

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

CASSANÉA DE MONDONVILLE, Mme Jean-Joseph, née Anne-Jeanne Boucon

Paris 11.X.1708–4.II.1780

Anne-Jeanne Boucon today is known principally as the subject with her husband of magnificent pastels by La Tour (*q.v.*) of which several versions are known. Her father, Étienne Boucon (–1735), came from Crest (Dauphiné), and in 1704 he married Anne-Claude Nolson or Nollesson in Paris. Bourgeois de Paris, he held a licence of agent de change until 1714, and was also chevalier de Saint-Jean de Latran et de Saint Lazare and comte palatin. He is mentioned several times in Rosalba Carrera's journal: on 13.VI.1720 she had lunch with him, and met him again on 10 and 24.IX.1720; on the second occasion he was with "une illustre dame". He is also credited with some verses printed in the *Mercure* in .XI.1719, *Alla virtuosissima Signora d'Argenon, Homaggio debito*; she, who lived at Crozat's and was the subject of a pastel by Rosalba, was Anne-Marguerite de La Pierre d'Argenon, an amateur singer, great-niece and adopted daughter of Charles de La Fosse.

Boucon's patronage of the arts extended to lending money to musicians to have their work engraved. He lived rue du Temple in 1708, rue des Bons Enfans by 1719, before purchasing in 1719, for 31,000 livres, a house on the rue des Vieux-Augustins which had previously belonged to surintendant Fouquet. He died in Paris 20.II.1735, leaving his estate in a will made .IX.1734 to Anne-Jeanne, including "tous les tableaux en pastel" [qui sont] "ouvrages de ses mains, et le fruit de ses études." In 1732 his sister-in-law Jeanne Nolson married the musician Jean-Baptiste-Antoine Forqueray; among the witnesses were Boucon, his son and daughter, members of the Bonnier de La Mossion family; and the painter André Bouys (Louis Forqueray, *Les Forqueray et leurs descendants*, Paris, 1911).

Anne-Jeanne was also a gifted musician: the attribute with which La Tour embellished her was commemorated also by Rameau, who entitled one of the *Pièces de clavecin en concerts* (1741) "La Boucon". Her talent was recognised also by pieces with the same title from two other significant composers, Jean-Baptiste Barrière (Livre VI, privilege granted 1739) and Jacques Duphly (1744). Boucon herself seems never to have published, nor has any piece survived in manuscript (exhaustive searches of pièces de clavecin published in Paris have been conducted).

Her name appears on the subscription lists for music at the time, for example, Telemann's *Nouveaux quatuors en six suites à une flute traversière*, 1740. She was among his earliest performers in Paris, responsible for inviting the German composer to play at the Concert spirituel.

In 1747, at the age of 39, she married the virtuoso violinist and composer Jean-Joseph Cassanéa de Mondonville (1711–1772). Unusually they married without communauté des biens. Their son Maximilien-Joseph (*q.v.*) was also an amateur pastellist; he witnessed her death in the house in the rue des Vieux-

Augustins. Mariette recounted the story of the La Tour pastels and the price Mme de Mondonville had to pay for hers, noting that "[elle] joint au goût de la musique celui de la peinture, dans laquelle elle s'est quelquefois exercée."

D'Aquin de Château-Lyon offered this summary of her gifts:

Que dirai-je de Madame de Mondonville, autrefois Mademoiselle Boucon? De quelle expression se servir à son sujet? La seule convenable est celle-ci, Madame de Mondonville est ravissante. Apollon & L'Amour, pouvoient-ils mieux faire que d'unir ensemble deux de leurs plus intimes favoris? Heureux les Amateurs qui sont admis dans leur société, ils goûtent ces beautés sublimes dont les Muses seules avoient le secret.

Not all the known versions of the La Tour pastel are of equal quality, and it is perhaps possible that she herself copied the image.

Bibliography

Pierre-Louis d'Aquin de Château-Lyon, *Lettres sur les hommes célèbres, dans les sciences, la littérature & les beaux-arts, sous le règne de Louis XIV*, Amsterdam, 1754; Machard 1980; Mariette 1852; Tessier 1926; Bruce Gustafson, private communication, 2021

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