

Ludwig Minkus and Léo Delibes

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La Source;

Fantastic Ballet in Three Acts
and Four Scenes,
by Charles Nutter
and Arthur Saint-Léon:

Piano Score

Introduced and Edited by

Robert Ignatius Letellier

**CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS**

P U B L I S H I N G

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Ludwig Minkus



Léo Delibes

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INTRODUCTION

LA SOURCE (The Spring)

The ballets Ludwig Minkus set to music span some thirty years of the nineteenth century (1860-90) and embody trends typical of the time. The first scores he wrote were for the last great dance master of the French Romantic School, Arthur Saint-Léon (1821-1870). Works like the Hungarian *Fiammetta*, the Russian/Polish *Le Poisson doré*, and the Persian *La Source* provide good examples of the type of fantastic ballets current in the 1850s and 1860s, where an everyday scenario is intersected by supernatural beings and sometimes an anthropomorphised nature. *Coppélia* (1870), Saint-Léon's last and greatest work with Léo Delibes, follows the same pattern, but with a rationalized supernatural.

The violinist, conductor and composer Aloysius Ludwig Minkus (23 March 1826—3 December 1917) was a subject of the Austrian Empire, Czech by birth. He received his musical education in Vienna, but his creative life was spent mostly in Russia. From 1853 to 1856 he directed the serf orchestra of the powerful Russian aristocrat Prince Yusupov, appeared as a violin soloist, and taught the violin. In 1861 he became a solo violinist at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, and conductor of the orchestra for ten years from 1862. For much of this time he was also ballet composer to the theatre. From 1866 he taught the violin at the Moscow Conservatory, and further served as Inspector to the Orchestras of the Imperial Theatres. In 1868 the choreographer Marius Petipa planned his ballet *Don Quixote* for the Bolshoi Theatre and Minkus was invited to compose the music. The ballet was an enormous success and led to Minkus being appointed Official Composer to the Imperial Russian Ballet—a position he held until it was discontinued in 1886. In 1872 he moved to St Petersburg in this role, and collaborated with Petipa on some further 16 ballets over the next 19 years, the most famous being *La Bayadère* (1877). Minkus left Russia to return to Vienna, possibly in the summer of 1891, where he lived in semi-retirement on a pension from the Tsar's treasury. He died in Vienna in 1917, at the age of 91.

This volume reproduces the music from *La Source*, the most famous of Minkus's early works with Saint-Léon, and an instance of the comparatively rare publication of the composer's work in his lifetime. It first appeared as:

—*La Source. Musique de Minkous (1er & 4me Tableaux) et Léo Delibes (2me & 3me Tableaux)* (Paris: L. Parent, 1867). Piano score (155pp.).

Later it was taken up by Henri Heugel:

—*La Source: ballet en 3 actes et 4 tableaux* (Paris: Heugel & fils, 1883, 1900, 1947). Piano score.

After the success of *Fiammetta/Néméa* Minkus was becoming known internationally. So when five years later the Paris Opéra ordered a new grand ballet from Saint-Léon to a libretto by Charles Nuitter (the Opéra archivist), Saint-Léon

involved Minkus in the project, securing for him a hand in the composition, giving him the first act and the second scene of the third act of this new work, *La Source*. The other two scenes (the second act and first scene of the third act) were entrusted to the young, unknown Léo Delibes, thirty at the time, who had drawn favourable attention to himself in the preparation of the ballet music for the première of Meyerbeer's posthumous *L'Africaine* in 1865.

The first performance of *La Source* on 12 November 1866 was great success for the young man, whose bold and colourful composition was praised at the expense of Minkus's subtler contribution which was universally dismissed as weaker. The ballet as a whole was also very successful, with 73 performances until 1876, although it actually made less in receipts than *Néméa* (6,750.37 fr.). Saint-Léon immediately began planning another work with Nuitter and Delibes, and one which would crown the young French's composer's success with triumph, *Coppélia*. This was premiered on 25 May 1870, the last of Saint-Léon's work, and the last great success of the French Romantic ballet at the Salle Le Peletier before the crisis of the Franco-Prussian War, and the end of the Second Empire.

La Source is a fantastic ballet in three acts and four scenes, with a scenario by Charles Nuitter and Arthur Saint-Léon, who also devised the choreography. The splendid sets were painted by Desplechin, Lavastre, Rube, and Chaperon, and the costumes designed by Loumier and Albert. It was first produced at the Théâtre Impérial de l'Opéra, Paris, 12 November 1866, with the principal dancers Guglielmina Salvioni (Naila), Eugénie Fiocre (Nouredda), Louis Mérante (Djemil), and L. Marquet (Morgab).

The association between Saint-Léon and his composers was strong, both in personal and professional terms—a remarkable and decisive factor for *La Source* which was largely created from a distance. The choreographer, during his sojourns in Russia, formed an affectionate friendship for Minkus, and seems to have had found working with him easy. Ivor Guest observes that: "He was accustomed to dictating requirements to Minkus, with whom he used to stay when visiting Moscow, and he was frequently making suggestions to Delibes." There was a closeness and harmony in the working relationships, attested to frequently in Saint-Léon's correspondence. The sense of an equal partnership is reflected in the affecting description of the collaborators on the night of the première of *La Source*, taking place in Paris hundreds of miles away. Writing to his special friend and the principal recipient of his letters, Charles Nuitter, Saint-Léon observed on 13 October 1866.

Last Monday we thought that *La Source* was being given, as we were working on the new ballet at Minkus's. From time to time we stopped and paced up and down.

Nuitter's scenario gave the ballet its Oriental setting, and was criticized for being too long: the second act should be halved, and much of the action condensed. "The final scenes are very well done, and as moving as the simple mime permits," it was observed.

The dancers drew favourable attention. The ballet was originally conceived for Adele Grantzow, but as she hurt her foot during rehearsals, and was then detained in St Petersburg for the Tsarevitch's wedding, Lucien Petipa and Charles Nuitter decided to pass on the role to Guglielma Salvioni. She was accomplished, but more limited as a soloist. The choreographical directions were sent on from Russia by Saint-Léon. *La France Musicale* reported: "The role of the Spring (Naila) is...very well filled by Mlle. Salvioni ...a most intelligent artist, whose dancing is full of fire and intrepidity,

and whose mime is most remarkable...M. Mérante plays Djemil. He is a conscientious artist. ..who knows how to invest his roles with their appropriate character and likeness." Saint-Léon was nonetheless anxious to have Salvioni replaced by Grantzow, who was famed for her *retraites sur pointes*. *La Source* was revived the following year with Grantzow, who came from Russia to take over the part of Naila; she performed with considerable success.

The two French dancers, Eugénie Fiocre and Léontine Beaugrand, also made a deep impression. Eugénie Fiocre, in the role of Nouredda, was a great success, especially in the Guzla dance. To Gautier she seemed "the prettiest blonde houri ever to have worn the bonnet and corset of pearls in the Mohammedan paradise. Her charming body shaded by light gauze specked with gold, is displayed with an exquisite grace in the *pas de la guzla*, one of the prettiest in the ballet." Other critics were less kind; one described her *pas* as "a kind of Oriental cancan" and was greatly shocked by her costume, which, he said, "could not have been more disgraceful." The young artist Edgar Degas was in the audience, and deeply taken by her beauty. His painting of her in the first act, sitting pensively by the spring, was to be the first of his many famous studies of the Paris Opéra ballet.

A sum of 33,446.21 francs was expended on the production, and most of this went on the sets. The most praised was that for the first and last scenes, designed by Desplechin and constructed under the guidance of Sacre, the chief machinist. It was largely formed by a high, realistic mountain built upon the stage, with a spring of real water gushing from its side. In the first act, this spring flowed, limpid and abundant, amid lush undergrowth and marvellous exotic flowers, bathed in the first rays of a morning sun simulated by electric light: when the curtain first went up, the set was applauded on its own account. In the last scene, the spring dried up, leaving nothing but a wasted crater at the foot of the bare, arid rock. Another scenic effect had been successfully employed in the third scene, in Morgab's tent, when the gipsy had thrown a handful of herbs into her brazier and a bluish mist had been seen to rise—an illusion created by raising a gauze curtain."

As regards the music, the first and last scenes were composed by Ludwig Minkus, and the second and third by Delibes. Léo Delibes (21 February 1836 – 16 January 1891) had studied composition at the Conservatoire under Adolphe Adam, and had entered the Opéra as second chorus-master in 1865. He excelled initially as a composer of lighter works, writing sparkling operettas in the style of his teacher Adam. His first operetta, *Deux sous de charbon* (Two sous-worth of coal) was written in 1856, when he was just 19, for the Folies-Nouvelles. He found his greatest success in ballet with *Coppélia* (1870) and *Sylvia* (1876), and in the serious opera *Lakmé* (1883), which deals with the love of a British officer and the daughter of a Brahmin priest in mid-19th century India. His ballet music was much admired by other composers, including Tchaikovsky, who rated *Sylvia* more highly than his own *Swan Lake*.

Delibes's contribution to the score of *La Source*, his first essay at ballet music, brought him immediate attention, and was noted for its many delightful melodies. In Jouvin's opinion, his music was "vivacious and especially lively", and contrasted effectively with the plaintive melodies of Minkus. Gautier wrote that Delibes "has no less talent by being a Frenchman, and has acquitted himself well of the task set him. We seem to recognize in the score some reminiscences, perhaps not sufficiently disguised, of Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream* music. Nevertheless they fit in there very well: is not a ballet a mimed symphony?"

"The style of the two composers," observed the critic of *La France Musicale* (18 November 1866), "is essentially different and easily recognizable at a first hearing. M.

Minkus's music has a vague, indolent, and melancholic character, full of grace and languor. That of M. Delibes, fresher and more rhythmic, is much more complicated in orchestration, and sometimes a little more ordinary. I should add that this difference in style is perfectly justified by the: contrasting character of the two parts of the ballet."

The critic of the *Ménestrel* declared that "the first act, despite several pretty details, seemed a little thin, but the music of the last scene contains some charming and often very expressive melodies. The second act is brilliant and does great credit to M. Delibes; it is certainly the most successful and most noteworthy portion; the: whole of the score could have been entrusted to the young composer, and this will doubtless be done on another occasion."

The first recording of the complete score in 1990 allowed for a more balanced assessment, with a recent critic commenting on Minkus's "well-crafted music well suited to the story" (Noël Goodwin).

Minkus's contribution to *La Source* reveals an instrumentation that is anything but commonplace. The shimmering colours and consistently delicate scoring, with scurrying strings, rapid staccato woodwind writing and diaphanous textures recall the heyday of the fairy music of early- and mid-German Romanticism (Weber's *Oberon*, Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Nicolai's *Merry Wives of Windsor*). There is a sense of instrumental bravura: in all of Minkus's ballets the violin solos, like that for the *pas de la Guzla* in *La Source*, indicate the intuition of a virtuoso. The impact of this careful application of the orchestral palette is reinforced by a limited but effective use of recurring themes. Each ballet consistently identifying a key factor in this way. The shimmering arpeggiated theme of the Spring and the brusque motif of the its fate (through the malice of Morgab) shape the music of *La Source*. This is underscored by a purposeful application of tonality, with *La Source* dominated by B-flat major, the tonal métier of the Spring in its original untrammelled naturalness..

Other Versions

Arthur Saint-Léon arranged a new version entitled *The Lily* for Adele Grantzow. *Le Lys*, ballet in 4 acts, was first performed in St Petersburg on 21 October/2 November 1869. Saint-Léon moved the action from Persia to China, but the music and dances were mostly borrowed from *La Source*. It was the first ballet which Grantzow created, and she was provided with the opportunity of dancing out a melody on a specially invented "Chinese" musical instrument. Saint-Léon's correspondence contains some record of his collaboration with Minkus on *Le Lys*, and a note on the success of the premiere:

My ballet [*Le Lys*] is where it was when I left it, and much has been forgotten. Minkus is here and now I must press on with it. (14 September 1869)

Yesterday, 2 November, was the première of my ballet *Le Lys* for the return of Grantzow. 400 bouquets greeted our ballerina on her entrance in the second act...Minkus's music is very good. Scenery and costumes were brilliant. No other ballet has ever caused me such trouble. I am worn out and very happy to have finished. (3 November 1869)

Produced in Italy under the title *La Sorgente*, and at the Viennese Court Opera as *Naila* in 1878, *The Spring* has also had several more recent revivals: by A. Koppini at St Petersburg in 1902, by N. Sergeyev as a farewell evening for Agrippina Vaganova at St Petersburg in 1916, and again, with choreography by Vaganova and Ponomaryov, at Leningrad in 1925. Léo Staats used the music (in an arrangement by Henri Busser) for dances in his *Soirée de fête* at the Paris Opéra in 1928. Separate

versions of the *pas de deux* were arranged by John Cranko for Stuttgart in 1964 and by Balanchine for the new York City Ballet in 1968.

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Synopsis

Act 1

A spring flowing amidst the rocks of a mountain defile

Naila, the spirit of a spring in a mythical Persia, is protected by the hunter Djemil, who prevents the gypsy Morgab from polluting the stream with poisonous plants. Djemil falls in love with the lovely girl Noureda, and picks a beautiful flower from a precipitous crag for her sake, refusing a reward but daring to lift her veil to see her lovely face. To punish the offence, her brother ties him up with rushes and condemns him to die of thirst beside the spring. Naila sends the waters of the stream over Djemil's bonds and sets him free, and although she reproaches him for having picked her magic flower, promises to help him win his loved one.

Act 2

The Khan's palace

Accompanied by Morgab, Noureda arrives at the palace of the Khan, her promised husband. They are joined by Djemil who, with his enchanted flower, conjures up a spring from which Naila emerges. As soon as he sees her, the Khan prefers her to Noureda. The rejected girl swears to avenge herself with the help of Morgab.

Act 3

The mountain defile

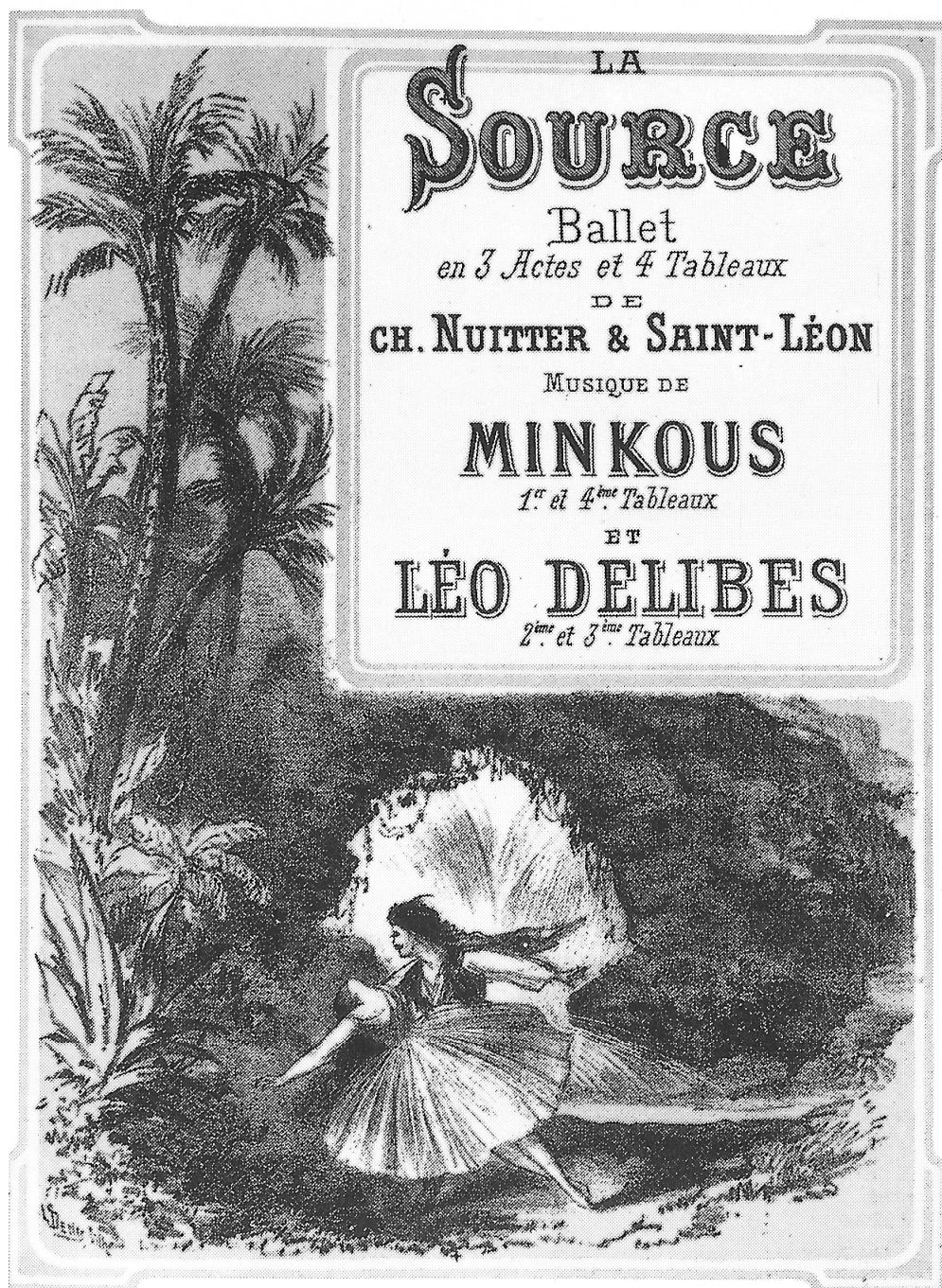
Once more Djemil offers his love to Noureda, but her brother interrupts them and tries to kill him. He is again saved by Naila, who bids him flee with Noureda, although the water spirit, desolate that her love is unrequited, warns him that Noureda does not care for him. He begs her to use the magic flower to make the girl fall in love with him, and Naila, well knowing that her life is bound up with that of the flower, sacrifices herself by hanging it over Noureda's heart, which at last warms towards Djemil. Naila grows pale and slowly dies as the jet of water from the spring ceases to flow.



Arthur Saint-Léon



Charles Nutter



LA SOURCE

Ballet en 3 Actes et 4 Tableaux

DE

CH. NUITTER & SAINT-LÉON

Musique de

MINKOUS & LÉO DELIBES

PERSONNAGES

NAÏLA, <i>Re de la Source</i>	MM ^{mes} {	SALVIONI
		GRANZOW
		R. ^a SANGALLI
NOUREDDE,	MM ^{mes}	E. FIOCRE
MORGAB, <i>Bohémienne</i>		L. MARQUET
ZAEL, <i>Lutin</i>		SANLAVILLE
DADJÉ, <i>Favorite du Khan</i>		BARATTE
DJELMA, <i>Suivante de Nouredde</i>		ALINE
DJEMIL,	MM ^{rs}	MERANTE
MOZDOCK, <i>Frère de Nouredde</i>		CORALLI
LE KHAN,		DAUTY
SINDJAR, <i>Serviteur du Khan</i>		CORNET
ISMAÏL,	<i>id</i>	PLUQUE

*Lutins, Éphémères, Papillons, Insectes, Fleurs, Farfadets, etc. Circassiens, Ecuyers,
Esclaves, Serviteurs du Khan, etc. Circassiennes, Favorites, etc.*

LA SOURCE

Musique de

MINKOUS (1^{er} & 4^{me} Tableaux) et LÉO DELIBES (2^{me} & 3^{me} Tableaux)

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LA SOURCE

ACTE PREMIER.

MINKOUS.

*En défilé au milieu de hautes
montagnes. Au fond, des flancs
d'un rocher s'échappe le filet
argentin d'une source.*

PRÉLUDE.

Maestoso. Fl.

PIANO.

Bons Cors. f

ff TUTTI.

f

ff

p

H^b

Cl.

Bons

Tromb. Alto, Basse.

Fl.

Timb.

Basse.

do.

Cl.

Fl.

Cors.

Bon

Un poco più mosso.

rit.

Fl.

ten.

cantabile.

Cl.

Bons

Quat.

Alto.

Vlle

The first system of musical notation consists of a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The treble staff contains a melodic line with a slur over the first two measures and a fermata over the third. The bass staff contains a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes with a slur over the first two measures and a fermata over the third.

The second system of musical notation continues the piece. The treble staff has a slur over the first two measures and a fermata over the third. The bass staff has a slur over the first two measures and a fermata over the third. The word "cre" is written above the treble staff, and "scen" is written above the bass staff.

The third system of musical notation continues the piece. The treble staff has a slur over the first two measures and a fermata over the third. The bass staff has a slur over the first two measures and a fermata over the third. The word "do" is written above the treble staff, and "dim." is written above the bass staff.

The fourth system of musical notation continues the piece. The treble staff has a slur over the first two measures and a fermata over the third. The bass staff has a slur over the first two measures and a fermata over the third.

The fifth system of musical notation concludes the piece. The treble staff has a slur over the first two measures and a fermata over the third. The bass staff has a slur over the first two measures and a fermata over the third. The word "cre" is written above the treble staff, "scen" is written above the bass staff, and "do" is written above the treble staff. The word "RIDFAU." is written above the treble staff, and "f diminuendo." is written above the bass staff.

N° 1.

INTRODUCTION FANTASTIQUE.

Vivace.

PIANO.

The musical score is written for piano and consists of five systems of staves. The first system includes a treble staff with a key signature of one flat and a 3/8 time signature, and a bass staff. The treble staff begins with a *pp* (pianissimo) dynamic marking. Above the treble staff, the instrument is identified as "Cl. Bop." (Clarinet in B-flat). To the right of the first system, the word "Cor." (Cornet) is written. The second system continues the melodic and harmonic development. The third system features a more active treble staff with sixteenth-note patterns. The fourth system shows a sustained bass line with a long note in the left hand. The fifth system concludes the introduction with a final melodic flourish in the treble and a sustained bass line.

pte Fl.

cresc.

8 *8* **Lento.** *3* *Fl* *3*

Cl. dolce. *2.*

rit. **Vivace.**

Vlles div.

1^{re} Fl.

cresc.

8-----1

8-----1

cre - - - - - scen - - - - - do

poco a poco

f f p

2^{me} Fl.

Timb

This musical score is for a piece titled "La Source". It is written for piano and includes parts for several other instruments. The score is organized into six systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clef) for the piano. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor), and the time signature is 4/4. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, trills (tr), and dynamic markings like *f* (forte) and *p* (piano). The first system is marked with a "1^{re} Fl." (First Flute) and a "1^{re} Violon" (First Violon). The second system is marked with a "1^{re} Violon" and a "2^e Violon" (Second Violon). The third system is marked with a "2^e Violon". The fourth system is marked with a "2^e Violon". The fifth system is marked with a "2^e Violon". The sixth system is marked with a "2^e Violon". The score also includes a section for "Alto. Vlle" (Alto Violle) and a section for "Cl." (Clarinet) and "Cor. B." (Cornet B). The score is divided into sections by a dashed line, with the first section marked "8" and the second section marked "8". The score ends with a "Cre" (Crescendo) marking.

1^{re} Fl.

8

1^{re} Violon

2^e Violon

Alto. Vlle

8

Cl.

Cor. B.

Cre

- *scen* - *do*

f *f*>

Allegretto.

p cantabile.
Harpes.

First system of musical notation. The treble staff contains a melody with a trill marked 'x' and a triplet marked '3'. The bass staff features a triplet marked '3'. Instrumentation labels 'Fl' and 'Cl' are present above the treble staff, and 'V^{ns}' is written above the bass staff.

Second system of musical notation. The treble staff includes a triplet marked '3', a half note marked 'Hb', a triplet marked '3', a second flute part marked '2^e Fl.', and a triplet marked '3'. The bass staff has a triplet marked '3' and the word 'V^{ns}' written below it.

Third system of musical notation. The treble staff features a triplet marked '3', a triplet marked '3', a triplet marked '3', and a triplet marked '3'. The bass staff contains a triplet marked '3' and a triplet marked '3'.

Fourth system of musical notation. The treble staff includes a triplet marked '3', a triplet marked '3', a triplet marked '3', and a triplet marked '3'. The bass staff contains a triplet marked '3' and a triplet marked '3'.

Fifth system of musical notation. The treble staff begins with a forte dynamic 'f' and a decrescendo hairpin, followed by a 'dim.' marking and a 'dolce' marking. The bass staff includes the word 'Harpos.' and a triplet marked '3'. The system concludes with a triplet marked '3'.

Sixth system of musical notation. The treble staff contains a triplet marked '3', a triplet marked '3', a triplet marked '3', and a triplet marked '3'. The bass staff features a triplet marked '3', a triplet marked '3', a triplet marked '3', and a triplet marked '3'.

Vivace

cresc.

8-measure rest

Lento.

c. dolce.

2-measure rest

rit.

2-measure rest

Alto, Basse.

N° 2.

L'ÉPHÉMÈRE. SCÈNE DANSÉE.

Andante.

Fl. Quart. *p* Cl. *pp* Bong.

PIANO.

Fl. Bong. *f* *dim.* *pp*

All^o moderato.

pp riten. *f* Fl. *p* Quart.

8

8

Allegretto.

ple Fl. Vons

Quat. *p*

Fl. Cl.

Triang.

Triang.

8

p

Cr.