

Daniel-François-Esprit Auber:
Le Philtre

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Edited and Introduced by

Robert Ignatius Letellier

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P U B L I S H I N G

Daniel-François-Esprit Auber: *Le Philtre*,
Edited and Introduced by Robert Ignatius Letellier

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Daniel-François-Esprit Auber (lithograph c 1830)

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INTRODUCTION

Le Philtre, an opera in two acts with libretto by Eugène Scribe, was premiered at the Académie Royale de Musique (Salle de la rue Le Peletier) on 20 June 1831. The work was an immediate success and remained in the repertoire of the Opéra until 1862. Scribe's libretto was based on an Italian story, Silvio Malaperta's *Il Filtro*, published in a French adaptation in the *Revue de Paris* by Stendhal in 1830.

The story is set in Mauléon, in the eighteenth century. Guillaume, a young farmhand, is in love with Thérèsine, the beautiful but aloof lady of the manor. He and his rival, the swaggering Sergeant Jolicoeur, both try in vain to persuade Thérèsine to marry them. In despair, Guillaume buys what he thinks is a love potion from Doctor Fontanarose, a travelling vendor of patent medicines, and a charlatan. The potion he sells to Guillaume is in fact a bottle of wine. Fontanarose tells the young man that it will not take effect for twenty-four hours—so giving the doctor enough time to leave town. As Guillaume drinks the wine he starts to feel more confident—so much so that he appears almost indifferent to Thérèsine, who is infuriated at this change in her formerly doting young lover. Hoping to make him jealous, she agrees to marry Jolicoeur. Still Guillaume seems untroubled, for he is certain Thérèsine will be in love with him at the end of twenty-four hours.

Act 2 takes place some hours later. The villagers are celebrating the approaching marriage of Thérèsine and Jolicoeur. Thérèsine, however, is unhappy that Guillaume is not there, since her revenge will have no effect if he does not see it. Guillaume asks Fontanarose for a love potion that will work at once. In order to pay for it, he has to join Jolicoeur's regiment, for which he receives twenty *écus*. Meanwhile the villagers find out that Guillaume's uncle has died and left the young man all his money. Guillaume becomes instantly popular with all the girls, and is convinced that the potion is working. Thérèsine then discovers Guillaume has enlisted in order to gain enough money to buy a love potion. She realizes how much he must love her and buys back his enlistment papers. When Jolicoeur returns, Thérèsine explains to him that she is going to marry Guillaume. Thérèsine and Guillaume then learn that the latter is rich. As the couple rejoice over their good fortune, Fontanarose leaves town with honour and gratitude from all sides.

This is a light canvas, and hardly offered situations worthy of the grand lyric resources of the Opéra. The deployment of the chorus and more substantial orchestra of the big theatre really demanded a stronger plotline. Many critics considered the work to be little more than an *opéra-comique* in which recitative replaced the usual spoken dialogue, although the transference of Scribe's *opéra-comique* techniques to the comic opera genre is not that simple. There is less action and a simpler plot than in most of the *opéras-comiques* despite a similarity of structural elements. Hence there is less need for recitative, with more of the action incorporated into the musical numbers which are in turn able to unfold at a more leisurely pace. This situation is underlined by the prevalence of arioso writing in the course of these longer musical numbers. These necessitate more complex musical forms. While none of these would be out of place in an *opéra-comique*, there are fewer strophic forms, less couplets, more arias and ensembles, and ensembles involving the chorus.

Both librettist and composer have subtly but formally demonstrated their

awareness of generic distinction: they are promoting the same message, but this time as a comic opera not an *opéra-comique*.

In matters of overall dramatic structure and musical style, *Le Philtre* is similar to Scribe-Auber *opéras-comiques*. The work is constructed along the same general lines. The music has distinguishing qualities. The overture focuses on the love triangle at the centre of the story, with themes from the act 1 trio for Thérèsine, Jolicoeur and Guillaume predominating: Jolicoeur's strutting military dotted rhythms, Guillaume's assertion of his faith in the efficacy of the philtre with its characteristic leaping fifths, the conclusion of the trio in thirds—a proleptic suggestion of the union of Thérèsine and Guillaume.

The pastoral atmosphere is developed and sustained from the very beginning, with the gentle 12/8 opening chorus with its chiming bell over the rich string writing, which returns to frame the first scene. The melodies are graceful and fresh, none more so than those written for the star tenor. Adolphe Nourrit played the role of the naive villager with a perfect naturalness, appearing in the smock of the farm boy Guillaume. His aria “Philtre divin” has a pathetic charm and diffident but serene character all its own—perfectly captured by the ritornello, with its four-part harmony for two flutes and two oboes, and the mysterious, recurring music of the philtre and its ingestion—a pedal note in octaves of E-flat, sustaining a rising sequence of chromatic triads in first inversion over eight bars.

Julie Dorus-Gras and Laure Cinti-Damoreau took turns in playing the role of Thérèsine, singing of the loves of “la belle Yseult aux blanches mains”. The proud and successful Thérèsine also has a *grand air* (“La coquetterie fait mon bonheur”), her independence and wilfulness illustrated with well-crafted coloratura. Other striking pieces are Jolicoeur's *couplets militaires* “Je suis sergent”; Doctor Fontanarose's *rondo-boniment* “Vous me connaissez”; the finale of act 1; the barcarolle for two voices (“Je suis riche, vous êtes belle”) both graceful and original; and the ensemble of the second act where the village girls press Guillaume to dance with them. Fontanarose is a particularly amusing comic creation, and his irresistible vending *couplets burlesques* a comic tour de force.

The original cast was: Adolphe Nourrit (Guillaume); Julie Dorus-Gras and Laure Cinti-Damoreau (Thérèsine); Henri-Bernard Dabadie (Jolicoeur); Nicholas Prosper Levasseur (Fontanarose); Elie (Fontanarose's valet); and Constance Jaruwék (Jeannette, a villager). The décor by Pierre-Luc-Charles Cicéri was much applauded. Had the work been transported to the Opéra-Comique, it would probably have had a longer career. It nonetheless enjoyed great success, and was given uninterruptedly from 1831 until 1849, with two further revivals, in 1852-59 and 1861-62. There were 243 performances altogether.

The opera was translated into German, Danish, English and Italian, and produced in Berlin, Brussels, Vienna, Copenhagen, Brünn, London, Amsterdam, Graz, Milan and New York. The subject became the basis of Felice Romani's libretto for Gaetano Donizetti, resulting in one of his best scores, *L'Elisire d'amore* (1832). After the latter became very popular, music from the two operas was mixed in a *pasticcio* which was sung in German at St. Petersburg in 1836.



Le Philtre act 1 scene 5: Dr Fontanarose vends his elixir of love

Nouvelle Edition.

LE

PHILTRE

Opéra en deux actes,

Paroles

de M^r G. Scribe,

Musique de

D. F. E. AUBER.

PARTITION PIANO ET CHANT.

PRIX 15^f NET.

*Paris, G. BRANDUS et S. DUFOUR, éditeurs,
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PERSONNAGES.

| <i>Supplé.</i> | <i>Tenors.</i> | <i>Basses.</i> |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| TÉREZINE. | GUILLAUME. | JOLICOEUR. |
| JEANNETTE. | //////// | FONTANAROSE. |



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LE PHILTRE.

3

OUVERTURE.

Andante con moto. (♩ = 104)

PIANO.

ff

ff

p

pp

p

This musical score is for a piano and violin piece by Daniel-François-Esprit Auber. It consists of six systems of music. The first system begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic in the right hand and a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic in the left hand. The second system continues with the *ff* dynamic. The third system features a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic in the left hand and includes trills (*tr*) in the right hand. The fourth system starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic in both hands. The fifth system is marked *All.^o vivace. (♩ = 126)* and begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The sixth system continues with the piano (*p*) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

This page of a musical score, titled "Le Philtre" and numbered "5", contains six systems of piano accompaniment. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The music is written in a minor key, indicated by two flats in the key signature. The notation is dense and rhythmic, featuring many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, often grouped in beams. Dynamic markings such as *ff* (fortissimo) and *p* (piano) are used throughout. The first system includes a *ff* marking in the bass staff. The second system has a *ff* marking in the bass staff. The fifth system has a *p* marking in the bass staff. The sixth system has a *p* marking in the bass staff. The score is presented in a clean, black-and-white format with clear notation and dynamic markings.

This page of musical score, numbered 6, is by Daniel-François-Esprit Auber. It consists of seven systems of two staves each, representing a piano accompaniment. The music is written in 6/8 time and features a complex texture with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes. The notation includes various ornaments, slurs, and dynamic markings such as accents and hairpins. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). The piece is characterized by its intricate rhythmic patterns and dense harmonic textures.

This page of musical notation, titled "Le Philtre" and numbered "7", contains seven systems of piano accompaniment. Each system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The music is written in a style characteristic of 19th-century piano literature, featuring a variety of rhythmic patterns and textures. The first system shows a melodic line in the treble and a rhythmic accompaniment in the bass. The second system continues this pattern with more complex rhythmic figures. The third system introduces a more active bass line with frequent sixteenth-note patterns. The fourth system features a prominent melodic line in the treble with a supporting bass line. The fifth system shows a dense texture with many sixteenth-note chords in both hands. The sixth system continues this dense texture with a focus on rhythmic drive. The seventh system concludes the page with a final cadence, showing a clear resolution of the melodic and harmonic elements. The notation includes various musical symbols such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings like *ff* (fortissimo) in the fourth system.

This page of musical notation, page 9 of 'Le Philtre', contains eight systems of piano accompaniment. Each system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The music is characterized by dense, rhythmic textures, often featuring sixteenth-note patterns and complex chordal structures. The notation includes various musical symbols such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings. A prominent 'ff' (fortissimo) marking is visible in the lower right section of the page. The overall style is that of a classical piano score, likely from the 19th or early 20th century.

10

Animé

ff

This page of a musical score, numbered 11, contains six systems of piano accompaniment. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The music is written in a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 3/4 time signature. The score is characterized by dense, rhythmic textures, including sixteenth-note runs and complex chordal structures. Dynamic markings such as *ff* (fortissimo) and *ff* with accents are used throughout. The first system includes a measure number '11' in the upper right corner. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of the sixth system.

N° 1

INTRODUCTION

Andantino con moto. (♩ = 80)

PIANO

The first system of the piano introduction features a treble and bass clef. The treble clef has a 12/8 time signature and a dynamic marking of *p*. The bass clef has a 12/8 time signature. The music consists of a flowing melody in the right hand and a supporting bass line in the left hand.

The second system continues the piano introduction with similar melodic and harmonic development in both hands.

All. non troppo. (♩ = 104)

The third system marks the beginning of the *All. non troppo* section. The tempo is indicated as 104 beats per minute. The music features a more rhythmic and textured piano accompaniment.

The fourth system continues the *All. non troppo* section with intricate piano textures and rhythmic patterns.

CHORUS

Sopranos.
A - mis - a - mis - sous cet é - pais feuil - la - - ge bré -

Tenors.
A - mis - a - mis - sous cet é - pais feuil - la - - ge bré -

Basses.
A - mis - a - mis - sous cet é - pais feuil - la - - ge bré -

The chorus section includes vocal parts for Sopranos, Tenors, and Basses, along with a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "A - mis - a - mis - sous cet é - pais feuil - la - - ge bré -". The piano accompaniment provides a rhythmic and harmonic foundation for the vocal lines.

15

Soprano: vous bra- vous le so- leil et ses feux, gou- tons — gou- tons en-
Alto: vous bra- vous le so- leil et ses feux, gou- tons — gou- tons en-
Bass: vous bra- vous le so- leil et ses feux, gou- tons — gou- tons en-

fin après l'ou- vra- ge le re- pos — le re- pos — qui seul rend heu- reux. à -
fin après l'ou- vra- ge le re- pos — le re- pos — qui seul rend heu- reux.
fin après l'ou- vra- ge le re- pos — le re- pos — qui seul rend heu- reux.

2^{es} Sop.
Soprano: - mis sous cet é- pais feuil - la - ge, à -
Alto: à - mis sous cet é- pais feuil - la - ge.
Bass: à - mis sous cet é- pais feuil -

14 *p* *pp* *1^{re} Sup.* *2^{me} Sup.* *1^{er} Sup.*

1^{er} Sup.
_ mis sous cet épais feuillage, a mis sous cet épais feuillage

2^{me} Sup.
_ a mis sous cet épais feuillage

1^{er} Sup.
_ mis sous cet épais feuillage, bra-vons le soleil et ses feux,

2^{me} Sup.
bra-vons le soleil et ses feux,

1^{er} Sup.
_ mis sous cet épais feuillage, bra-vons le soleil et ses feux,

2^{me} Sup.
_ mis sous cet épais feuillage, bra-vons le soleil et ses feux,

1^{er} Sup.
_ sous cet épais feuillage, bravons le soleil et ses feux. bra -

2^{me} Sup.
_ sous cet épais feuillage, bravons le soleil et ses feux. bra -

1^{er} Sup.
_ sous cet épais feuillage, bravons le soleil et ses feux. bra -

15

Soprano: -vons le soleil et ses feux sous cet épais feuil - la ge bravous le so -

Tenor: -vons le soleil et ses feux sous cet épais feuil - la ge bravous le so -

Bass: -vons le soleil et ses feux sous cet épais feuil - la ge bravous le so -

Soprano: leil et ses feux. gou - tons en - fin a - près fou - vra ge le re - pos qui

Tenor: leil et ses feux. gou - tons en - fin a - près fou - vra ge le re - pos qui

Bass: leil et ses feux. gou - tons en - fin a - près fou - vra ge le re - pos qui

Soprano: seul rend heu - reux. gou - tons en - fin a - près fou - vra ge le re -

Tenor: seul rend heu - reux. gou - tons en - fin a - près fou - vra ge le re -

Bass: seul rend heu - reux. gou - tons en - fin a - près fou - vra ge le re -

p *fp* *8va*

16

S. - pos - qui seul rend heu - reux, amis a - mis sous cet épais feuil - lage bravons -
 T. - pos qui seul - rend heu - reux, amis a - mis sous cet épais feuil - lage bravons -
 B. - pos qui seul rend heu - reux, amis a - mis sous cet épais feuil - lage bravons -

8^{va}

S. - le soleil et ses feux, amis a - mis sous cet épais feuil - la - ge bravons - le soleil et ses
 T. - le soleil et ses feux, amis a - mis sous cet épais feuil - la - ge bravons - le soleil et ses
 B. - le soleil et ses feux, amis a - mis sous cet épais feuil - la - ge bravons - le soleil et ses

S. feux, oui, le re - pos seul rend heu - reux, oui, le re - pos seul rend heu - reux.
 T. feux, oui, le re - pos seul rend heu - reux, oui, le re - pos seul rend heu - reux
 B. feux, oui, le re - pos seul rend heu - reux, oui, le re - pos seul rend heu - reux.

8^{va}

GUILLAUME, (regardant Yvonne)

La voi - là! quelle est jo - li - e

mais, mais de -

- puis quelle a mon cœur, il n'est plus dans ma vi - e ni re - pos ni de bon - heur,

GRÉOR

Sopranos
Tenors.
Basses.

A - mis sous cet épais feuil - la - ge, bravons le so -

A - mis sous cet épais feuil - la - ge, bravons le so -

A - mis sous cet épais feuil - la - ge, bravons le so -