour un Evêque, au lieu de dire Patrono dans le cours de la pièce, on dira Pastori.

Gai.



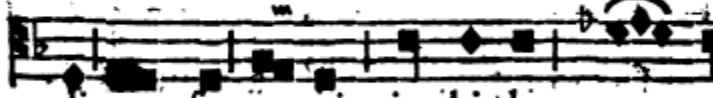
SU- a- vi ju- bi- lo, can- tu pi-



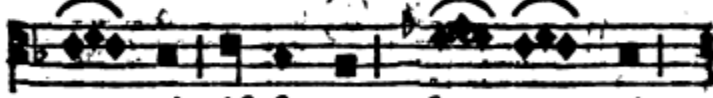
if- fi- mo e- xul- te- mus & læ-



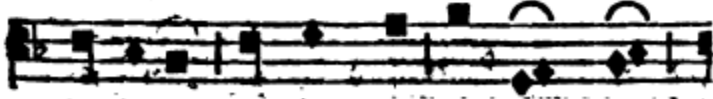
te- mur, & læ- te- mur in gau-



di- o su- a- vi- ju- bi- lo; can-



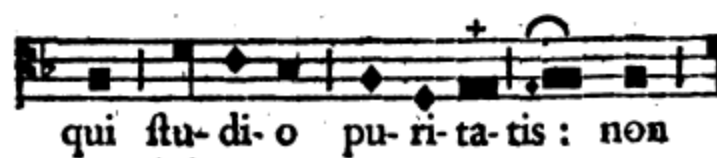
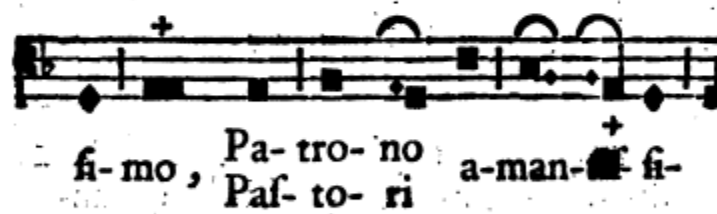
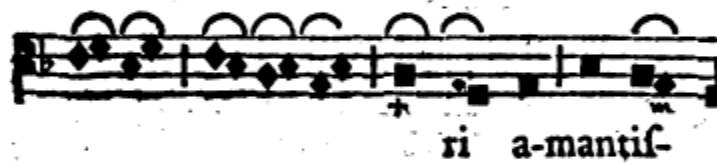
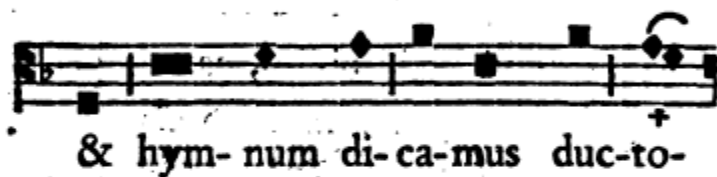
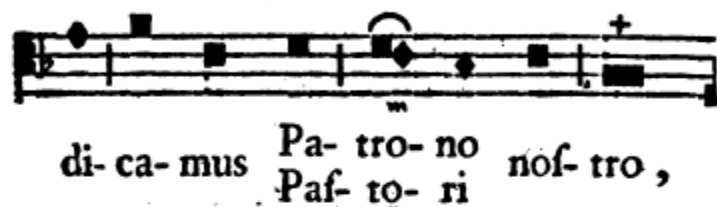
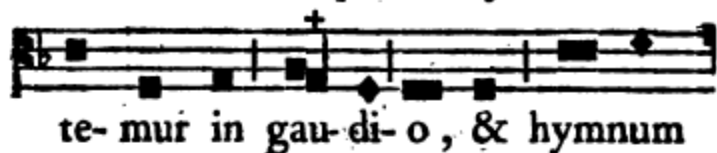
tu pi- if- fi- mo, su- a- vi



ju- bi- lo, e- xul- te- mus & læ-

Ll ij

400

Motet pour la fête

d'un St Patron.

401

fu- it il- li fi- mi- lis, qui e-
 xem-plo pi- e- ta- tis pla- cu- e- rit
 Re- gi re- gum, prop- ter e- a il-
 lu- xit or- bi, or- bi ter- ræ,
 or- bi ter- ræ. To- tus a- ma-
 bi- lis, to- tus ad- mi- ra- bi- lis,
 N. N. O
 N. sanc- tif- fi- me : ô,
 Ll iij

Modere. *Lent.* *Repos.*

402 *Motet pour la fête d'un St Patron.*

6 N. sanctif- fi-me.
 Gai.
 fu- a- vi ju- bi- lo, can- tu pi-
 if- fi- mo, fu- a- vi ju- bi- lo
 e- xul- te- mus & læ- te- mur in
 gau- di- o, e- xul- te-
 mus, & læ- te- mur,
 Lent.
 in gau- di- o.

Appendix C: Translated text.

Page 4.

“Or cet instrument est capable de soutenir vingt voix des plus fortes, dont il est si aisé de jouer qu'un enfant de quinze ans en peut sonner aussi fort comme un homme de trente ans. Et on peut tellement en adoucir le son qu'il sera propre pour joindre à la musique douce des chambres, dont il imite les mignardises et les diminutions, qu'il peut faire de trente-deux notes à la mesure”

“Mais la vrâye Basse du Cornet se fait avec le Serpent, de sorte que l'on peut dire que l'un sans l'autre est un corps sans ame.”

Page 7.

“Le “serpent”, instrument à vent employé autrefois pour soutenir le chant d ’église, a-t-il jamais été en vogue dans les lutrins des églises canadiennes ? Avant l’incendie de la basilique de N. D. de Québec il figurait avec d ’autres attributs ecclésiastiques dans une sculpture qui dominait le lutrin de cette église et on le rencontre encore dans des morceaux de sculpture de quelques-unes de nos vieilles églises.

—Lot.”

Page 9.

“L'hon. L.O, Taillon chantera dimanche prochain, avec accompagnement de serpent par le cure Tassé, virtuose incomparable, la partie du mandement collectif—mis en plain-chant pour la circonstance qui indique la manière de voter. La cérémonie se fera à Longueuil.”

Page 10.

“nos modernes Serpentistes cessaient de le défigurer par d'insipides Cadences, et des ornemens plus ridicules encore”

Page 10.

“Sera tenu ledit Pain de faire chanter en faux-bourdon les samedys aux premières vespres des festes à tronc, et, les jours de dimanches et festes, la messe et le Magnificat en musique, et aux festes à chanter la messe en musique, ensemble le Non nobis de In exitu en faux-bourdon ; pareillement faire chanter sur le livre l'introït des grandes messes par chacun dimanche ; le Te Deum en musique aux festes à thrésorier, doyen et chanter et festes de Nostre-Dame ;... et fera chanter l'antienne et Magnificat sur le livre, ensemble les trois derniers répons de chaque nocturne à matines, et les hymnes aux festes de Nostre-Dame et aux festes à thrésorier, doyen et chanter, les introïtes, postcommunions et les répons de la préface en temps de caresme ; fera chanter trois fois la semaine la messe en faux-bourdon, suivant la coutume, s'il n'arrive des festes doubles, semy-doubles, scavoir le lundy, mercredy et vendredy ; et faire chanter aux trois jours de Rogations petites et grandes, et autres precessions et cérémonies tant ordinaires qu'extraordinaires.”

Page 12.

1. Laetatus sum. Motet, par M. Hardy, pour une voix, avec accompagnement de basse et serpent.
2. Motet, pour une basse-taille, par M. Hardy, avec accompagnement de serpent et basse.
3. O salutaris, à trois voix, par M. Hardy.
4. Motet pour la fête du Saint-Esprit, par M. Hardy; solo pour haute-contre ; accompagnement de basse.
5. O salutaris à trois voix, en fa, par M. Hardy.
6. Tantum ergo, à deux voix, par M. Hardy.
7. O salutaris à quatre voix, par M. Hardy.
8. O salutaris, à trois voix, avec accompagnement de basse. (Attributed to Hardy).
9. Petite messe, à trois voix, par M. Hardy, avec accompagnement de serpent et basse.
10. Domine, de M. Hardy, arrangé pour trois voix, avec accompagnement de serpent et basse.
11. Credo, de M. Dumont, avec accompagnement de serpent, pour un ténor ou dessus (Attributed to Hardy).
12. Credo, de M. Dumont, arrangé pour deux voix, avec accompagnement de serpent ou violoncelle. (Attributed to Hardy).

Page 16.

“Je suis fâché que le sieur Corru ne convienne pas au Chapitre. Je souhaiterais cependant qu'on pût lui donner de quoi subsister, c'est-à-dire qu'on le fit prêtre, s'il en est capable, et qu'on lui donne une cure. Je sais qu'il est plus naturel d'élever de jeunes ecclésiastiques du pays ; cependant comme il savait passablement jouer du serpent, j'ai cru qu'il pourrait être utile à l'Eglise”

Page 21.

“M. Corru est très utile à ceux qui sont leurs humanités qu'il possède parfaitement; nos écoliers ont paru lui être autant attachés cette année qu'il ne s'est mêlé que de leurs études, qu'ils en avaient d'éloignement les années précédentes. Il est pareillement fort attaché à ses écoliers et il aime son état”

Page 22.

“Nous ne savons pas pourquoi l'évêque ne souhaite pas que M. Corru soit chargé du soin du petit séminaire Presque selon notre lettre il y est très utile – peut être l'évêque changera-t-il de sentiment?”

Page 33.

“Les fugues. C'est lors qu'on perd quelque chose de son repos pour servir et obliger le prochain, ce qui est quelquefois plus agréable à Dieu qu'une profonde paix.”

Page 33.

“Le Chant sur le Livre demande beaucoup de science, d’habitude & d’oreille dans ceux qui l’exécutent, d’autant plus qu’il n’est pas toujours aisé de rapporter les Tons du Plain-Chant à ceux de notre Musique. Cependant il y a des Musiciens d’Eglise, si versés dans cette forte de Chant, qu’ils y commencent & poursuivent même des Fugues, quand le sujet en peut comporter, sans confondre & croiser les Parties, ni faire de faute dans l’Harmonie”

Page 34.

“Quant au chant sur le Livre à plusieurs parties faites impromptu, mon sentiment est qu’il est presque impossible de le bien faire... je soutiens qu’il est impossible de parer à mille occasions de charivary. Je viens d’entendre une fugue, je la vas rendre, je la commence, dans ce temps là même j’entends un des musiciens qui entame une suite de dissonances, je dois quitter ma fugue et chercher à l’accompagner. Je veux moi même faire des syncopes de quarte sur mon plainchant, le musicien qui chantera avec moi, saura-t-il comment il doit y assujettir son chant, il continuera son chant, moi le mien, le troisième un autre, un quatrième peut-être un cinquième, un sixième, sur tous principes différents. Si l’on appelle cela de la musique, je l’appelle moi un horrible charivary, indigne de la majesté du lieu où nous servons notre Dieu...”

Page 35.

“Lorsque le clergé sera arrivé à la porte de la Ville, ou de la maison qui aura été préparé pour Monseigneur l’Evesque : pendant qu’il prendra ses habits pontificaux, on aura soin d’étendre sous le dais un tapis & un Carreau. Monseigneur l’Evêque viendra s’y mettre à genoux, pour y baiser la croix, qui lui sera présentée par le cure ; lequel après l’avoir rendue au clerc, fera une profonde inclination à l’Evesque. Les Ecclésiastiques recevront à genoux sa Bénédiction, se lèveront, & après l’avoir salué, marcheront jusqu’à l’Eglise, dans l’ordre qui aura été gardé en venant : c’est-à-dire, le clergé immédiatement devant le Dais ; & le peuple ensuite. ... On entonnera au commencement de la marche, le Répons, Ecce Sacerdos magnus.”