

Daniel-François-Esprit Auber
Le Concert à la cour, ou La Débutante

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Opéra-comique en un acte

Paroles de Eugène-Augustin Scribe
et
Mélesville

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 as a member of the Institut (1832). Lithograph by Planta

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INTRODUCTION

Le Concert à la cour, ou La Débutante, an *opéra-comique en un acte*, with libretto by Eugène Scribe and Mélesville, was first performed at the Opéra-Comique (Salle Feydeau) on 3 June 1824. It enjoyed considerable success, remaining in the repertoire from 1824-38 (apart from 1837), and receiving 207 performances. There were two revivals: in 1842 (given 24 times), and 1851-52 (15 times). In all the number of performances in Paris totalled 246.

The cast was:

Frédéric, prince de Wurtemberg (Louis-Auguste Lemonnier)
Victor, a painter and musician (Louis-Antoine-Eléonore Ponchard)
Astucio, superintendant of the prince's music (Vizentini)
Adèle, a prima donna (Antoinette-Eugénie Rigaut)
Carline, wife of Astucio (Marie-Julienne Boulanger)

The story is set in Stuttgart at the Court of Württemberg in the early nineteenth century.

Adèle, a young soprano, has come to the court at Stuttgart to obtain a position as a singer and finds her old friend Victor there as painter to the court. The Kapellmeister Ascanio not only refuses to help Adèle, but rejects her in an audition. The Prince finds Adèle in tears and arranges for her public debut. Ascanio ruins it by conducting the accompanying orchestra in erratic tempos. Victor senses what is afoot, pushes the conductor out of the way, and accompanies her in another aria, which secures the approval of the Court.

The libretto is amusing, and the music witty, comprising as it does 8 short numbers. Contemporaries recognized in Astucio an apparently well-deserved caricature of the composer Ferdinando Paër (1771-1839). The B-flat major overture and the conclusion of the opera are melodically attractive, and the finale offers opportunities for imaginative stage presentation. There are also some piquant couplets for Carline (“Comme il me lançait”) and the Prince (“Pourquoi pleurer”). Nos. 7 and 8, the *Morceau d'ensemble* and *Finale* for the whole company, are handled well, and provide a showcase for the soprano, with chorus, variations, melodrama, and a highly decorated vocal line. The great aria, No. 4, the *grand air à vocalises* “Entendez-vous au loin l’archet de la folie” (also known as “Espérance, confiance”), is a parody of the Italian styles so much in vogue at the time, but also includes some fleet and spicy touches that are Auber’s own. The librettists have divided it into several sections, each capturing an aspect of the described Venetian carnival—from the distant sound of merrymaking, the rush to join the festive throng, the brilliant costumes and masks, the physical assault on the senses, to the fusion of vision, sound and motion in the passage of the festal gondolas. Each section is varied in rhythm and length to provide a metrical model for the composer’s imagination.

*Entendez-vous au loin l’archet de la foule?
Venise dans ses murs voit la foule accourir;
La raison elle-même en ce moment s’oublie;
Le carnaval vient de s’ouvrir.*

*Voyez que cette marche est belle!
C’est Cassandre donnait la main
À la séduisante Isabelle,
Qui gaiment lorgnait Arlequin.*

*Povera
Signora
A des migrianes;
Povera
Signora
Gémit tout bas!
Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah!*

*Voici venir sur leurs riches nacelles
Les gondoliers, qui rament en chantant;
Ils ont à bord gentilles pastourelles,
Dont les cheveux flottent au gré du vent...
Entendez-vous? Quel tintamarre!
La mandoline et le guitare,
Du galoabel le son bruyant,
Tout à la fois, ah! C’est charmant.*

Auber integrated parts of this famous aria (“Povera signora”) into his composite score for the ballet *Marco Spada* (1857). A classic recording of the aria was made by Alice Verlet on 8 June 1909 (2-033000 3117f) (transcribed to CD, Symposium 1331).

The cast were among the most famous singing in Paris at the time, and constituted a brilliant repertory team at the Opéra-Comique during the 1820s, and in some cases into the 1830s. Louis-Auguste Lemonnier assumed the baritone parts in all Auber’s early works up to *La Fiancée* (1829). Louis-Antoine-Eléonore Ponchard sang at the house from 1812 to 1837, won great fame as the *premier ténor* by creating Georges Brown in Boieldieu’s *La Dame blanche* and also Roger in Auber’s *Le Maçon* (both in 1825), and became a renowned singing teacher at the Paris Conservatoire. Vizentini was the house *basse chantante* until 1825 (when he created Baptiste in *Le Maçon*). The two women were very successful artists: Antoinette-Eugénie Rigaut, as *première chanteuse légère*, created all Auber’s soprano leads from *Le Testament et les billets doux* (1819) to *Fiorella* (1826): while the mezzo-soprano Marie-Julienne Boulanger, during her long career, became one of the most celebrated singers in the history of the Opéra-Comique, creating leading roles, often with strong comic elements, in all the Auber operas from *La Bergère châtelaine* (1820) to *Le Domino noir* (1837).

Coming as it did near the beginning of Auber’s Parisian success and international fame, *Le Concert à la cour* presents a succinct one-act distillation of several aspects of the composer’s art. The elegance and finesse of his style are amply in evidence, as are his delight in the overture form, his innate response to the fundamental cell of the *opéra-comique*, the couplets (with two excellent examples), as well as deft handling of the bigger concerted forms, like the trio and big ensemble (for Adèle, Victor, the Prince, Astucio, the Dames de la cour, courtisans and chorus). But the opera (as reflected in the overture) is built around the central soprano aria, and in the part of Adèle we have a prototypical portrayal of recurrent type in the work of Scribe and Auber—the heroine, who is a fusion of *soubrette* and *soprano leggero*, archetypically embodied in Zerlina (*Fra Diavolo*, 1830), and quintessentially realized in Angèle (*Le Domino noir*, 1837) and Catarina (*Les Diamants de la couronne*, 1841).

In addition, *Le Concert à la cour* is the first example of a very special type of drama created by Scribe and Auber—the ‘artist opera’. These scenarios, with contemporary settings, explored the nature, calling, vicissitudes, cabals, trials and triumphs of the artistic spirit, invariably focused on a singer protagonist, a topos that features as a recurrent concern of the creators’ aesthetic perspectives. Indeed, each decade of their creative collaboration saw the emergence of an opera on this theme, addressed each time in terms of the changing style, emphases and gestures of Auber’s subtly varied musical expression. So Adèle (1824) looks forward to Henriette in *L’Ambassadrice* (modelled on the famous soprano Henriette Sontag) (1836), Carlo in *La Part du Diable* (based on the legendary castrato Carlo Broschi who sang for Philip V of Spain) (1843), Fabio and Cafarini in *La Barcarolle* (centred on the rivalry between fictional court musicians) (1845), and Jenny in *Jenny Bell* (another soprano role revisiting the career of Sontag, with elements of the life of Jenny Lind) (1855). Artistic skill coupled with kindness, shrewdness and sagacity are celebrated as sensible and helpful choices in life.

Le Concert à la cour enjoyed considerable success during the century across Europe (and even reaching South America), with productions in:

Brussels: 31 October 1824 (in French)

Berlin: 11 October 1825 (in German, translated by C. A. Herklots) and 31 October 1835 (in French)

Budapest: 31 March 1826 (in German, translated by F. Ellmenreich)

Prague: 17 June 1826 (in German)

Graz: 31 July 1826 (in German)

Munich: 1826 (in German)

Vienna: Josefstadt 10 January 1827 (in German, with additional music by Riotte) and Kärntnertor-Theater 9 March 1827

Stockholm: 7 February 1834 (in Swedish, translated by P. U. Huldberg)

Frankfurt: 25 December 1836 (in German)

St Petersburg: 28 December 1836 (in German)

Copenhagen: 20 October 1839 (In Danish, translated by T. Overskou)

Rio de Janeiro: 1846 (in French)

London: St James’s Theatre 26 February 1849 (in French)

Breslau: 29 April 1862 (in German)

Budapest: 1 March 1888 (In Hungarian, translated by E. Abrányi)



Louis-Antoine-Eléonore Ponchard



Marie-Julienne Boulanger

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À LA

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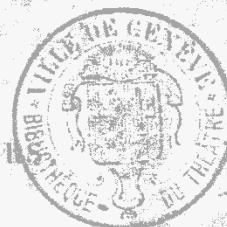
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AV.

PERSONNAGES.

ACTEUR



FREDERIC, Prince Allemand M^r. LEMONNIER.

VICTOR, jeune Peintre M^r. PONCHARD.

ADELE, Cantatrice Française M^{me}. RIGAUT.

ASTUCHO, Surintendant de la musique M^r. VIZINTINI.

CARLINE, sa Femme M^{me}. BOULANGER.

SEIGNEURS et DAMES de la Cour.

Musiciens

Valets.

~~~~~  
La Scène se passe à Stutgard.

~~~~~  
Le Théâtre représente un riche salon. Porte au fond et deux latérales.
A gauche du spectateur, une table ronde couverte d'un tapis vert, et cinq
sièges autour. A droite, vers le fond, un piano.

A

53

OUVERTURE.

Andantino con moto. 416 = ♩ du Métronome de Maëzel.Gr.^{de} Flûte.Pet.^{te} Flûte.

Hautbois.

Clarinettes
en Si.Trompettes
en Si.Cors en Si
bas.

Bassons.

Timballes
en Si b.1^{er} Violon.2^d Violon.

Alto.

Violoncelle
et C-Basse.

Clar.

Cors.

B.^{as}

Gravé par Petit Jue

540.

2

Gr. Fl.

Chr.

Coro.

Bons

solo.

Violons *pp*

Alto.

Violon sans C-F.

Pizzicato.

Pizzicato.

Pizzicato.

540.

The musical score is written for a full orchestra and includes vocal parts. The top system features the Grand Flute (Gr. Fl.), Clarinet (Chr.), Cor Anglais (Coro.), and Bassoon (Bons). The middle system features the Violins (Violons), Alto, and Violon sans C-F. The bottom system features the Violons, Alto, and Violon sans C-F. The score is marked with 'pp' (pianissimo) and 'Pizzicato.' (pizzicato). The page number 540 is at the bottom right.

B^{us}

PP

Villes sans C-B.

Gr. Fl.

Clar.

PP.

B^{ops}

PP.

staccato.

PP.

staccato.

PP. arco.

celle (er) a l'arc

Villes sans C-B.

Villes sans C-B.

Gr. Fl.

Clar.

Hous

me. ter. a l'8. se

vielles sans C-B.

Bous

pp

vielles sans C-B.

Cors.

Bous

pp

vielles

C-B.

This musical score is for a piece titled "Le Concert à la cour". It is arranged for a large ensemble of instruments. The score is divided into three systems, each containing five staves. The instruments are: Cors (Horn), Bous (Trumpet), Clar. solo. (Clarinet solo), Violles sans C-B. (Violins without C-B), and Violles (Violins). The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The first system shows the initial entry of the instruments, with the Cors and Bous playing a melodic line, the Clar. solo. playing a more active line, and the Violles providing a harmonic foundation. The second system continues the development of these themes, with the Violles sans C-B. and Violles playing a steady rhythm. The third system features a solo for the Clar. solo. and a more complex interplay between the Cors and Bous. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *ppp* (pianissimo) and *p* (piano).

Cors.

Bous

Clar. solo.

Violles sans C-B.

Violles

ppp

p

Cors.

Bous

Violles

This page of musical notation, titled "Le Concert à la cour", is page 9 of a score. It features a complex arrangement of musical staves. The notation includes various clefs (treble and bass), key signatures (one flat), and a variety of rhythmic values and patterns. Dynamic markings such as "FF" (fortissimo) are present. The score is written for a large ensemble, with multiple staves for different instruments and voices. The notation is dense and detailed, typical of a professional musical score.

8

vllle et C-B.

pp

pp

Gr. Fl.

H-b.

Crs

Bous

pizzic.

pizzic.

pizzic.

vllles seuls.

pizzic.

540.

Allegretto. 408 = ♩ G. M.

Pet. Fl.

Cl.

P

P

P

Vlles et C-B.

P

Pet. Fl.

Cl.

C^{rs}

B^{ons}

P

P

Vlles et C-B.

This musical score is for a piece titled 'Le Concert à la cour' from a larger work. The tempo is marked 'Allegretto' with a metronome indication of 408 beats per minute, where the quarter note is equal to the tempo marking 'G. M.'. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score is divided into two systems. The first system includes staves for Piccolo Flute (Pet. Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), Piano (P), Violins (Vlles), and Viola/Celli/Basses (C-B.). The second system includes staves for Piccolo Flute (Pet. Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), Harp (C^{rs}), Bassoon (B^{ons}), Violins (Vlles), and Viola/Celli/Basses (C-B.). The piano part features a prominent triplet pattern. The strings play a rhythmic accompaniment. The woodwinds have melodic lines with some grace notes. The harp and bassoon enter in the second system with a triplet pattern.

The musical score is divided into two systems. The first system contains five staves: Pet. Fl., Cl., C25, Bsns, and Violles et C-B. The second system contains four staves: Cl., staccato, p, and pizzicato. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

System 1:

- Pet. Fl.**: Treble clef, key signature of one flat (B-flat). The staff contains a complex melodic line with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes.
- Cl.**: Treble clef, key signature of one flat. The staff contains a melodic line with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes.
- C25**: Treble clef, key signature of one flat. The staff contains a melodic line with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes.
- Bsns**: Bass clef, key signature of one flat. The staff contains a melodic line with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes.
- Violles et C-B**: Bass clef, key signature of one flat. The staff contains a melodic line with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes.

System 2:

- Cl.**: Treble clef, key signature of one flat. The staff contains a melodic line with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes.
- staccato.**: Treble clef, key signature of one flat. The staff contains a melodic line with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, marked with a staccato articulation.
- p**: Treble clef, key signature of one flat. The staff contains a melodic line with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, marked with a piano (p) dynamic.
- pizzicato.**: Bass clef, key signature of one flat. The staff contains a melodic line with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, marked with a pizzicato articulation.

This musical score is for a piece titled "Le Concert à la cour". It is arranged for a large ensemble, including woodwinds, brass, strings, and harps. The score is written in a key with two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 4/4 time signature. The notation is spread across two systems of staves.

First System:

- Gr. Fl.** (Great Flute): Solo part starting in the third measure.
- Cl.** (Clarinet): Playing a melodic line.
- Cr^s** (Cornets): Playing a rhythmic accompaniment.
- Bons** (Bassoons): Playing a rhythmic accompaniment.
- Viol^{ns} et C.B.** (Violins and Cello/Bass): Playing a rhythmic accompaniment.

Second System:

- Viol^{ns} et C.B.** (Violins and Cello/Bass): Playing a rhythmic accompaniment.
- arco.** (arco): Indicated for the string section.

The score features a variety of musical textures, including melodic lines, rhythmic patterns, and a solo section for the Great Flute.

This page of musical notation, numbered 14, is attributed to Daniel-François-Esprit Auber. It features a complex arrangement of musical staves, likely for a large ensemble or orchestra. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, such as sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and dynamic markings, including *ff* (fortissimo) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The staves are organized into systems, with some staves showing a change in key signature or time signature indicated by a double bar line and a new key signature. The overall style is characteristic of 19th-century French musical notation.

This page of musical notation, titled "Le Concert à la cour", page 15, features a 12-staff score. The first 11 staves are in treble clef, and the 12th staff is in bass clef. The music is written in a key with one flat (B-flat) and a 3/4 time signature. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, beams, and slurs. The 12th staff contains a double bar line and a repeat sign, indicating a section that is repeated.

musical score for Daniel-François-Esprit Auber, page 16. The score is written for a large ensemble, featuring multiple staves. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and bar lines. The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines. The notation is in a standard musical notation style, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a time signature of 4/4. The score is written for a large ensemble, featuring multiple staves. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and bar lines. The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines. The notation is in a standard musical notation style, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a time signature of 4/4.

This page contains musical notation for a piece titled "Le Concert à la cour". The score is written on 12 staves. The first 11 staves are in treble clef, and the 12th staff is in bass clef. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The music features various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. A dynamic marking "P" (piano) is visible on the 11th staff. The notation is complex, with many beamed notes and slurs.

musical score for a full orchestra, featuring a solo for Horn (H-b.) and Clarinet (Cl.) in the first system, and a solo for Bassoon (Bons) in the second system. The score is written in B-flat major and 3/4 time. The first system includes staves for Horn (H-b.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Bons), and strings. The second system includes staves for Horn (H-b.), Bassoon (Bons), and strings. The music is characterized by intricate melodic lines and rhythmic patterns, typical of Auber's style.