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French Society Abroad: The Popularization of French Dance Throughout Europe, 1600-1750

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Research & Scholarship SYMPOSIUM

French Society Abroad:

The Popularization of French Dance Throughout Europe, 1600-1750

This paper explores the dissemination of French dance, dance notation, and dance music throughout Europe, and it explains the reasons why French culture had such an influence on other European societies from 1600-1750. First, the paper seeks to prove that King Louis XIV played a significant role in the outpour of French dance and the arts. Next, the paper discusses prominent French writers of dance notation who influenced the spread of French dance literature and training throughout Europe. Finally, the paper delineates European composers and their involvement in the development and production of French dance music. Using academic, peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and other scholarly sources, this paper seeks to accurately present the information in an orderly fashion. The paper contains visual evidence of dance and music notation to assist the reader in understanding the subject matter. Additionally, theories of contemporary authors as well as authors from the time period are discussed to present concrete evidence. The two main types of dance discussed in the paper are ballroom and court dances, which were prominent within the French royal court. One major finding of the research is the fact that French court and ballroom dances were specifically designed to communicate the power and prestige of King Louis XIV; consequently, other European countries were influenced to strive for similar prestige. Another finding is that many forms of French dance notation were translated and published in other countries, which increased the use of French dance throughout Europe. Musically, European composers such as Handel and Mozart included elements of French dance music in their compositions, and thus played a significant role in prevalence of French dance music throughout Europe. Overall, this paper proves that French dance received wide recognition due to political influence, availability of dance notation, and the involvement of prominent composers.