



Artwork by
Scott McKowen

The Bungler

by Molière
translated by Richard Wilbur

Know-the-Show
Audience Guide
researched and written by
the Education Department of

The
SHAKESPEARE
Theatre of
New Jersey



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The Bungler is presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York.





The Life Of Molière



Portrait of Molière
by Charles-Antoine Coypel, 1730.

Jean Baptiste Poquelin, popularly known by his stage name Molière, was a French playwright who is now considered one of the great masters of comedy in Western Literature. An accomplished artist in almost every aspect of the theatre, Molière was not only a brilliant playwright, but also an accomplished producer, director and actor. His works not only transformed French classical comedy, but eventually influenced dramatists worldwide.

Born on January 15, 1622, Molière was the eldest of

six children. His father, Jean Poquelin, held a permanent position as an upholsterer and furnisher of the Royal Court during the reign of King Louis XIV. Desperately wanting his son to obtain an aristocrat's education, Jean Poquelin enrolled his son in the prestigious *Collège de Clermont* in 1636. Molière received an exceptional education there, particularly excelling in humanities and philosophy, and eventually qualified to become a lawyer.

Jean Poquelin had hoped his son would follow in his footsteps and choose an upstanding career path. In his early twenties, however, Molière defied his father, abandoned the law, and founded the *Théâtre Illustre* with the Béjart family in Paris. (Molière had a long-running romantic relationship with co-founder Madeline Béjart, who was a French actress. He later married her younger sister, Armande, with whom he had three children.) At about the same time, he adopted the stage pseudonym Molière—probably to save his father the embarrassment of having an actor in the family. The company went bankrupt in 1644 due to Molière's inability to keep up with expenses, and he was sent to debtors' prison twice. The troupe borrowed money from a friend to pay for Molière's release. Molière's father begrudgingly repaid the debt one year later.

Struggling artistically as well as financially, the disheartened troupe fled the city and toured the provinces and remote towns of southern France. There Molière came into his own as an actor and a playwright.

By the mid 1650s the troupe had garnered tremendous praise in the provinces, in part due to the popularity of Molière's first full-length play, *L'Étourdi ou Les Contretemps* (*The Bungler, or The Counterplots*). In 1658, Molière and his troupe returned to Paris where they earned the patronage of Louis XIV (then only 19 years old). The "Sun King" supported Molière artistically and financially for the next fifteen years.

For the next thirteen years, Molière transformed his company into the leading

Portrait of Louis XIV, King of France and of Navarre (1638-1715) - circa 1665-1670 (when he was patron to Molière).
Painting after Claude Lefebvre.





French comedic troupe. His style of theatre heavily borrowed from Italian *commedia dell'arte* companies, but Molière refined the *commedia* themes and combined them with neoclassical French tradition. In addition, Molière adopted the Alexandrine, a rhymed hexameter commonly used in contemporary tragedies, in order to create conversational and relaxed diction. This fusion brought French comedy to an unmatched level of artistry and inventiveness. His later comedies such as *The School for Wives* (1662), *Tartuffe* (1664), *The Misanthrope* (1666) and *The Learned Ladies* (1672) were steeped in social criticism and satire. With his acerbic and biting flair, Molière mocked the morals and manners of 17th century France, while also offering insights into human nature. Many of his plays invited controversy, and a number of scandals arose around several of them.

Tartuffe, considered one of Molière's most controversial pieces, features a religious conman in the title role. The titular character pretends to minister to the family's religious and moral needs. By the play's end, the mistress of the house exposes Tartuffe as an imposter and religious hypocrite. The Society of the Holy Sacrament, a French church group, found the play immoral and offensive and banned it from performance. In 1669, the restructuring of the French church caused The Society to dissolve, and the ban on *Tartuffe* was lifted.



During the last decade of his life, Molière suffered from tuberculosis. He refused, however, to let his grave illness prevent his artistic pursuits. Molière died playing the title role in *The Imaginary Invalid* in 1673. During a royal performance before King Louis XIV, Molière collapsed and suffered a hemorrhage onstage. He performed the rest of the play, but died a few hours after he returned home.

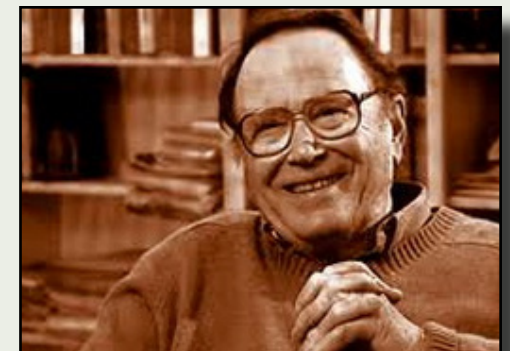
The Catholic clergy, who often believed Molière's plays attacked them, refused him holy burial (not uncommon for actors in any case). But the King interceded on behalf of his master comedian one last time, and Molière was quietly buried in the night at the Cemetery Saint Joseph. As an actor and director, Molière was a consummate theatre artist, but it is his work as a playwright that has immortalized him.

Portrait de Jean-Baptiste Poquelin dit Molière (1622-1673), by Pierre Mignard

RICHARD WILBUR, Translator

RICHARD WILBUR (Translator) was born in New York City and received his B.A. from Amherst College and an M.A. from Harvard. He has taught on the faculties of Harvard, Wellesley, Wesleyan, and Smith. Mr. Wilbur's publications include six volumes of poetry and two collections of his selected verse, a volume of his collection verse, translations of Molière's four most outstanding verse plays, the musical *Candide*, for which he supplied most of the lyrics, a collection of his prose, and two books for children. His highly praised verse translations of Molière's plays *The Misanthrope*, *Tartuffe*, *The School for Wives*, and *The Learned Ladies* have all been performed in New York and are frequently presented by resident theatre companies throughout the United States, Canada, Australia, and Great Britain, including productions at Stratford, Ontario, and the National Theatre in London. He has also completed verse translations of two of Racine's great tragedies, *Andromache* and *Phaedra*. Among Mr. Wilbur's awards are two Pulitzer Prizes, a National Book Award, Edna St. Vincent Millay Award, Bollingen Award, Ford Foundation Award, Guggenheim Fellowship, and Prix de Rome Fellowship. He has served as both Chancellor and President of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. In

1987 he was named the second Poet Laureate of the United States, succeeding Robert Penn Warren.





The Bungler

A Short Synopsis

Please note: Below is a full summary of the play. If you prefer not to spoil the plot, consider skipping this section.

As the day begins in the public square in Messina, L lie bemoans the challenge of a rival suitor, L andre, for his new love, C lie, a young gypsy slave. He enlists the help of his servant, Mascarille (“the most glorious trickster in town”) to win the heart of C lie and free her from Trufaldin’s captivity. Encountering C lie and Trufaldin (a miserly, old man), Mascarille claims to be in need of some advice from the young woman. The clever C lie picks up on the secret manner of Mascarille’s words and begins conversing in code to prevent being understood by the leering Trufaldin. Before she can give concrete instructions on how to free her, however, L lie interrupts them and exposes the scheme. Furious, Trufaldin locks C lie inside the house — and thus concludes the first of a multitude of botched schemes.

Next, Mascarille attempts to con Anselme (an elderly miser) and Pandolfe (L lie’s father) to gain funds to purchase the slave, only to be unwittingly foiled by his do-gooder master once again. Overhearing one of Mascarille’s plots, Hippolyte, Anselme’s daughter, rages at the cunning servant, for she fears that the plan will prevent her wished-for marriage to L andre. Mascarille reassures Hippolyte that his plan will actually free her from her arranged-betrothal to L lie and secure an engagement to her beloved L andre.

After L lie’s next bungle, Mascarille is forced to concoct yet another scheme. He spreads a false rumor that Pandolfe has suddenly died, and a compassionate Anselme presents the “grief-stricken” L lie with a significant sum of money to pay for his father’s funeral rites. The scheme crumbles when a terrified Anselme witnesses the “deceased” Pandolfe alive and well, and both fathers angrily realize they have been “duped” by Mascarille.

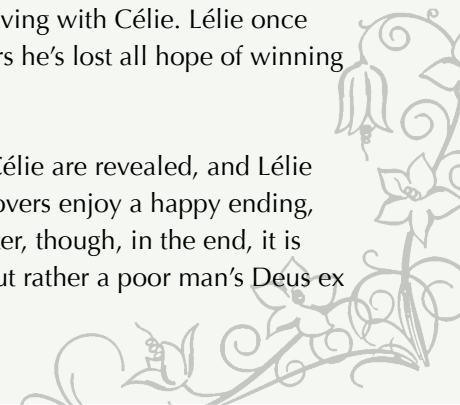
When his methods fail to buy the slave’s freedom, Mascarille attempts to thwart the advances of L lie’s rival, L andre. After a bit of subterfuge by Mascarille, L andre confesses that he has secretly arranged to purchase C lie, despite his father’s wishes that he marry Hippolyte. Mascarille agrees to “help” L andre by promising to send C lie to a secluded house in the country. In actuality, Mascarille plans to whisk C lie off to L lie. This plot is foiled however, with the arrival of a letter from C lie’s “father” who offers to reward Trufaldin for keeping C lie safe until he can arrive. Bewildered, Mascarille soon discovers the true source of the damning letter — L lie. A further attempt to remove L andre as a rival falls under L lie’s guileless interference.

As night falls, Mascarille attempts to intercept L andre’s newest scheme to steal C lie. Once again, L lie interferes and foils Mascarille’s endeavors. Fortunately, L andre’s plot is also foiled, when Trufaldin furiously wards off the “throng of masquers.”

By the next day, L andre has given up his claim on C lie, and Mascarille makes a bold new attempt to free her for his master. He discovers that Trufaldin, once named Zanolio Ruberti, fled Naples leaving his family behind. Trufaldin grieves over his inability to locate his long lost son, whom he assumes is dead. Armed with this new and valuable information, Mascarille disguises L lie as an Armenian merchant, and instructs him to assure Trufaldin that his son has been spotted in Turkey. L lie blunders the prepared scenario, and is eventually chased off by Trufaldin and Mascarille.

The unexpected arrival of a “fine young gypsy man” seeking to purchase C lie adds a new wrinkle to Mascarille’s plans. Determined to maintain his “glorious trickster” reputation, Mascarille disguises himself as a Swiss innkeeper in an attempt to prevent the Andr s (the gypsy) from leaving with C lie. L lie once again blunders his servant’s scheme, and it appears he’s lost all hope of winning C lie.

In the end, the mysterious origins of Andr s and C lie are revealed, and L lie wins the hand of the gypsy slave. All the young lovers enjoy a happy ending, and Mascarille retains his title as a cunning trickster, though, in the end, it is not his schemes that win the day for his master, but rather a poor man’s Deus ex Machina in the form of an old crone.





Who's Who in the Play

LÉLIE (lay-LEE) – The “bungler” of the play, he’s an impetuous, young gentleman who vies for the affections of the gypsy, Celie. He enlists the help of his clever servant to win her, but manages to blunder every clever scheme.

*Ah, how I thank high Heaven when I view
The heavenly charms it has bestowed on you!*

MASCARILLE (mah-ska-REE) – Lélie’s cunning servant and “the most glorious trickster in town;” he concocts scheme after scheme to help his master win Célie.

*After this triumph, they’ll paint me with a wreath
On my heroic brow, and underneath
Will be the glorious title I’ve always sought for:
MASCARILLUS RASCALUM IMPERATOR.*

CÉLIE (say-LEE) – The mysterious, young gypsy woman who has caught the eye of Lélie and Léandre. She has been left as slave to Trufaldin as security for a loan made to her gypsy band.

*My heart, which hears your words with some alarm
Would never wish my eyes to do men harm...*

PANDOLFE (pahn-DOLF) – Lélie’s demanding father; he insists that Lélie marry Hippolyte.

I’m not pleased, frankly speaking, by the conduct of my son.

ANSELME (ahn-SELM) – Hippolyte’s money-lending, status-conscious father; he possesses a secret love for a woman named Nerine.

*Tell me now, Mascarille: although I’m old,
Are my looks still fairly pleasant to behold?*

HIPPOLYTE (ee-po-LEET) – Anselme’s amorous daughter; betrothed to Lélie, but in love with Léandre.

*You promised that you’d be the champion of
My hopes to wed Léandre, whom I love...*

TRUFALDIN (tru-fal-DAN) – A miserly old man.

*Well, now! Someone’s deceiving me!
The tales you’ve told me don’t at all agree.*

LÉANDRE (lay-AHN-druh) – A young, handsome man from a wealthy family; he courted Hippolyte, but now is enamored of Célie.

*Though passion still would blind me, I now see
Your daughter’s worth and virtue beckoning me*

ANDRÈS (ahn-DRACE) – A mysterious and attractive gypsy man.

*I have done everything a man could do,
Célie, to prove my ardent love to you.*

ERGASTE (air-GHAST) – a friend of Mascarille’s.

*Mascarille, as your bosom friend, I’m well aware
Of the part you play in your master’s love affair.*

A MESSENGER

**TWO COMPANIES OF
MASQUERADERS**



Costume renderings of the Masqueraders and the Messenger by Costume Designer, Paul Canada, 2017.



Commedia dell'arte & *The Bungler*

The Bungler, Molière's first full-length play, premiered in Lyons around 1655. This early endeavor pulled a tremendous influence from the Italian *commedia dell'arte*. Utilizing stock characters in improvised comic scenarios (known as *lazzi*), *commedia* was a theatre form to which Molière would have had significant exposure while his company toured the provinces. *Commedia dell'arte* flourished throughout Europe from the 16th through the 18th century.

One can easily see the episodic and *lazzi*-inspired structure of *The Bungler*. Nearly every scene includes a mini-play in which a scheme is hatched, attempted, succeeds (or nearly succeeds), and then is bungled. In many cases, these "variations on a scheme" can be seen as micro-plays in and of themselves.

The plots in *commedia* almost always center around one or two pairs of lovers trying to unite. These couples are often dressed in corresponding colors (the "red couple" or the "blue couple"), so that audiences know how the pairings are intended to unite. The obstacles they face are often the meddling of miserly fathers or braggarts. The lovers typically call on their servants to help their romantic endeavors, but invariably the servants make mistakes. We see descendants of these *commedia* structures in a wide range of popular comic entertainment — everything from the Three Stooges to our contemporary sitcoms and rom-coms.

In the case of *The Bungler*, Molière subverts the expected plot structure. Here, it is the *master* who continuously botches the carefully laid plans of his *servant*. Many of the *lazzi*-inspired scenes in this play echo the conflicts between *Arlecchino* (the fast-thinking servant) and *Pantelone* (the gullible old miser). Molière took these comic kernels, scripted them, and infused them with his own witty flair and unique sense of character.

Commedia Archetypes in *The Bungler*

Though Molière broke in many ways from the stock characters in writing this play, the *commedia* origins are still readily apparent.



ARLECCHINO – The fast-thinking, cunning servant (often to two masters); the schemer the audience roots for [Mascarille]

PANTELONE – The old miser; of the highest social standing; loves nothing more than money [Pandolfe and Anselme]

IL DOTTORE – An egotistical and proud father figure; easily gulled [Trufaldin and Anselme]

IL CAPITANO – A braggart and a lover; blindly arrogant and oblivious to his flaws [Andrés and Léandre]

INNAMORATI – The high-class, hopeless lovers [Lélie, Célie, Hippolyte, Léandre]

COLUMBINA – The cunning servant; often mistress to Arlecchino; an equal match for her witty partner [Célie]



Chronology

of Major Events in Molière's Life

1622 – Jean-Baptiste Poquelin (later called Molière) is born

1636 – Cardinal Richelieu establishes the French Academy

1641 – opening the first permanent proscenium-arch theater in France - the *Palais Cardinal* (later renamed the *Palais Royal*)

1642 – Cardinal Richelieu dies

1643 – Molière abandons law and founds the *Théâtre Illustre* with the Béjart family

1643 – Louis XIV, known as the “Sun King”, takes the throne at the age of 4

1644 – The *Théâtre Illustre* goes bankrupt, and Molière is briefly imprisoned for debt. Jean-Baptiste Poquelin begins going by the name of Molière.

1658 – Molière's troupe performs in Paris and gains royal patronage

1660 – Molière's troupe is given permanent playing space in the *Palais Royal*

1662 – Molière marries Armande Béjart, the younger sister of his long-time mistress Madeleine Béjart

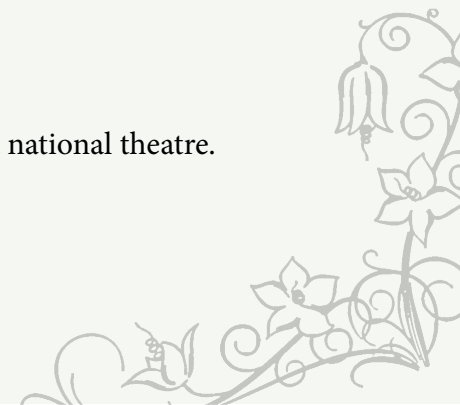
1665 – Molière's troupe becomes the King's Men, the official troupe for court entertainment

1666 – Molière writes *The Misanthrope*

1672 – Madeleine Béjart dies

1673 – Molière dies from an attack of tuberculosis following a performance of *The Imaginary Invalid*

1680 – Molière's troupe is combined with the Marais and Bourgogne companies to create the *Comédie Française*, the first national theatre.

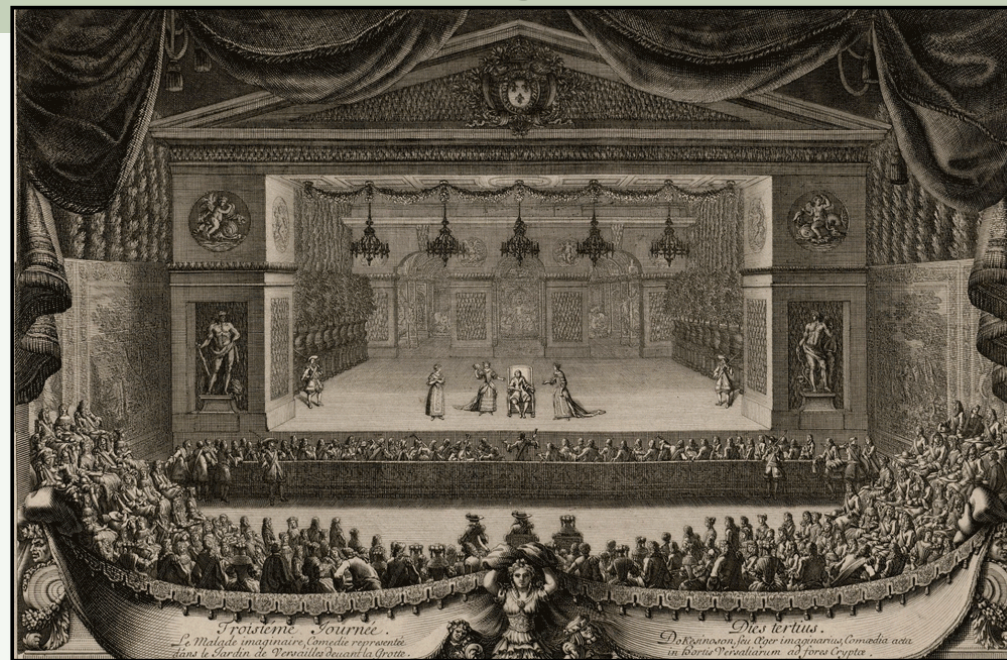


Molière's Theatrical Style

In order to understand Molière's style, one must also understand the literary and theatrical context for the plays he was writing: both the rules of French Neoclassicism to which Molière had to adhere and the kind of playing space he and his troupe had at their disposal.

Neoclassicism in French literature began under the reign of Cardinal Richelieu after Louis XIII died and before the ascension of Louis XIV to the throne. Richelieu made an effort to consolidate power and create the basis for the absolute monarchy. One of his devices for centralizing authority was the *Academie Française*, an organization established to regulate and officiate on the French language and other French art forms. The *Academie Française* defined theatre in a way that came to be known as the Neoclassic style with rules (derived from Aristotle's ancient literary manual, *The Poetics*) known as the Unities. The Unities consisted of time, action, and place. Two additional criteria were added later — verisimilitude and decorum.

According to the *Academie*, correct drama should only have one action, or plot, to the play. All of that action must take place in the same geographic location, and the scenic design should not attempt to compress geographic reality or represent more than one place. Finally, the action of the play must be resolved within a reasonable amount of time in the world of the play (no more than twenty-four hours), if it does not progress in real time. Verisimilitude is the property derived from Aristotelian dramatic theory where all elements of the play must seem



Etching of the remounted performance of Molière's *The Imaginary Invalid* by Jean Le Pautre, 1674.

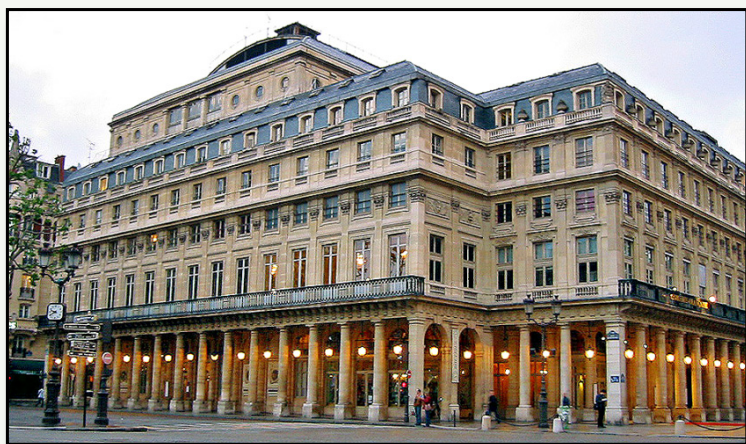
real, probable and believable. The last element, decorum, referred to the way both the characters and the actors playing them should behave. Poor characters should be portrayed as poor and should behave the way poor people were perceived. Likewise, the rich should be portrayed and behave in a way appropriate to their class.

Though the classical unities and neoclassic form were employed both on the continent and in England, strict adherence did not occur until after the foundation of the *Academie Française* in 1636. This is why Shakespeare's plays and other works slightly preceding Molière's time, like Corneille's *The Cid* have a more episodic structures where each scene has its own specific time and location not necessarily related to the rest of the scenes. Once the *Academie* enforced this set of criteria, however, most dramatic literature on the continent followed this schema until the mid to late 1800s. Molière frequently chafed under the constraints of these rules, and



much of the genius of his comedy consists of his ability to stay just on the right side of Richelieu's rules while infusing his comedies with the unruly, populist flavor of the Italian theatrical form known as *Commedia dell'Arte*.

Another important factor in understanding Molière's work is the architecture of the playing space. When Molière won the favor of King Louis XIV, he was awarded use of the *Salle du Petit-Bourbon*, which was demolished not long afterwards in order to expand the *Louvre*. The *Salle du Petit-Bourbon* was an indoor court theatre — a long gallery with a stage on one end. After the sudden ouster from the *Salle du Petit-Bourbon*, Louis XIV gave Molière the theatre of the late Cardinal Richelieu, known as the *Palais Cardinal* (renamed the *Palais Royal*). This theatre, the first permanent proscenium stage in Paris, was built for private court performances, but fell into disuse after the Cardinal's death. Molière and his troupe renovated the space and added more seating to make it more suitable for public performances. Molière's troupe performed here for the rest of his life. After Molière's death, his company along with another theatrical troupe joined to create the



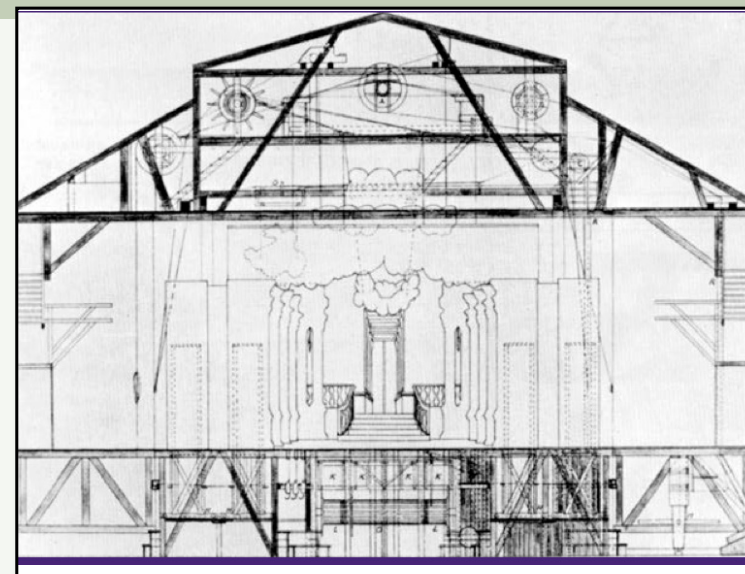
The *Comédie Française* is considered to be the longest running state theatre in the world, and still performs in the *Salle Richelieu* in the *Palais-Royal* complex in Paris.

Comédie Française, the first and only national theatre of France.

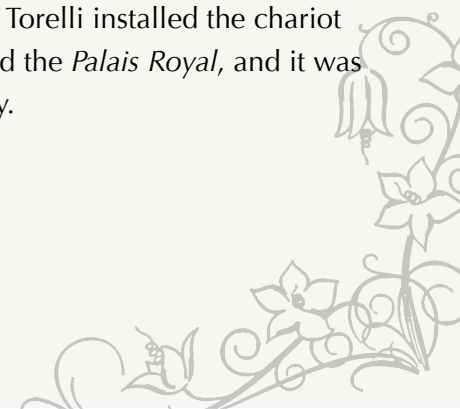
The proscenium stages of the time were not

very deep. The logistics of candlelight did not allow them to be too far removed from the audience, and the house lights were never extinguished during the performances.

The shallow stage and proximity to the audience tended to foster a presentational, stylized acting method. Neoclassical set designs tended to use a background painted with a forced, one-point perspective (to create the illusion of depth) and several doors, especially for farces like those written by Molière. For changes in scenery, chariot and pole systems were common in Europe, and renowned Italian scenic designer Giacomo Torelli was brought to Paris by Louis XIV to install this Italianate scene-shifting technology. In essence, chariot and pole systems involved painted flats mounted on small dollies which ran in tracks just below the stage floor. Torelli installed the chariot and pole system in both the *Petit-Bourbon* and the *Palais Royal*, and it was undoubtedly employed by Molière's company.



An side section of a theatre space utilizing a chariot and pole method of changing scenery.





Alexandrine Verse

Before Shakespeare popularized iambic pentameter in English poetry, a common verse form was the Alexandrine. Most common in French baroque poetry, the Alexandrine line has 12 syllables and is divided into two parts by a caesura, or a brief pause in the language.

*Morbieu! c'est une chose indigne, lache, infame,
De s'abaisser ainsi jusqu'a trahir son ame;
Et si, par un malheur, j'en avais fait autant,
Je m'irais, de regret, pendre tout a J'instant.*

Although Alexandrine rhythm perfectly emphasizes the elegant cadence of the French language, it does not have the same effect in English. Therefore, Richard Wilbur translated *The Bungler* into iambic pentameter, a verse form that is particularly conducive to English speech patterns. Each line of iambic pentameter verse has ten syllables which divide into five “feet” of unstressed-stressed emphasis.

*By God, I say it's base and scandalous
To falsify the heart's affections to us;
If I caught myself behaving in such a way,
I'd hang myself for shame, without delay.*

THE MAJOR WORKS OF MOLIÈRE

Le Médecin volant (1645)—*The Flying Doctor*
La Jalousie du barbouillé (1650)—*The Jealousy of le Barbouillé*
L'Étourdi ou Les Contretemps* (1655)—*The Blunderer, or, the Counterplots, or The Bungler
Le Dépit amoureux (1656)—*The Love-Tiff*
Le Docteur amoureux (1658), the first play performed by Molière's troupe for Louis XIV (now lost)—*The Doctor in Love*
Les Précieuses ridicules (1659)—*The Affected Young Ladies*
Sganarelle ou Le Cocu imaginaire (1660)—*Sganarelle, or the Imaginary Cuckold*
Dom Garcie de Navarre ou Le Prince jaloux (1661)—*Don Garcia of Navarre, or the Jealous Prince*
L'École des maris (1661)—*The School for Husbands*
Les Fâcheux (1661)—*The Mad (also translated The Bores)*
L'École des femmes (1662)—*The School for Wives*
La Jalousie du Gros-René (1663)—*The Jealousy of Gros-René*
L'Impromptu de Versailles (1663)—*The Versailles Impromptu*
Le Mariage forcé (1664)—*The Forced Marriage*
Gros-René, petit enfant (1664; now lost)—*Gros-René, Small Child*
La Princesse d'Élide (1664)—*The Princess of Elid*
Tartuffe ou L'Imposteur (1664)—*Tartuffe, or, the Impostor*
Dom Juan ou Le Festin de pierre (1665)—*Don Juan*
L'Amour médecin (1665)—*Love Is the Doctor*
Le Misanthrope ou L'Atrabilaire amoureux (1666)—*The Misanthrope*
Le Médecin malgré lui (1666)—*The Doctor in Spite of Himself*
Mélicerte (1666)
Pastorale comique (1667)—*Comic Pastoral*
Le Sicilien ou L'Amour peintre (1667)—*The Sicilian, or Love the Painter*
Amphitryon (1668)
George Dandin ou Le Mari confondu (1668)—*The Abashed Husband*
L'Avare ou L'École du mensonge (1668)—*The Miser, or, the School for Lies*
Les Amants magnifiques (1670)—*The Magnificent Lovers*
Le Bourgeois gentilhomme (1670)—*The Bourgeois Gentleman*
Psyché (1671)—*Psyche*
Les Fourberies de Scapin (1671)—*The Impostures of Scapin*
La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas (1671)—*The Countess of Escarbagnas*
Les Femmes savantes (1672)—*The Learned Ladies*
Le Malade imaginaire (1673)—*The Imaginary Invalid*



Commentary & Criticism

Victor Hugo's and Voltaire's Praise of *The Bungler*

"Victor Hugo and Voltaire judged *The Bungler* to be not a formative work but a harbinger of Molière's genius."

Mark Bly, *American Theatre* (2000)

The Early Success of The Bungler

"Molière's readers will recall that his first major original play, *The Bungler*, had the good fortune not only to please its initial audience in Lyons in the mid-1650s, but also to succeed well enough later in Paris to become a repertory staple for Molière company during its early years there."

F. W. Voger, "Molière and the Comical Teuton"

On the theme of Illusion and Reality in *The Bungler*

"Molière is the first French dramatist to use the paradox of illusion and reality to express a sophisticated world view. His work transformed a dramatic device into a powerful statement of belief in man's ability to create his own universe... *Lélie*, completely open and truly incapable of deception, cannot function in the world of illusion, but triumphs with the weapon of truth."

William A. Mould "Illusion and Reality:
A Resolution of an Old Paradox"

On the themes of *The Bungler*

"There is a hidden lesson in Molière's cautionary tale. Sometimes the invisible realm can be as powerful as the visible one, and, at its best, theatre can be, with its anarchic spirit, an antidote to our obsessive need for control and our belief that we can know and order all things."

Mark Bly, *American Theatre* (2000)

On Mascarille

"...as the clever valet cooks up ploy after ploy, assuming disguise after disguise, his dissembling feels more and more like a performance. Each scheme he launches almost becomes a short play produced by, directed by, and starring Mascarille."

Tom Seller, *American Theatre* (2000)

On translator Richard Wilbur

"Wilbur's rendering of *The Bungler* masterfully captures Molière's poetry and comic spirit."

Jonathan Shandell, *Theater – A Journal Published by
the Yale School of Drama* (2001)

"As a poet in his own right, Wilbur may be one of the few translators today who can successfully produce an actable verse translation with the supple vocabulary and fluidity of the French."

Tom Seller, *American Theatre* (2000)

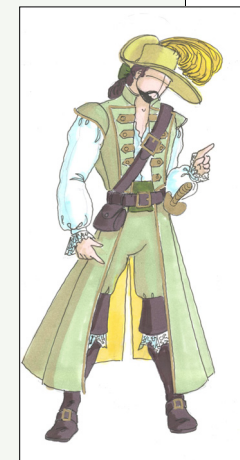
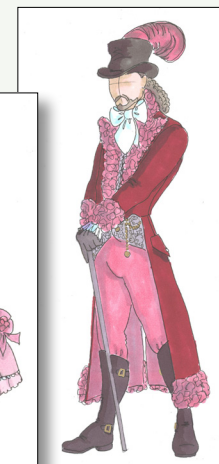
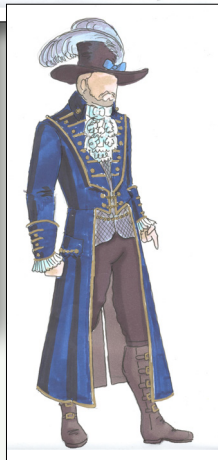
"It would be hard to overpraise Wilbur's special genius for verse translation. Whether re-creating the witty badinage of Molière or the high tragic music of Racine or Corneille, Wilbur has the uncanny ability to create English versions that never feel like translations. They read and play as if they were originally written in English."

Dana Gioia, Former Chairman of the
National Endowment of the Arts, *Molière: The Bungler*

In this Production



ABOVE: Model of the set design by Richard Block©2017.
LEFT & BELOW: Costume design renderings by Paul Canada©2017.

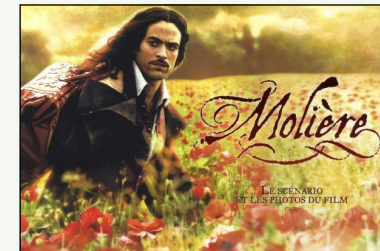




Explore Online

View Laurent Tirard's film *Molière* on BBC, starring Romain Duris as Molière; think of it as the French version of *Shakespeare In Love*.

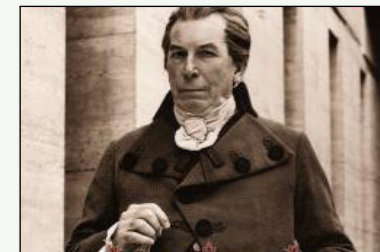
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00nvsz4>



Hear it before (or after) you see it! Listen to the LA Theatre Works audiobook version of Wilbur's translation of *The Bungler*.

Published by LA Theatre Works, March 2011

<https://www.audiobooks.com/audiobook/the-bungler/217632>



Learn about Molière's royal patron Louis XIV of France, The Sun King through videos, articles, pictures.

<http://www.history.com/topics/louis-xiv>





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