



**THE VICTORIAN DRAMA LEAGUE**  
Supporting community theatre in Victoria



WHAT'S ON ▾

EVENTS ▾

AUDITIONS ▾

MEMBER PORTAL ▾

RESOURCES ▾

ABOUT ▾

CONTACT

MEMBER PROFILE

LOGOUT

FACEBOOK

INSTAGRAM SEARCH

PERFORMANCE REVIEW

# LE MARIAGE FORCÉ [THE FORCED MARRIAGE]

---

*Reviewed by Richard Burman,*

*20 Aug 2022*

Author: Moliere

Director: Donald McManus

Theatre Company: Melbourne French Theatre Inc.

## REVIEW

'Le Mariage Force' ('The Forced Marriage') is a one-act farce by Moliere first presented in 1664. It was presented by Melbourne French Theatre Inc. to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the birth of Moliere. After performing in various locations, Melbourne French Theatre Inc. has moved into the Kensington Town Hall. The play was performed in French with surtitles. It was first performed at the court of Louis XIV with music and dance, in which the king participated.

For this celebratory production the audience was entertained, on entering the auditorium, by a small band of five instrumentalists exquisitely playing music of Jean-Baptiste Lully and setting the period of the play. Lully had composed music for the first production. The instrumentalists were Kasinda Faase (flute), Lara Mladjen and Lachlan Harris (violins), Maddison Furlan (viola da



gamba) and Rosanne Hunt (cello). They also played for the dance sequence in the play.

A middle-aged bridegroom to be, Sganarelle, is about to be married to Dorimene, a young coquette. Dorimene sees in her alliance with Sganarelle the prospect of a wealthy independent life with her lover, Lycaste. Sganarelle begins to have doubts about this approaching marriage. How can an aged bridegroom be certain that his intended truly loves him and not another? He approaches friends and philosophers to advise him, none of whom really help him. He then decides not to go through with the union but the thought of fighting a duel of honour with Dorimene's young brother, Alcidas, changes his mind and they have a forced marriage.

The play was directed by Donald McManus, who also played the role of Sganarelle. This was a delightfully comic performance which Donald kept up through the whole of the play as he was rarely, if ever, off the stage. He made very good use of facial expressions and body movement to project the indecision of the character. His friend, Geronimo, was confidently played by Michael (Michel) Bula and their scenes set the basis for the comic plot. Maya O'Farrall was the young coquette, Sganarelle's fiancée, and she conveyed her ambitions clearly to the audience, but I would have liked a little more pertness in the character. Still it was a nice performance.



Sganarelle consulted two philosophers to help resolve his doubts. The first, Pancrace, was an Aristotelian philosopher and was played enthusiastically with great fun and gusto by Dr. Hilary Gopnik MA, PhD. Hilary made full use of the town hall, entering and exiting through the auditorium as well as into the wings and back again. This was a bubbly performance which was well appreciated by the audience.

In great contrast to Pancrace the second philosopher, Marphurius, was a Phyrhonian or sceptical philosopher. This was a man of few and obscure words of a gloomy nature. Marphurius was played effectively by Celia Handscombe.

Celia was also cast as Alcidas, Dorimene's brother. Sganarelle had gone to Dorimene's father, Alcantor, to call off the match. Richard Ryan gave a nice buffo performance as the father who, while agreeing to the proposal, passes Sganarelle to his son. Celia's creation of the young gentleman brother who politely offers the duel was a style of restrained comedy acting in contrast to the others. Karim Bouriah-Lopez completed the cast as Lycaste, Dorimene's lover. Karim also paired with Ayala Gopnik-McManus as two Egyptian dancers.

Costumes for the production indicated the period of the play well. The play ran for about seventy minutes.

[Home](#)  
[What's On](#)  
[One Act Plays](#)  
[VDL Awards](#)  
[Theatrecraft Youth Unlimited](#)

[Auditions](#)  
[Resources](#)  
[Member Portal](#)  
[Reviewer Portal](#)  
[Adjudicator Portal](#)  
[Logout](#)

[About](#)  
[Our Patron](#)  
[Committee of Management](#)

[Contact](#)  
[Association Rules & Policies](#)  
[f](#) [@](#)



© 2022 The Victorian Drama League | Website by BarBendingDesigns