

Daniel-François-Esprit Auber:
Le Premier Jour de bonheur

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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 (1870). Photograph by Nadar

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INTRODUCTION

Le Premier Jour de bonheur, an *opéra-comique* in three acts, was first performed at the Opéra-Comique (Deuxième Salle Favart) on 15 February 1868. It was the 86-year-old Auber's second-last opera: *Rêve d'amour* followed a year later. Eugène Scribe had died in 1861, and Auber chose Adolphe-Philippe Dennery (actually Adolphe Philippe) and Eugène Cormon (Pierre-Etienne Piestre), as his collaborators for his last two operas. The subject of *Le Premier Jour de bonheur* was borrowed from a comedy by Souques called *Le Chevalier de Canolle* given at the Odéon on 17 May 1816. The play was turned into an *opéra-comique* in 1836 by Sophie Gay (née Nichault de Lavalette), with music by Hippolyte-Honoré-Joseph Court de Fontmichel. For Auber's version, Dennery and Cormon shifted the action from France during the period of the Fronde to Pondichéry in India, during the siege of the city by the French during the Anglo-French Colonial Wars (1746-63).

For Gaston de Maillepré, an officer serving in the French army, every happy event is marred by some misfortune. He tells the Indian priestess Djelma that he has fallen in love, but with an unknown woman whom he saw twice in London before the War, as her carriage went by. An English girl, Hélène, and her craven fiancée Sir John Littlepool arrive, having been apprehended as spies while on their way to the English garrison at Madras. Gaston recognizes in Hélène his mysterious lady; she is in fact the daughter of the governor of Madras. Gaston releases Hélène, but keeps Littlepool as a hostage. In act 2 Gaston comes to Madras under a flag of truce to see Hélène, but she rebuffs him. He is taken prisoner by the English. A dispatch arrives that Littlepool has been accused of sketching the French fortifications and will be shot at dawn as a spy. As a measure of retaliation, Gaston is chosen to be shot the next day. Hélène takes pity on him and confesses her love for him. Gaston's joy at this helps him to forget his despair over his imminent fate.

Act 3. The day dawns for Gaston's execution. Suddenly Sir John, supposed by all to be dead, appears having been exonerated. The French have released him, but have warned him that they will come after him unless Gaston is returned alive. Hélène rejects Gaston when Littlepool arrives, but Gaston refuses to leave without her. The impressionable Sir John, in fear for his life, relinquishes all claims to Hélène, now believing that Hélène has chosen Gaston simply to save his life, and is reconciled to their union. Gaston's first day of happiness has at last arrived.

The libretto was constructed with skill, but the givens of the situation lack enough power and simplicity to sustain interest. The score contains lovely pieces. The overture presents an overall contrast between the Indian elements of the story (the graceful Ballad of the Djinns) and the French colonial ones (a bellicose march full of military swagger and dance themes from the act 2 ball, no. 7). Within this there is a secondary juxtaposing of the Indian and European heroines, Djelma and Hélène. It opens with the soldiers' chorus of greeting to their commander from the beginning of the act 1 finale (basically a waltz in D major), and after a short cello introduction, moves into the opposing *Andante con moto* (another waltz, this time in B-flat major)—the *mélodie* for Djelma in act 2 “Ah! voici la nuit sous l'ombre des bois”, in praise of the mild Indian summer night.

The following *Allegro* in 2/4 presents the extrovert dance refrain “Ecoutez ce

joyeux refrain” from Hélène’s *chanson* (also in D major) in act 2. This moves into the conclusion of the overture, based on the chorus “Dans les fêtes et le bruit, jeunes têtes le temps fuit” from the same ball scene. The two opposing waltz themes with tempo and key changes dominate the first part of the overture, while the second part is shaped by the galop-like themes in the main key. This thematic opposition deviates from the plan followed in most of Auber’s other overtures in that there are no transposed repetitions of formal sections, and the keys of the quoted themes are retained throughout.

Act 1 is remarkable for its introduction, skilfully disposed and varied, the beautiful tenor romance “J’ai vu s’écrouler ma fortune”, and the brilliant finale. Act 2 contains a song for Hélène (“Susann’, causons un p’tit moment!”), the duettino for Hélène and the young Djelma (“Un époux chez vous”), the famous *Air des Djinns*, and a festive chorus at the governor’s banquet, beginning as a brindisi in waltz form for Gaston and forming the basis of the finale. The Ballad of the Djinns won great success. It is accompanied by only two chords, the perfect and the dominant seventh over a tonic pedal held by the horns, the whole handled with exquisite taste. There is also a male-voice trio and a duet for Gaston and Hélène. This act also contains one of Auber’s rare uses of the polonaise, despite this being one of the dominant dance forms of the first quarter of the 19th century (“Partir avec le jour”). In act 3 there is a beautiful nocturne again for two female voices (“Ô nuit, une heure encore”), the syllabique rondo for Littlepool, and Gaston’s poetic and touching *stances* (“Ce nom qui me rapelle”), harmonized with rare delicacy.

The characteristic lyricism of Auber’s late style is much in evidence in this work. But unlike the preceding works, an air of longing and sadness blows through this score. This is apparent in Djelma’s *mélodie* (“Notre Dieu notre père”) and Gaston’s romance in act 1, and in the nocturne for Djelma and Hélène in act 3. Djelma’s aria (“Ah! Voici la nuit”) in act 2 became very popular, a *mélodie vaporeuse* (as Benoit Jouvin described it). Auber, confident of its effect, used it in the middle section of the overture. Gaston’s romance (reaching c`) contains the words of the title set as the leading melody of the opera. The introduction is also subjected to a refined elaboration.

Le Premier Jour de bonheur was the only significant work of the last decade of Auber’s life, and indeed his last great success. The cast was very accomplished, consisting of: Joseph-Amédée-Victor Capoul (Gaston de Maillepré); Marie Cabel (Hélène); Charles-Louis Sainte-Foy (Littlepool); Mlle Marie-Rose (Djelma); Léon Melchissédec (De Mailly, a French officer); Victor Prilleux (Bergerac, a French officer); and Bernard (the governor of Madras).

Between 1867-70 there were 167 performances in Paris, and in this period it surpassed even Thomas’s *Mignon* (1866). The reprise of 1873, however, was cut short after only 8 performances. Further productions in French were in 1869 in Brussels and Ghent. The work was given in the German translation of Ernst Pasqué in Munich and Leipzig (1868), Vienna (1874), Brünn (1876) and Berlin (1881). There was also a Hungarian adaptation in Budapest (1868). For the Italian edition, special recitatives (composed by “E.M.”) were added. The libretto was set as a *zarzuela* by Fernandez Caballero (*El primer día feliz* 1872).

LE
PREMIER JOUR
DE

BONHEUR

OPÉRA COMIQUE EN TROIS ACTES

Poème de MM

DENNERY & CORMON

Musique de

D.F.E. AUBER

de l'Institut

PARTITION CHANT ET PIANO

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LE PREMIER JOUR DE BONHEUR

PERSONNAGES.	ACTEURS.	VOIX.
HELENE	M ^{lle} MARIE CABEL	1 ^{re} Chanteuse.
DJELMA	M ^{lle} MARIE ROZE	1 ^{ère} Dugazon.
GASTON de MAILLEPRE	M ^r CAPOUL	1 ^{er} Ténor.
Sir JOHN LITTLEPOL	M ^r S ^t FOY	1 ^{er} Comique.
De MAILLY	M ^r MELCHISSEDEC	Baryton.
BERGERAC	M ^r PRILLEUX	Basse comique.
Le Gouverneur de Madras	M ^r BERNARD	Basse.

CATALOGUE DES MORCEAUX.



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LE PREMIER JOUR DE BONHEUR.

OPÉRA-COMIQUE

EN TROIS ACTES.

Musique de

D. F. E. AUBER.

OUVERTURE.

Allegro (♩ = 160).

PIANO.

f Tambour.

tr

ff

tr

f

This page of musical notation, likely for piano, consists of six systems of staves. Each system typically contains a treble staff and a bass staff, with some systems having a single staff. The notation includes various musical elements:

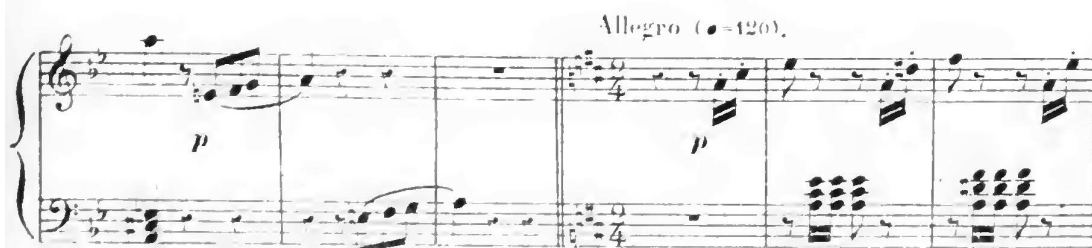
- System 1:** Features a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a rhythmic accompaniment. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#).
- System 2:** Continues the melodic and rhythmic patterns from the first system.
- System 3:** Includes trills (marked 'tr') in the treble staff and a more complex rhythmic pattern in the bass staff.
- System 4:** Shows a dense texture with many chords and trills in both staves.
- System 5:** Similar to System 4, with a high density of chords and trills.
- System 6:** The final system on the page, showing a continuation of the complex textures and a final cadence.

Andante con moto (♩=126).

p

pp

This musical score is for a piece titled 'Le Premier Jour de bonheur'. It is written for piano and consists of six systems of music. The tempo is 'Andante con moto' with a metronome marking of 126 quarter notes per minute. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The score begins with a series of chords in the right hand and a melodic line in the left hand. The first system includes a dynamic marking of *p* (piano). The second system includes a dynamic marking of *pp* (pianissimo). The third and fourth systems feature a more active melody in the right hand, often with slurs. The fifth and sixth systems include triplets in the right hand, indicated by a '3' over the notes. The piece concludes with a final triplet in the right hand.





This page of musical notation for piano consists of six systems of staves. Each system typically contains a treble staff and a bass staff, with some systems having a single staff for a specific instrument. The notation includes various musical elements such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The first system shows a treble staff with a series of eighth notes and a bass staff with a single note. The second system features a treble staff with a series of eighth notes and a bass staff with a single note. The third system shows a treble staff with a series of eighth notes and a bass staff with a single note. The fourth system features a treble staff with a series of eighth notes and a bass staff with a single note. The fifth system shows a treble staff with a series of eighth notes and a bass staff with a single note. The sixth system features a treble staff with a series of eighth notes and a bass staff with a single note. The notation is written in a clear, legible style, with various musical symbols and markings used throughout.

The first system shows a treble staff with a series of eighth notes and a bass staff with a single note. The second system features a treble staff with a series of eighth notes and a bass staff with a single note. The third system shows a treble staff with a series of eighth notes and a bass staff with a single note. The fourth system features a treble staff with a series of eighth notes and a bass staff with a single note. The fifth system shows a treble staff with a series of eighth notes and a bass staff with a single note. The sixth system features a treble staff with a series of eighth notes and a bass staff with a single note.

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The image displays a page of musical notation for the piece "Le Premier Jour de bonheur", page 9. The notation is arranged in six systems, each consisting of a treble and bass staff. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 4/4. The music features a variety of textures, including arpeggiated chords, block chords, and melodic lines. A small, stylized logo is visible in the upper right corner of the second system. The notation is clear and legible, with standard musical symbols and accidentals.

This page of musical notation, likely a piano accompaniment, consists of six systems of staves. Each system contains a treble staff and a bass staff. The notation includes various musical elements:

- System 1:** Features a complex treble staff with many beamed sixteenth notes and chords. The bass staff has a steady eighth-note accompaniment.
- System 2:** Similar to the first, with dense treble textures and a consistent bass accompaniment.
- System 3:** The treble staff includes triplet markings (indicated by a '3' over the notes). The bass staff continues with eighth-note accompaniment.
- System 4:** The treble staff has a melodic line with some grace notes. The bass staff has a more active accompaniment. A dynamic marking of *p* (piano) is present.
- System 5:** The treble staff features a series of beamed sixteenth notes. The bass staff has a simple accompaniment.
- System 6:** The treble staff continues with beamed sixteenth notes. The bass staff has a simple accompaniment.

The overall style is characteristic of 19th-century piano music, with a focus on rhythmic patterns and harmonic support for a vocal line.

This musical score is for a piano piece in D major, 3/4 time. It consists of six systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff joined by a brace. The first system features a melody in the treble with eighth-note patterns and triplets, and a bass line with chords and eighth notes. The second system continues the melody with triplets and includes a piano (*p*) dynamic marking in the bass. The third system shows a more active treble melody with eighth-note runs. The fourth system features a treble melody with eighth-note patterns and a bass line with chords. The fifth system continues the treble melody with eighth-note patterns and a bass line with chords. The sixth system begins with a *crescendo.* marking in the bass, which plays a simple eighth-note accompaniment while the treble continues with eighth-note patterns.

This page contains six systems of musical notation for piano, arranged in two columns of three systems each. The notation is in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The first system begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first staff of each system is the treble clef, and the second staff is the bass clef. The music features a variety of note values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. Dynamic markings include *f* (forte) in the first system and *ff* (fortissimo) in the fifth system. The notation includes many beamed notes, suggesting a fast or lively tempo. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of the sixth system.

N° 1.

INTRODUCTION - MÉLODIE - MADRIGAL.

All. moderato. (♩=132.)

DJELMA.

GASTON.

CHŒUR
des
INDIENNES

CHŒUR
de
SOLDATS

All. moderato

PIANO. *p*

Ped.

1^{re} TENOR

2^e TÉNOR

BASSE

La bri - se est em - bau - mé - e Des

La bri - se est em - bau - mé - e Des

La bri - se est em - bau - mé - e Des

plus — dou - ces sen - teurs, La ter - re est par - se - mé - e De

plus dou - ces sen - teurs, La terre est par - se - mé - e De

plus dou - ces sen - teurs, La terre est par - se - mé - e De

mil - le et mil - le fleurs. Ah! mes a - mis, vi - ve la

mil - le et mil - le fleurs. Ah! mes amis,

mil - le et mil - le fleurs. Ah! mes amis,

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of four systems of music. Each system includes a vocal line (treble and bass clefs) and a piano accompaniment (grand staff). The lyrics are in French and describe a peaceful scene of drinking and singing in the shade of trees.

System 1:

Vocal: guer - re, Lorsque sur l'her - be assis au frais, On peut à
 vocal: vi - ve la guer - re, Lorsque sur l'her - be assis au frais,
 piano: vi - ve la guer - re, Lorsque sur l'her - be assis au frais,

System 2:

Vocal: l'om - bre des fo - rêts Boire et chanter et ne rien fai -
 vocal: On peut à l'ombre des fo - rêts Boire et chanter et ne rien fai -
 piano: On peut à l'ombre des fo - rêts Boire et chanter et ne rien fai -

System 3:

Vocal: - re. La bri - se est embau - mé - e Des plus dou -
 vocal: - re. La brise est em - bau - mé - e Des plus don -
 piano: - re. La brise est em - bau - mé - e Des plus don -

System 4:

The piano accompaniment continues with a melodic line in the right hand and a harmonic line in the left hand, concluding the piece.

ces sen_teurs, La ter_re est par_se_mé_e Des plus bril_

lan_tes fleurs. Ah! mes a_mis, vi_xe la guer_re, Lorsque sur

l'her_be assis au frais, On peut à l'om_bre des fo_

Three vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, and Bass) and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "rets Boire et chanter et ne rien fai - re." and "Allons! al - lons! bra - ves sol - dats, Courez, cou -".

The score is written for three voices and piano. The piano part features a strong, rhythmic accompaniment with a prominent bass line and chords. The vocal parts are in a homophonic setting, with the lyrics clearly visible below the staves.

The first system shows the vocal parts and piano accompaniment. The piano part is marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The second system shows the vocal parts and piano accompaniment. The piano part is marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The third system shows the vocal parts and piano accompaniment. The piano part is marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic.

rez à de nouveaux combats Pour la pa_trie et pour la gloi - -

rez à de nouveaux combats Pour la pa_trie et pour la gloi - -

rez à de nouveaux combats Pour la pa_trie et pour la gloi - -

re Pour la pa_tri_e et pour la gloi - - re!

re Pour la pa_tri_e et pour la gloi - - re!

re Pour la pa_tri_e et pour la gloi - - re!

Puis, a - près la vic - toi - re, Le ca -

Puis, a - près la vic - toi - re, Le ca -

Puis, a - près la vic - toi - re, Le ca -

tr *p*

dimin.

- non se tai - ra, Oui puis après la vic - toi - re, !

- non se tai - ra, Oui puis après la vic - toi - re, Le

- non se tai - ra, Oui puis après la vic - toi - re, Le

ca - non se tai - ra, — Le cal - me re - nai - tra, Et chacun re - di -

ca - non se tai - ra, Le cal - me re - nai - tra, Et chacun re - di -

ca - non se tai - ra, Le cal - me re - nai - tra, Et chacun re - di -

- ra: La bri - se est em - bau - mé - e Des plus dou -

- ra: La brise est em - bau - mé - e Des plus dou -

- ra: La brise est em - bau - mé - e Des plus dou -

Ped

16

ces sen-teurs, La ter - re est par - se - mé - e De mil - le et
ces sen-teurs, La terre est par - se - mé - e De mil - le et
ces sen-teurs, La terre est par - se - mé - e De mil - le et

mil - le fleurs. Ah! mes a - mis, vi-ve la guer - re, Lorsque sur
mil - le fleurs. Ah! mes a - mis, vi-ve la guer - re,
mil - le fleurs. Ah! mes a - mis, vi-ve la guer - re,

l'her - be assis au frais, On peut à l'om - bre des fo -
Lorsque sur l'her - be assis au frais, On peut à l'ombre des fo -
Lorsque sur l'her - be assis au frais, On peut à l'ombre des fo -