

Daniel-François-Esprit Auber:
La Fiancée du roi de Garbe

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Edited and Introduced by

Robert Ignatius Letellier

**CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS**

P U B L I S H I N G

Daniel-François-Esprit Auber: *La Fiancée du roi de Garbe*,
Edited and Introduced by Robert Ignatius Letellier

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D. F. E. AUBER.

D. F. E. Auber. A photograph from the last years

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INTRODUCTION

La Fiancée du roi de Garbe, an opéra-comique in three acts, with libretto by Eugène Scribe and Jules-Henri Vernoy de Saint-Georges, was premiered at the Opéra-Comique (Deuxième salle Favart) on 11 January 1864. The subject is borrowed from a story by Boccaccio, which had been turned into a short erotic tale in verse by La Fontaine. It has an oriental setting; ‘Garbe’ is an Arabic word for the West, suggesting that this may originally have been an Arab tale before being taken up by Boccaccio. The ‘King of the West’ could refer to the King of Moorish Spain, or of the Algarve, or possibly even of Morocco. In the libretto it has an unidentified Iberian character.

In La Fontaine's tale, Alaciél, the daughter of Zaïr, the sultan of Alexandria, is to marry the King of Garbe. Alaciél sets out to sea on her journey accompanied by Hispal, a young noble who is in love with her. They are attacked by pirates, jump overboard, and are washed up on a desert shore. Hispal becomes Alaciél's lover. This is only the beginning of her adventures. The young princess acquires seven more lovers—in La Fontaine's words she “passes through the hands of eight men”—before finally reaching her destination, where there is a happy ending, and the King of Garbe accepts her as a virgin: “Veuve de huit galants, il la prit pour pucelle”.

Scribe and Saint-Georges adapted this *conte* to the mores of the time, and the exigencies of the stage. It becomes a picaresque tale built around Alaciél's journey from Garbe, where she marries the king (in act 1), through various adventures to her home to Egypt (in act 2), and back to Garbe (in act 3), attended all the while by the king's dashing nephew Don Alvar, with his entourage of the royal barber Figurina, and his cupbearer Truxillo. The pirates, and various characters from Arabic folklore (the imam and the hermit), feature in the central desert act, while the outer two are set in the Occidental royal court of Garbe.

This was the last collaboration between Auber and Scribe, terminated, after the death of the latter, by Saint-Georges. Auber left Scribe and Saint-Georges to fight the literary battle about the libretto, the notoriously difficult challenge of arranging a famous *conte* for the lyric stage. The work was treated by both authors and musician in the manner of an operetta, apart from the fourth tableau, the scene of the pirates, which has the dramatic character of an operatic finale.

The overture opens with the theme of the finale. In act 1, the first tableau contains Figurina's opening aria (“Voici la barbière”), a duet for King Bobolin and his barber (“Dépêchons nous!”), the couplets for the page Raphael (“Ah! Le charmant pays!”), the romance of Don Alvar (“Tiens, regarde ce divin portrait! Tout bas je puis te dire”) and the quartet that follows (“J'entends que l'on publie en chaque carrefour”). The tenor romance written for Don Alvar, with its veiled and coloured accompaniment, with the murmuring bows of the strings, seems like a rustle of wings. The second tableau depicts the marriage of Alaciél, and is remarkable for its sprightly conclusion “Allons, bravons les dangers”. Figurina's aside in the first finale: “Notre roi se marie?” enthused the public.

Act 2 of *La Fiancée du roi de Garbe* shows Saint-Georges trying to bring in various elements from the source, resulting in scenes that are badly integrated. The composer, on the other hand, derived positive inspiration from some of the characters. He was especially taken by Alaciél and her companion, in their tent set up in the

desert for them by Don Alvar. He set this scene to music with his familiar spirit, youthfulness of melody and finesse of harmony. He provided a *nocturne* in B-flat major, a trio sung by Alvar, Figurina and Alaciel (“Allons! Dormons”), Alvar’s ravishing serenade (“Ô reine de beauté”) that is expanded into both trio and septet, and the lovely *chanson* for two sopranos (Alaciel and Figurina) (“Va, brise chérie, dans notre patrie”). The *nocturne* is in the style proper to a musician—a reverie, a poem totally Oriental in feel. In the trio, Auber produced the most admirable page of his score. Act 2 of the opera, the most feeble part of the libretto, comes across musically as the best section of the score.

Act 3 contains the scene of the pages (chorus “Voltigeons, compagnons, Et rions et chantons!”), Truxillo’s *couplets* (“Grâce, pardon, pour cette fois!”) and Figurina’s aria (“Non, je n’y croisais pas, si ce maudit érin...Ah! Que de dangers en voyage!”).

The cast were: Victor Prilleux (Bobolin, the King of Garbe); Valérie Tual (Alaciel); Léon Achard (Don Alvar); Alexandrine Cico (Figurina); Charles-Louis Sainte-Foy (Truxillo); Davoust (the Sultan of Egypt); Charles-Amable Bataille (Kouli-Rouka, a Malay pirate); Charles-François Duvernoy (Hatchi-Bounan, an imam); Elias Nathan (Ali-Caphar, a hermit); and Zoé Béla and Augusta Colas (Raphael and Paer, pages of the king). The opera did not endure beyond a first flush of enthusiasm. It was in the repertoire for one year, 1864, and numbered 33 performances.



Jules-Henri Vernoy de Saint-Georges

LA FIANCÉE DU ROI DE GARBE

PAROLES DE

E. SCRIBE ET DE SAINT-GEORGES

MUSIQUE DE

D. F. E. AUBER

Personnages.

BABOLIN 1^{er}, Roi de Garbe.
DON ALVAR, son neveu.
FIGARINA, sa barbière.
TRUXILLO, son échanton.
LE SOUDAN D'ÉGYPTÉ.
ALACIEL, sa fille.
ZAÏDA, confidente d'Alaciel.
KOULI-ROUKA, corsaire Malais.
HATCHI-BOUSSAN, iman.
ALI-CAPHAR, anachorète.
RAPHAËL, page de Babolin.
PAËR, autre page.
Femmes esclaves.
Cour de Babolin 1^{er}.
Cour du Soudan d'Égypte.
Corsaires.
Pages du Roi de Garbe.

Acteurs.

MM. PRILLEUX.
ACHARD.
M^{lle} CICO.
MM. SAINTE-FOY.
DAVOUST.
M^{lle} TUAL.
M^{me} DECROIX.
MM. BATAILLE.
DUVERNOY.
NATHAN.
M^{lle} BÉLIA.
M^{me} COLAS.

AVIS. — Vu les traités internationaux, les auteurs et les éditeurs de cette partition se réservent
le droit de représentations, réimpressions et traductions à l'étranger.

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LA
FIANCÉE DU ROI DE GARBE

Opéra Comique en 3 Actes et 6 Tableaux.

Paroles
de **E. SCRIBE** et de **S^t GEORGES**.

Musique
de **D. F. E. AUBER**.

(126 = ♩) **All^o maestoso.** **OUVERTURE.**

PIANO. *ff*

This page of musical notation for piano consists of six systems of staves. The notation is written in a historical style, likely from the 19th century. The first system shows a treble and bass staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 3/4. The music features a complex texture with many beamed notes and rests. The second system continues this texture. The third system also continues the complex texture. The fourth system introduces a dynamic marking of *crescendo.* in the bass staff. The fifth system features a dynamic marking of *f* (forte) in the bass staff and a dynamic marking of *ff* (fortissimo) in the treble staff. The sixth system concludes the page with a final chord in the bass staff.

The image displays a page of a musical score, specifically page 5, for the piece 'La Fiancée du roi de Garbe'. The score is written for piano and features six systems of music, each consisting of a grand staff (treble and bass clefs joined by a brace). The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/8. The first four systems are marked with a 'C' time signature. The fifth system begins with the tempo instruction 'All? non troppo.' followed by a quarter note and the number 96, indicating a tempo of 96 beats per minute. The sixth system includes a piano dynamic marking 'p'. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, accidentals, and dynamic markings.

This page of musical notation for piano consists of six systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The notation includes various musical elements:

- System 1:** Starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The right hand features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand provides a steady eighth-note accompaniment.
- System 2:** Continues the melodic development in the right hand, with some sixteenth-note passages. The left hand maintains the accompaniment.
- System 3:** The right hand has a more active melodic line with slurs and ties. The left hand continues with the eighth-note accompaniment.
- System 4:** Features a series of sixteenth-note chords in the right hand, creating a textured effect. The left hand continues with the accompaniment.
- System 5:** The right hand has a melodic line with some slurs. The left hand continues with the accompaniment. A piano (*p*) dynamic is marked in the right hand.
- System 6:** The right hand has a melodic line with slurs. The left hand continues with the accompaniment. A piano (*p*) dynamic is marked in the right hand.

This musical score is for a piano piece, likely from the opera 'La Fiancée du roi de Garbe'. It consists of six systems of music, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The time signature is 2/4. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The first system features a complex, rapid melody in the right hand. The second system begins with a forte (*ff*) dynamic marking. The third system includes a piano (*p*) dynamic marking. The fourth system shows a change in the bass line. The fifth system continues the melodic development. The sixth system concludes with a final cadence, marked with a double bar line and repeat signs.

This page of musical notation for piano consists of six systems of staves. The first system is in 6/8 time and includes dynamic markings *p*, *pp*, *cresc.*, and *p*. The second system continues the melodic and harmonic development. The third system features a *cresc.* marking followed by a *p* marking. The fourth system shows a continuation of the musical themes. The fifth system includes a *pp* marking towards the end. The sixth system concludes the page with a final cadence. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, beams, and slurs, indicating a complex and expressive piece.

This page of the musical score for 'La Fiancée du roi de Garbe' contains six systems of piano accompaniment. The first three systems are in 3/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The fourth system, marked 'Allegro. (104 = ♩)', changes to 2/4 time. The fifth and sixth systems continue in 2/4 time. The notation includes various melodic lines, chords, and dynamic markings such as *ff* (fortissimo).

Allegro. (104 = ♩)

The image displays a page of musical notation for piano, consisting of six systems of staves. The first three systems show a complex, fast-paced melody in the right hand with dense chordal accompaniment in the left hand. The fourth system is marked **Allegro. (104 = ♩)** and shows a change in tempo and meter to 2/4. The final two systems continue the piece with similar fast-paced melodic lines and dense accompaniment.

This page of musical notation, page 11 of 'La Fiancée du roi de Garbe', features six systems of piano accompaniment. Each system consists of a treble staff and a bass staff. The first system shows a treble staff with eighth-note patterns and a bass staff with chords. The second system begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic marking and features a more active treble staff with sixteenth-note runs. The third system continues with similar textures. The fourth system shows a treble staff with sustained chords and a bass staff with moving lines. The fifth system includes a key signature change to one sharp (F#) in the treble staff. The sixth system concludes with a key signature change to two sharps (F# and C#) in the treble staff. The notation is detailed, with many beamed notes and complex chordal structures.

This image displays a page of musical notation, likely a score for piano, consisting of six systems of staves. Each system contains a treble staff and a bass staff, connected by a brace on the left. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The first system begins with a treble staff starting on a G4 and a bass staff with a G3. The second system features a forte (ff) dynamic marking. The third system includes a mezzo-forte (f) marking. The fourth system includes a piano (p) marking. The fifth and sixth systems continue the musical composition with various note values and rests. The page is numbered 12 in the top left corner, and the composer's name, Daniel-François-Esprit Auber, is printed at the top center.

This page contains a musical score for the piece "La Fiancée du roi de Garbe". The score is written for piano and is organized into six systems, each consisting of a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The first system begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic marking. The notation includes various musical elements such as eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and slurs. There are several measures marked with a bracket and the number "8", indicating an eight-measure phrase. The score is printed in black ink on a white background.

This page of musical notation, numbered 14, is attributed to Daniel-François-Esprit Auber. It contains six systems of piano accompaniment, each consisting of a treble and a bass staff. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The notation includes various musical elements such as notes, rests, and ornaments. The first system features a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a rhythmic accompaniment. The second system shows a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a rhythmic accompaniment. The third system features a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a rhythmic accompaniment. The fourth system shows a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a rhythmic accompaniment. The fifth system features a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a rhythmic accompaniment. The sixth system shows a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a rhythmic accompaniment. The notation is written in a clear, legible style, typical of 19th-century musical manuscripts.

Eh c'est elle qui est capable,... comment cela?..

N° 1.

AIR.

13

Allegretto. (84 = ♩)

FIGARINA.

PIANO.

p



biè - re Qui, joyeuse et fiè - re, Tient tout
sous ses lois; Car sans pé - ri - phra - se, C'est el - le qui
ra - se Le plus grand des rois!
Du cô - té de la bar -
_be, on le dit, Et c'est u -

- ne max - i - - - me en cré -

- dit, Du cô - té de la bar - be,

est la tou - te puis - san - ce. Mais

grâ - ce à ma sci - en - ce, Cet - te puis - san - ce -

- la, la! la! la! la! Dans l'instant tombe - ra! Voi - ci la bar -

a tempo.

ritornello.

biè - re Qui, joy - euse et fiè - re, Tient tout

sous ses lois; Car sans po - ri - phra - se, C'est el - le qui

ra - se le plus grand des rois

Quel - le no - ble vi - - e! Oui cha -

cun en - vi - - e Mon

cresc.

sort — for — tu — né;

Car sous — ma main blan — che S'in —

— cli — ne et se pen — che et se pen — che, Un

front couron — né! Voi — ci la bar — biè — re Qui, jo — yeuse et

a tempo.

fiè - re, tient — 8 tout — sous ses lois; Car,

sans pé - ri - phra - se, C'est el - le qui ra - se Le plus

grand — des Rois!