

Daniel-François-Esprit Auber:
Le Serment

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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 Serment*,
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D.F.E. Auber: lithograph of the composer in early middle age

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INTRODUCTION

Le Serment, an *opéra* in three acts, with libretto by Eugène Scribe and Edouard Mazères, was first performed at the Académie Royale de Musique (Salle de la rue Le Peletier), on 1 October 1832.

The story is set in Toulon in 1800. Act 1. Andiol's inn (*Au Lion d'argent*) is full of bustle, and the host extols his profession and love of money. Capitaine Jean, a counterfeiter, enters with his followers disguised as sailors, and ask for a room. The only room available adjoins the neighbouring chateau, and is reputed to be haunted. The Captain is drawn to Marie, Andiol's daughter, but she is waiting for the modest farmer, Edmond, whom she hopes to marry despite her father's opposition to this poor match. Edmond eventually arrives, and reveals that he has been conscripted, and on his way to join his regiment. He is hopeful of success and promotion. Marie is distraught, and her father furious to find Edmond in the inn. Andiol orders him to leave, but Edmond insists on his right to hospitality, and orders a meal and a room. The only room available is the reputedly haunted chamber. Despite Marie's fears, he determines to have it.

Act 2. In the Gothic chamber, Edmond presses his loving attentions on the agitated Marie, and calms her fears, looking forward to seeing her on the morrow. Despite hearing strange sounds, he falls asleep, thinking of his new career as a soldier. In the dull glow of the firelight, one of the large pictures in the room swings open, to reveal the vaults of the chateau, and the activity of the counterfeiters, still dressed as sailors. They observe the sleeping Edmond, and plan to kill him, but are restrained by Capitaine Jean. He allows Edmond to leave freely on the condition that Edmond solemnly promises to keep the secret of Jean's true identity. As dawn breaks Edmond is led away through the secret passage.

Act 3. The outside of Andiol's inn next to the chateau, showing a marketplace with the port in the distance. Levantine merchants are peddling their rich wares. After the mysterious disappearance of Edmond, Andiol has pledged Marie to marry the wealthy Capitaine Jean. Preparations for the civil ceremony are underway, as Jean plans to waylay a rich caravan, and escape with his new wife on a brig he is expecting to dock in the port. In the meantime he knows the customs police are looking for him. Andiol enters with Marie in her wedding dress, and while her father anticipates the wealth the marriage will bring him, Marie is full of despair. An officer enters with a news-sheet about the Battle of Marengo. Andiol reads it out, and is amazed to find that Edmond has distinguished himself in battle and is now a captain. He pretends though that Edmond has been mortally wounded. Despite Marie's distress, all move into the chateau for the wedding preparations. Edmond now enters, full of joy to see his native land again. This changes to concern when the wedding party return and he sees Marie about to marry Capitaine Jean. The latter reminds Edmond of his promise, and refuses to accept Edmond's challenge to a duel. A brigadier of the gendamerie arrives looking for the Captain. By exchanging his papers for Jean's, Edmond provides an opportunity for the Captain to escape, while he is arrested as the supposed leader of the counterfeiters. At this moment Edmond's regiment march into the square, and he is now revealed to be their colonel. A note is brought in from the fleeing Capitaine Jean, releasing Edmond from his promise, returning Marie to him, and leaving him all

his treasure. As the brigadier hastens to the dock to apprehend Jean, his brig is already seen sailing out of the harbour.

Such a slight subject could have furnished the material for a small *opéra-comique*. The proportions of the Opéra were far too grandiose for *Le Serment*, and adaptation of libretto and musical form were needed for adjustment to the exigencies of the bigger opera house. The opera was not a great success, but maintained its place in the repertoire without interruption until 1849, although most often given without the last act. The *mise en scène* was much admired, depicting the interior of an inn, a Gothic chamber, and a busy street where merchants of various races dressed in native costume peddled their wares. The opera enjoyed particular popularity in Germany as *Die Falschmünzer*.

The music is full of ingenious details and the orchestration is refined. The overture became well-known. It establishes three distinct thematic worlds. The first is the pastoral world in the extended *Andantino* introduction, a long lazy barcarolle suggesting the seaport and the lives of Marie and Andiol. The busy theme of the *alla breve Allegro vivace* presents the world of the counterfeiters, with their work evoked in the unusual effect *col legno* of the tapping of the bows on wood (and looks forward to the similar activities of the coiners in act 1 of *Les Diamants de la couronne*). The third arena is military. The use of side and bass drum, brassy fanfares (familiar from *Fra Diavolo*), and the *Allegro mouvement de Pas redoublé* capture the swagger and panache of the patriotic theme embodied in Edmond's adventures as a soldier.

There are several extended solo numbers, like the opening air for Andiol sung by the bass Dérivis ("Le bel état que celui d'aubergiste"). There is also some fine choral writing for male voices, and Capitaine Jean's nautical couplets. The role of the counterfeiters presents another variant on the favoured Romantic topoi of robbers and smugglers; their activities are hidden behind stories of haunting to keep away the curious, and Scribe's words conjure up a ghostly frisson in Marie's ballad with its appropriately Gothic imagery ("Dans ce sombres appartements brillent des flammes souterraines").

The tenor is given excellent opportunities in Edmond's arias in act 2 ("En avant conscrit") and act 3 ("Salut ô mon pays"). The most famous piece in the opera is Marie's *grand air à vocalises* for the soprano ("Dès enfance les mêmes chaînes") in which all the most arduous difficulties of the art of singing are displayed. It was a triumph for Madame Damoreau, and served for a long time as a test piece, *le morceau de concours*, dreaded by young aspirant virtuosi. It was later introduced into the beginning of act 2 of the Italian version of *Fra Diavolo* as a more substantial and challenging alternative to Zerline's aria as she prepares the room for Lord and Lady Cockburn.

The original cast was: Adolphe Nourrit (Edmond); Laure Cinti-Damoreau (Marie); Henri-Bernard Dabadie (Jean); Prosper Derivis and Nicholas-Prosper Levasseur (Andiol); Ferdinand Prévôt (a brigadier of the gendarmerie); and Trévaux (an officer). The opera remained in the repertoire from 1832 to 1849, with the 100th performance taking place on 30 March 1849. There were 102 performances in total. It was translated into English, German, Italian, Hungarian, Czech and Russian, and produced in many European cities, from Liège and London (both 1833) to St Petersburg (1840), Florence (Pergola Carnival 1852), Prague (1866) and Koblenz (1899).



Edmond and Marie in Act 1. Woodcut from the Complete Works of Scribe

Nouvelle Edition

LE

SERMENT

Opéra en trois actes.

Paroles

de M.^r E. Scribe,

Musique de

D. F. E. AUBER.

PARTITION PIANO ET CHANT.

PRIX 15^{fr} NET.

Paris, BRAYERS J^{rs} à Paris 126 rue de Richelieu

PERSONNAGES.

Soprano.

MARIE

~~~~~

*Tenor.*

EDMOND.

~~~~~

Basses.

Le Capitaine JEAN.

ANDIOL



TABLE DES MORCEAUX.

OUVERTURE		Page
ACTE I.		
N. 1. INTRODUCTION	Chœur	Dans cette belle hôtellerie
AIR	Andiol	Le bel état que celui d'aubergiste
N. 2. (Récitatif)	Andiol, le Capitaine	En cet des voyageurs! quand mon auberge est pleine
COUPLETS et CHŒUR	le Capitaine	Puis dure tempête! hardi nautonnier
N. 3. (Récitatif)	Maria, le Capitaine, Andiol	Qu'on me prépare un lit!
BALLADE et CHŒUR	Maria, chœur	Dans ces sombres appartements
N. 4. AIR	Maria	De village voisin une heure nous sépare
N. 5. DUO	Maria, Edmond	Le voilà! c'est heureux! ah! mon Dieu!
N. 6. TRIO	Maria, Edmond, Andiol	Votre maison est une auberge et j'ai le droit de l'occuper
ACTE II.		
N. 7. ENTRACTE et RECIT	Maria	Viens la haut! ma fille mon père
DUO	Maria, Edmond	Tu que j'adore! un mot encore
N. 8. (Récitatif)	Edmond	Elle est partie et ma joie avec elle
AIR	Edmond	En avant! consens! en avant!
N. 9. MORCEAU D'ENSEMBLE		C'est dans la nuit et le mystère
ACTE III.		
N. 10. ENTRACTE et CHŒUR		Que ces étalles sont jolies!
N. 11. RECIT et CHŒUR	Maria, Andiol, le Brigadier	Ah! c'est un brigadier! Allons une bouteille
N. 12. AIR	Edmond	Salut ô notre pays! salut ciel de la France!
N. 13. (Récitatif)	Edmond	Je n'apportais personne et pour revoir Marie
DUO	Maria, Edmond	O jour de bonheur et d'ivresse
N. 14. CHŒUR et ENSEMBLE	Maria, Edmond, Andiol	C'est bien heureux! je l'aperçois
N. 15. DUO	Edmond, le Capitaine	Ainsi, infidèle à ma promesse
N. 16. Récitatif	Maria, Edmond, Andiol, le Brigadier	Marchons! marchons! suivez nos pas!
TRIO FINAL	Maria, Edmond, Andiol	Pour nous et pour la France



LE SERMENT.

1

OUVERTURE.

Andantino. *Alleg.*

PIANO

The musical score is written for piano and consists of six systems of music. The first system is marked 'Andantino' and the subsequent systems are marked 'Alleg.'. The music is in 6/8 time and features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The piano part is indicated by the 'PIANO' marking and the 'p' dynamic marking. The score is written in a single system with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a key signature of one flat (B-flat).

2 *All. vivace.*

pp *pp* *pp*

f. Mouvement.

p *p* *p*

All. moult de pas redoublé.

ff *ff* *ff*

This page of musical notation, titled "Le Serment" and numbered "5", contains six systems of piano accompaniment. Each system consists of a treble staff and a bass staff. The notation is complex, featuring many beamed sixteenth and thirty-second notes, as well as various rests and articulation marks. Dynamic markings include *pp* (pianissimo) at the beginning of the first system and *ff* (fortissimo) in the third system. A measure number "3" is located in the top right corner of the first system. The notation is written in a standard musical font, with clefs, key signatures, and time signatures indicated at the beginning of the first system.

This page of musical notation, likely for piano, consists of six systems of staves. Each system contains a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The music is characterized by complex rhythmic patterns, including many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and frequent use of trills (marked 'tr'). The notation is dense and intricate, typical of 19th-century French piano music. The page is numbered '6' in the top left corner, and the composer's name, 'Daniel-François-Esprit Auber', is printed at the top center.

5

The musical score consists of six systems of piano accompaniment. Each system is written for a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The notation is in 2/4 time and features complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth notes. Dynamics such as *ff*, *p*, and *f* are indicated throughout the piece.

This page of musical notation, likely for piano, consists of six systems of staves. The notation is complex, featuring many chords and rapid melodic lines. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The systems are as follows:

- System 1:** Standard piano notation with treble and bass staves.
- System 2:** Includes a *p* (piano) dynamic marking in the bass staff.
- System 3:** Continues the musical development.
- System 4:** Features an *8va* (octave) marking above the treble staff and a *cresc.* (crescendo) marking in the middle of the system.
- System 5:** Includes an *ff* (fortissimo) dynamic marking in the bass staff.
- System 6:** The final system on the page, showing a continuation of the dense harmonic texture.

This page of a musical score, titled "Le Serment", contains seven systems of piano accompaniment. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The music is written in a key with one flat (B-flat) and a 3/4 time signature. The notation is dense, featuring many chords and rapid sixteenth-note passages in both hands. Dynamics include *f* (forte) and *ff* (fortissimo). A section marked with a "7" above the staff begins in the second system. The score concludes with a double bar line and a repeat sign in the final system.

8

This musical score is for a piano piece, likely from a 19th-century French repertoire given the composer's name, Daniel-François-Esprit Auber. The score is written for a grand piano, with a treble and bass staff joined by a brace on the left. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor), and the time signature is 3/4. The piece begins at measure 8, marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The melody in the treble staff is characterized by eighth-note patterns and slurs, while the bass staff provides a steady accompaniment of eighth-note chords. The notation is clear and professional, typical of a published edition. The score spans seven systems of two staves each, covering measures 8 through 14. The final measure (14) ends with a double bar line.

9

The musical score consists of seven systems of piano accompaniment. Each system is written on a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The music is in 2/4 time and features complex textures with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, often beamed together. Trills (tr) are marked in the first two systems. Dynamics include 'f' (forte) and 'ff' (fortissimo). The notation is dense and technically demanding.

10

This page of musical notation, numbered 10, contains seven systems of staves. Each system consists of a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with complex rhythmic patterns, including many sixteenth and thirty-second notes. The notation is dense and features various dynamic markings such as *ff* (fortissimo) and *tr* (trill). The piece is in a key with one flat (B-flat major or D minor) and a 2/4 time signature. The notation is arranged in a traditional format with a key signature of one flat and a 2/4 time signature. The piece is in a key with one flat (B-flat major or D minor) and a 2/4 time signature. The notation is arranged in a traditional format with a key signature of one flat and a 2/4 time signature.

11

The musical score consists of seven systems of piano accompaniment. Each system is written for a grand piano, with a treble staff and a bass staff. The notation includes various chords, arpeggios, and melodic lines. Dynamics like *ff* and *8va* are indicated. The page number 11 is in the top right corner.

N^o 4.
INTRODUCTION.

Al^{ro} spiritoso $\text{♩} = 144$

PIANO.

CHOEUR de VOYAGEURS

1^{er} Dessus.
2^{es} Dessus.
Ténors.
Basses.

Dans cette belle hôteLle - ri - e que le re-pos a de douceur bon

1^{er} D.
2^{es} D.
T.
B.

inextingui ble bien ser - vi - e c'est le bonheur du voya.geur dans cette belle hôteLle -

13

1.D. *ri-e que le repos a de douceur bon vin et table bien ser- vi- e c'est*

2.D. *ri-e que le repos a de douceur bon vin et table bien ser- vi- e c'est*

T. *ri-e que le repos a de douceur bon vin et table bien ser- vi- e c'est*

B. *ri-e que le repos a de douceur bon vin et table bien ser- vi- e c'est*

1.D. *le bonheur du voyageur c'est le bonheur du voyageur.*

2.D. *le bonheur du voyageur c'est le bonheur du voyageur.*

T. *le bonheur du voyageur c'est le bonheur du voyageur.*

B. *le bonheur du voyageur c'est le bonheur du voyageur.*

1.D. *Dans cette belle hôtel le- ri- e que*

2.D. *Dans cette belle hôtel le- ri- e que*

T. *Dans cette belle hôtel le- ri- e que*

B. *Dans cette belle hôtel le- ri- e que*

le repos a de douceur bon vin et table bien ser-vi-e c'est le bonheur du voyageur.

le repos a de douceur bon vin et table bien ser-vi-e c'est le bonheur du voyageur.

le repos a de douceur bon vin et table bien ser-vi-e c'est le bonheur du voyageur.

le repos a de douceur bon vin et table bien ser-vi-e c'est le bonheur du voyageur.

MARIE (à part)

Il ne vient pas je n'y puis rien com-prendre je l'at-tends lu - er je l'at-tends aujour-

d'hui.

ANDIOL. (à Marie)

Et bien tu ne viens pas d'en -

Tenores

Ho - la Ho - la Ho - la Ho - la

13

M. si l'un mon père au milieu d'un quel en lui il

A. - ten - dre

M. ne vient pas! (André la secoue par le bras en lui montrant la table.)

1. D. Dans cet te belle hôte l le

2. D. Dans cet te belle hôte l le

T. Dans cet te belle hôte l le

B. du vin du vin i ci Dans cet te belle hôte l le

1. D. - ri - e que le re - pos a de douceur bon vin et table bien ser - vi - e c'est

2. D. - ri - e que le re - pos a de douceur bon vin et table bien ser - vi - e c'est

T. - ri - e que le re - pos a de douceur bon vin et table bien ser - vi - e c'est

B. - ri - e que le re - pos a de douceur bon vin et table bien ser - vi - e c'est