

Daniel-François-Esprit Auber:
Jenny Bell

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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

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D.F.E. Auber. Painting after a photograph by Nadar

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INTRODUCTION

Jenny Bell, an opéra-comique in three acts with libretto by Eugène Scribe, was premiered at the Opéra-Comique (Deuxième salle Favart) on 2 June 1855. It is set in eighteenth-century London. Lord Mortimer, the son of the Duke of Greenwich, is in love with the celebrated diva, Jenny Bell, but his father has forbidden him to see her. When the Duke asks Jenny to refuse to admit his son, she recognizes him as the man who helped her, many years ago, when she was a starving waif, and promises not to see Mortimer. In Act 2 Mortimer gains entry to Jenny's home by passing himself off as a composer. She dismisses the goldsmith Dodson, who has been paying court to her, to keep her promise to the young man and examine his opera. Greenwich, who has caught a glimpse of his son in Jenny's anteroom, reproaches her, but she asks the Duke to hide in a closet to watch how she will discourage this admirer.

Jenny looks at the opera and tells Mortimer that it is no good, whereupon he reveals his true identity and declares his love, but is rebuffed. When he faints, she leaves, and the Duke tries to console him. Jenny then attempts to cure Mortimer's infatuation by reading to her guests all the love letters she has received, and finally accepts diamonds and a proposal from Dodson. Mortimer challenges him, curses Jenny, and leaves. Act 3 opens in the Guildhall, where Jenny is to sing for the Lord Mayor. She is highly despondent and refuses either to sing or to receive Dodson. The Duke sees that Jenny really loves his son, and contritely gives his consent for their marriage.

The model for Jenny Bell was the famous Swedish soprano Jenny Lind, although she never sang the role. The piece is well constructed, with interesting situations and well-handled dialogue. The secondary characters of Henriette, Jenny Bell's chamber maid, George Leslie and Dobson are imaginatively integrated into the principal action. Motifs of an English provenance are introduced by the composer: firstly the cantilena which begins the overture and is later repeated in the vocal parts; and secondly the national anthems "God save the king" and "Rule Britannia".

The overture derives its vivacity from an alternation of galop and waltz. The opening galop is a D-major *allegro* from the act 2 finale. This contrasts with the waltz, a hesitant motif given jerking character stops and starts, and derived from Jenny's aria at the beginning of the last act, in which she reflects on her trepidation at singing before the Royal family and a large audience while wrestling with her own inner conflict. This opposition of circumstances is mirrored in the overture by the contrasting use of D major and F major (in the last finale Jenny's solo passage is in B-flat major, the key associated with her). The opening galop is repeated in F major. A new galop theme in D major then leads into the reprise of "Chanter, ô terreurs", now in B-flat, followed by the first galop in the same key. The second galop, now in D major, sharpens the tone of the final section before the short *presto-stretta* where a serious note is struck by a descending series of seven diminished seventh chords, aiming to return to B-flat but not actually doing so.

Also of interest are the chambermaid's couplets on the use of rouge by actresses ("Au théâtre, le secret"); the Goldsmith's syllabic couplets; and the lament whereby Jenny Bell used to move the hearts of passers-by in her girlhood ("Dans la rue, à peine éclairée"). Auber responded with real feeling to this situation. His melodies, almost

always in the major mode, are sometimes spiced with chromatic alterations for generating emotional effect—as here in this pathetic begging song, where the sharpened fourth resolves a half-step downwards to the natural fourth degree of the scale—and the augmented triad is used to express deep emotional feeling (as by many French composers as late as Faure). The effect is sustained by the use of syncopation and the cross-rhythms typical of Halévy. The duet between Lord Greenwich and Jenny Bell is rich in motifs; the intercalated tyrolienne (“Ah! De la fauvette”) very graceful. The lovely tenor romance “À sa voix, à sa vue” with the theme of “God save the king” is followed by an ensemble that concludes the first act with real feeling.

In act 2 the principal piece is the big duet in which Mortimer, under the pseudonym of William, declares his love for Jenny. Auber treated this complicated situation with the hand of a master used to overcoming difficulties. Use of chromatic chords as seasonings of an otherwise bland texture now develops into passages of harmonic richness, as at the phrase “...toujours me fait rire”, with its use of the Neapolitan sixth instead of the expected tonic cadential chord.

The score of this work is one of the most elaborate and richest in variety of combinations among the composer’s *opéras-comiques*. One has only to consider the most unusual aria for the baritone “Le bruit est pour le fat” whose subject is a sentence borrowed from the comedy *La Coquette corrigée*. The variations on “Rule Britannia”, with sparing use of non-imitative counterpoint as Jenny sings brilliantly over the cantus firmus of the anthem, close the opera brilliantly. This is a work which should be revived and better understood. The original cast were: Caroline Duprez (Jenny Bell); Edmund-Jules Ricquier-Delaunay (Mortimer); Jean-Baptist Faure (the Duke of Greenwich); Charles-Louis Sainte-Foy (Dodson); Joseph-Antoine-Charles Couderc (George Leslie); and Sophie Boulart (Henriette, Jenny’s maid). The opera was only in the repertoire for one year, 1855, with a total of 36 performances. *Jenny Bell* was performed in Brussels and Hamburg, but never in London.



Jean-Baptist Faure, creator of Lord Greenwich

Théâtre impérial de l'Opéra-Comique.

JENNY BELL

OPÉRA-COMIQUE EN 3 ACTES,

POÈME DE

M. EUGÈNE SCRIBE,

MUSIQUE DE

D. F. E. AUBER.

Partition pour Piano et Chant

Réduite par VAUTHROT.

Prix : 15 fr. net.

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JENNY BELL,

Musique de D. F. E. AUBER.

PERSONNAGES.	ACTEURS.
JENNY BELL.	M ^{lle} Caroline Duprez.
HENRIETTE.	M ^{lle} Boulart.
LE DUC DE GREENWICH.	M. Faure.
LORD MORTIMER.	M. Riquier-Delaunay.
GEORGES LESLIE.	M. Couderc.
DODSON.	M. Sainte-Foy.

CATALOGUE DES MORCEAUX.

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La mise en scène exacte de cet ouvrage est rédigée avec le plus grand soin et publiée par M. L. PALIANTI, régisseur du Théâtre impérial de l'Opéra-Comique.

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JENNY BELL

Opéra comique en 3 actes.

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

OUVERTURE

PIANO

Allegro. (126 = ♩)

f

Ped

ff

Ped

Ped

ff

Ped

ff

Ped

ff

All° non troppo (152 = ♩)

p

This page of the musical score for "Jenny Bell" contains seven systems of piano accompaniment. The music is written for piano in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first system includes a dynamic marking of *p* (piano) and a first ending bracket labeled 8 and 5. The subsequent systems are marked with a repeat sign and a first ending bracket labeled 8. The notation features a variety of chords, including triads and dyads, and melodic lines in both the treble and bass staves. The piece concludes with a final cadence in the seventh system.

4

1.º tempo.

p

Ped

Φ

Ped

Ped

p

p

dolce.

cresc.

poco rit

a tempo

p

tr

Ped

p 1° tempo.

All° non troppo

This page of musical notation for "Jenny Bell" consists of seven systems of piano accompaniment. Each system is written for a grand piano, with a treble staff and a bass staff. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 2/4. The notation includes a variety of musical elements: chords, arpeggios, and melodic lines. The first system shows a simple harmonic progression with chords in the right hand and single notes in the left. The second system introduces more complex chordal textures and arpeggiated figures. The third system features a more active right hand with sixteenth-note patterns. The fourth system continues with complex chordal textures and arpeggiated figures. The fifth system shows a more active right hand with sixteenth-note patterns. The sixth system features a more active right hand with sixteenth-note patterns. The seventh system concludes the page with a final chordal texture and arpeggiated figures.

8

p

1.^o tempo.

p

Ped

p

p

p

p

p

p

p

p

p

p

p

p

p

p

p

p

p

p

p

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p

p

Ped

p

m. g.

m. d.

dolce.

p

poco rit.

The image displays a page of musical notation for piano, consisting of six systems of staves. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The notation includes various musical elements such as dynamics, tempo markings, and articulation.

The first system begins with the tempo marking *p a tempo.* and features a series of chords in the bass and melodic lines in the treble.

The second system continues the melodic and harmonic development, with a prominent eighth-note pattern in the bass.

The third system shows a continuation of the melodic lines, with a series of chords in the bass.

The fourth system features a series of chords in the bass and a melodic line in the treble.

The fifth system includes a dynamic marking *f* (forte) and features a series of chords in the bass and a melodic line in the treble.

The sixth system concludes the page with a series of chords in the bass and a melodic line in the treble.

This page of musical notation for "Jenny Bell" consists of six systems of piano accompaniment. Each system is written for a grand piano, with a treble staff and a bass staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *p* and *f*.

- System 1:** The treble staff features a series of eighth-note chords and a melodic line. The bass staff provides a steady accompaniment with eighth-note chords.
- System 2:** The treble staff continues with a melodic line and chords. The bass staff has a more active accompaniment with eighth-note chords.
- System 3:** The treble staff features a series of eighth-note chords. The bass staff has a steady accompaniment with eighth-note chords.
- System 4:** The treble staff continues with a melodic line and chords. The bass staff has a steady accompaniment with eighth-note chords. A dynamic marking of *p* (piano) is present.
- System 5:** The treble staff features a series of eighth-note chords. The bass staff has a steady accompaniment with eighth-note chords.
- System 6:** The treble staff continues with a melodic line and chords. The bass staff has a steady accompaniment with eighth-note chords. A dynamic marking of *f* (forte) is present.

This musical score is for a piano piece, likely from a 19th-century French repertoire. It consists of six systems of staves, each with a treble and bass clef. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The notation includes various musical elements such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The first system shows a complex melodic line in the treble and a more rhythmic bass line. The second system continues this pattern with some changes in the bass line. The third system introduces a tempo change to "Presto." and features more complex chordal textures. The fourth system shows a return to a more melodic style. The fifth system includes a repeat sign and a fermata. The sixth system concludes the piece with a "Ped" (pedal) marking and a final chord.

Presto.

Ped

N° 1.

ARIETTE.

REP: Rien qu'une petite....
pour voir....

Allegretto. (116 = ♩)

HENRIETTE.

PIANO.

The musical score is written for a voice and piano. The key signature has two flats (B-flat major), and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked 'Allegretto' with a metronome indication of 116 beats per minute. The score is divided into two main parts: a piano introduction and a vocal entry. The piano introduction features a lively, rhythmic accompaniment in the right hand and a more melodic line in the left hand. The vocal entry is marked 'leggiero' and begins with the lyrics 'Au théâtre, le se-cret, par qui l'on plait, C'est du rose et puis du blanc, met - tons - nous - en. Oui, donnons nous des ap - pas Pendant qu'on ne nous voit pas, Pen - dant qu'on ne nous voit pas'. The piano accompaniment continues throughout the vocal lines, providing a steady rhythmic foundation.

H. Pendant qu'on ne nous voit pas! Bien qu'on doive à la na -

- tu - re Beaux yeux gentil le tour - nu - re Des attraits piquants et

H. *poco riten.* *a tempo.* vrais... Un peu d'art ne nuit ja - mais! On doit, quoique blanchet *a tempo.*

ro - se. Plaire en cor plus, je sup - po - se. Lorsqu'on joint ces attraits -

H. *poco rit.* *p a tempo.* - là A ceux qu'on avait dé - jà! Au thé -âtre le se -cret, par qui l'on

suivez. *suivez* *p a tempo.*

H. plait, C'est du rose et puis du blanc, met - tons - nous - en Ouidonnons nous des ap -

H. - pas, Pendant qu'on ne nous voit pas, Pen - dant qu'on ne nous voit pas

H. Pendant qu'on ne nous voit pas! Quoiqu'on règne en souve - rai - ne, Que l'on

H. compte, à la dou - zai - ne Des amou - reux sur ses pas, Ex - ces de

riten. a tempo.
bien ne huit pas! a tempo. D'au - tres s'y laisse - ront pren - dre, et la

suivez.

H. *lis - te va s'é - ten - dre Si l'on joint ces amours - là* A

poco rit. *p a tempo.*

H. *ceux qu'on avait dé - jà! Au théâ - tre le secret, par qui l'on plaît, C'est dur, et puis du*

suivez. *p a tempo.*

H. *blanc, met - tons - nous - en Oui, donnons nous des ap - pas Pendant qu'on ne nous voit*

pas, Pen - dant qu'on ne nous voit pas

rit. *animato.*

H. *Pendant qu'on ne nous voit pas! Ah! oui, don - nons nous des ap - pas Pen -*

suivez. *animato.* *p*

II. *H.* - dant qu'on ne nous voit pas, Oui oui don - nous-nous des ap - pas Pen -

P. *f* *p*

pas

II. *H.* - dant qu'on ne nous voit pas Pen -

P. *f*

II. *H.* ah! qu'on ne nous voit

II. *H.* - dant qu'on ne nous voit

P. *f*

II. *H.* pas! qu'on ne nous voit

P. *f*

