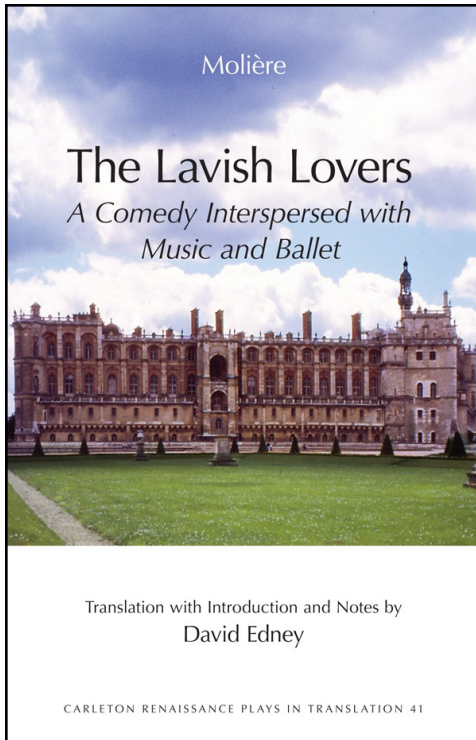


The Lavish Lovers: A Comedy Interspersed with Music and Ballet, Molière



TRANSLATED WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY
DAVID EDNEY

The Lavish Lovers, commissioned by Louis XIV to display all that theatre could offer, is an important example of the Sun King's use of art as an instrument of government. Part ballet, part comedy, with music by Jean-Baptiste Lully, it shows all the main trends of French court entertainments. The king was a true collaborator; he specified the subject, the characters and the setting. The roles of Neptune and Apollo were designed for him to perform as a dancer. In carrying out the assignment, however, Molière modified the elements to produce a show that the patron had not imagined. Long dismissed as a kind of forced labour, *The Lavish Lovers* is, in fact, a significant achievement, reflecting the political role of art and displaying different art forms within a single work. In it we see the playwright's craft and ideas at an important stage of his career, and his ability to maintain artistic integrity under an authoritarian *régime*.

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