

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

LE BÈGUE D'OLGIBAND DE LA GRANGE, Jean-Baptiste

fl. France 1755–88

The poet, playwright and composer hitherto known only as d'Olgiband de Lagrange was evidently also an amateur pastellist, as we may infer from this notice that appeared in the *Affiches de Lyon, annonces et avis divers* (22.VI.1757):

Le sieur de la Grange, auteur de la tragédie d'Erizzie, qui a dix tableaux en pastel, de sa façon, de la hauteur de 6 pouces sur 21 de largeur, dont deux représentent le Roi et la Reine, et les huit autres des fruits, poissons, gibier, etc., propose à douze personnes de lui donner chacune 50 livres, de faire entr'elles cinq parts desdits tableaux, à deux tableaux par lot et de tirer au sort lesdites cinq parts. Aux sept personnes qui n'auront point de part il leur fera leur portrait de la même grandeur des susdits tableaux, gratis. Ceux qui auront gagné un lot, en lui donnant 36 livres de plus, il leur fera également leur portrait. Il demeure rue du Boeuf, dans la maison de M. Bertaud, au troisième étage.

Very little is known of the author apart from a few plays and operas published in the 1770s. La Porte's *Anecdotes dramatiques* notes that he wrote and also composed the music for the opéra bouffon *La Folie du jour* (1773). Grimm called him a “polisson échappé du Collège”, denouncing his “deux pièces informes et pitoyables” (*Correspondance littéraire*, 1.XII.1766). The chevalier de Mouhy's *Abrégé de l'histoire du théâtre françois* (1780, II, p. 179) notes that La Grange was a “comédien de Province” whose tragedy *Erizzie* was performed at the théâtre de Lyon, 13.II.1755, and printed there that year.

There are evidently multiple confusions over the names (in each document spelled as here transcribed without the addition of [s] in each case), but it is here suggested (2023) that the author was the “Jean-Baptiste Le Begue Dolgiband de la Grange, bourgeois”, parrain at the baptism in Aix-en-Provence, Sainte-Madeleine of a Marie-Jeanne Mahon on 6.IV.1776 – he signed “Delagrangé”; the marraine was his wife, Marie-Jeanne de Monthebert, who was illiterate. On 19.XII.1770 at Illeville-sur-Montfort was baptised Jean Baptiste Nicolas, “fils légitime du Sr Jean Baptiste Le Begue d'Olgibart de La Grange musicien du prince Charles et de dem^{elle} Marie Jeanne Gasserand de la paroisse de St Eustache de Paris.” The father signed “JB Lebegue dolgiband de La grange”. The parrain was Nicolas Lejay, also musicien du prince Charles de Lorraine.

It is likely that the author was also the father of the “Mathieu Jean Le Begue d'Olgibaud de la Grange maître es arts en l'université de Paris” whose daughter Marie-Eugénie by his wife Marie-Augustine Gasseran de Montlebert was baptised also in Aix-en-Provence, Sainte-Madeleine on 10.III.1777. (No doubt Augustine was related – perhaps a niece – to Marie-Jeanne.) He was probably the “Jean Baptiste Mathieu Le Bègue dit La Grange, artiste du théâtre de cette commune” who died in Grenoble, 16.V.1798, born in Marseille, aged 51, so that the author and Marie-Jeanne were likely to have married in the early 1740s.

A further document is in Paris (30.V.1799, AN MC/ET/XXVIII/591), the inventaire après décès of Louise-Françoise Forest, conducted at the request of “Marie-Augustine Gazeran, veuve de Jean Baptiste Mathieu Lebegue”, then living in Paris, rue Antoine, and her two daughters, Marie-Eugénie (major) and Marie (minor), cousins, once removed, of the deceased. Mlle Forest had died aged 82, unmarried, on 21.V.1799, at 40 rue des Prêtres Paul.