

Fantastically French!

Design and Architecture in 16th- to 18th-Century Prints

9: The Pleasures of the Enchanted Isle

These two prints are part of a fourteen-print series that documents a lavish, six-day long party on the grounds of Versailles during the reign of King Louis XIV. The celebration's theme, "The Pleasures of the Enchanted Island," was based on a romantic story about an evil magician named Alcine who imprisoned the hero, Roger, on her island.

The scenes we see here depict day three of the party: a ballet set to the composition, *Les Plaisirs de l'Île Enchantée* by Jean-Baptiste Lully. Click the link below to listen to the music.

[Jean-Baptiste Lully - Les Plaisirs de l'Île Enchantée, extraits](#)

In the foreground of each print, we see the king and the royal family underneath a canopy, with a multitude of guests seated to the left and right.

In the first print, Alcine and her servants perch atop three whales floating in the basin in front of her palace. In the second one, we witness the building go up in flames in a huge fireworks display.

The king commissioned the print series to preserve these festivities, in a bid to impress his friends and rivals across Europe. I guess you could say King Louis XIV was the original influencer — posting party pics and giving his frenemies FOMO.