THREE OPERAS COMIQUES OF THE 1830s:
FRA DIAVOLO, ZAMPA AND LE PRE AUX CLERCs
and
THE PLACEMENT OF MUSICAL SOLI WITHIN THE DRAMA

By
FRANCINE YVONNE REGAUDIE-MCISAAC

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS
HISTORICAL MUSICOLOGY

in
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
(Department of Music)

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
April 1985

©Francine Yvonne Regaudie-McIsaac, 1985
In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the head of my department or by his or her representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of ___________ Music ____________________________

The University of British Columbia
1956 Main Mall
Vancouver, Canada
V6T 1Y3

Date ______ April 1985 ________
Abstract

In the 1830s the opéra-comique genre evolves from the simple "comédi es mêlées d'ariettes" to a true operatic form with musico-dramatic significance. One primary area of development is found in the placement and dramatic function of solo forms which begin to play a markedly different role than they had in opéras comiques of earlier periods.

Despite the evidence suggesting significant musico-dramatic development, few scholars have attempted to identify the practices governing the placement and function of musical soli in the opéras comiques of the 1830s. For this reason we have undertaken a detailed study of these elements in three libretti: Fra Diavolo (1830), Zampa (1831) and Le Pré aux Clercs (1832). In a preliminary examination, these libretti were found to exhibit traits representative of many works of the period.

Our research has led us to conclude that solo forms are employed in one or more of the following four dramatic situations: (1) to convey background information to the plot or to characters, or to reveal pre-curtain events; (2) to paint a character's true personality; (3) to expose a character's emotional state of mind or train of thought at a given moment; and (4) to distribute the number of soli through the opera in a manner that reflects a character's importance in the drama.

Although such uses of solo forms are not unique to the 1830s, the extent to which they were employed represents a significant departure from earlier practice.

This thesis is divided into five chapters. The first
chapter--by way of introduction--contrasts the roles of musical numbers in 1830s opéras comiques with those of their predecessors. It also discusses the literary and musical conventions of the works of this period. The second chapter first presents a synopsis of Scribe's and Auber's opéra comique Fra Diavolo, and a view of the well-made play elements as displayed in the libretto, before focusing on a discussion of the placement of musical soli in the drama. Similarly, chapters three and four discuss Mélèsville's and Herold's Zampa, ou la fiancée de marbre and Planard's and Herold's Le Pré aux Clercs respectively. The final chapter outlines the practices observed in the placement and dramatic function of soli in the three selected operas and relates the significance of these practices to the genre's development.
# CONTENTS

Abstract ................................................................. ii

Acknowledgement ....................................................... v

Chapter I: Introduction .............................................. 1

Chapter II: *Fra Diavolo* ............................................. 13
  The Libretto
    Synopsis ...................................................................... 14
    The Well-Made Play Elements in *Fra Diavolo* .............. 19
  Musical Soli ............................................................ 23

Chapter III: *Zampa, ou la Fiancée de marbre* ................. 40
  The Libretto
    Synopsis ...................................................................... 40
    The Well-Made Play Elements in *Zampa* ...................... 47
  Musical Soli ............................................................ 50

Chapter IV: *Le Pré aux Clercs* ..................................... 68
  The Libretto
    Synopsis ...................................................................... 69
    The Well-Made Play Elements in *Le Pré aux Clercs* ..... 75
  Musical Soli ............................................................ 80

Chapter V: Conclusion .................................................. 90

Bibliography ............................................................... 96
Acknowledgement

I extend my deepest appreciation to the following people: Prof. H. Robert Cohen, my thesis advisor, for the guidance he provided throughout this project; Prof. Dimitri Conomos for proofreading the final draft and for his helpful suggestions; Prof. Karin S. Pendle for her help in locating libretti of the 1830s; and my friends in Vancouver and throughout Ontario for their encouragement. I especially thank my husband, David, for his constant support and understanding in times of need, and for the time he spent proofreading my work.
I. Introduction

The year 1830 marks a new dawn in many facets of French musical life, and opéra-comique is no exception. In no other period are so many opéras comiques composed and, most importantly, are its libretti of such high literary quality and its music of such importance to the drama than during the early 1830s. In fact, the early 1830s mark a turning point in the development of opéra-comique; it is a period during which significant changes are effected to the genre's musical and literary constituents.

The bourgeoisie of the 1830s displays such a voracious appetite for this genre that the Théâtre de l'Opéra-Comique's administration is forced to present new operas at what is at times a barely manageable rate. More than 45 opéras comiques were created and produced from 1830 to 1835 alone. Although not all of these productions are comparable in grandeur and magnificence to contemporary French grand operas, a few certainly are. This period sees the creation of many of the genre's masterpieces: *Fra Diavolo, ou l'Hôtelier de Terracine* (1830) by librettist Eugène Scribe and composer D.F.E. Auber, *Zampa, ou la Fiancée de marbre* (1831) by A.H.J. Mélesville and L.-F. Herold, *Le Prê aux Clercs* (1832) by Eugène de Planard and L.-F. Herold, *Le Chalet* (1834) by Eugène Scribe and Adolphe Adam, *Le Cheval de bronze* (1834) by Eugène Scribe and D.F.E. Auber, and *L'Éclair* (1835) by librettists Eugène de Planard and Jules Vernoy de Saint-Georges and composer J.F.E. Halévy. No other works of this genre had, to that time, attained the success achieved by these 1830s operas. Several received well over 100 performances within the
first three years of existence, and continued to be performed throughout the century. *Le Prê aux Clercs* was performed for the 1000th time, at the Théâtre de l'Opéra-Comique, on October 10, 1871, less than 40 years after its premiere. Though the scholarly studies treating nineteenth-century opéra-comique as a whole are in no way comparable (in number at least) to those on French grand opera, the opéra-comique has not been entirely neglected. Several important studies are available. Unfortunately, however, these have not devoted adequate attention to an important constituent of the early 1830s opéras comiques: the placement of musical numbers in the dramatic action.

I. The Role of Music in Early 1830s Opéras Comiques

The equal proportions of spoken and sung elements in the opéras comiques of the early 1830s contrast markedly with the preponderance of spoken dialogue as opposed to sung passages in those of preceding times. A further distinguishing feature of the later works is the use of a variety of musical forms—barcarolles, romances, couplets, and other solo forms intermingled with duets, larger ensembles, and choruses. By way of comparison, the opéras comiques of the preceding era are generally characterized by three or four simple musical forms—ariettas, occasional duets, and small ensembles. During no other period in the early history of the genre has the libretto been more essential to dramatic representation.

When comparing the contents and structural organization of Boieldieu's *Béniowski* (1800) and Auber's *Fra Diavolo* (1830) (displayed in the chart below), one can clearly see the prepon-
derance of dialogue as opposed to music in the former opera, contrasting with the almost equal proportions of dialogue and music in Auber's work. The diversity of musical forms featured in *Fra Diavolo* is also made apparent by the chart below, as is the extreme simplicity of Béniowski's musical texture. The variety of solo forms (*airs, couplets, romances, barcarolles*), small and large ensembles, and choruses displayed in *Fra Diavolo* clearly contrasts with the four *ariettes*, the duet and trio, the brief *morceau d'ensemble*, and the brief choruses of its predecessor.

*Béniowski (1800)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I,i</td>
<td><em>Air</em> -- Spoken monologue</td>
<td>The scene begins with a brief <em>air</em> and is followed by a spoken passage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii</td>
<td>Spoken dialogue -- <em>Air</em> -- Spoken dialogue</td>
<td>Most of the scene is conducted in speech interrupted by a brief <em>air</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii</td>
<td>Spoken dialogue -- Chorus</td>
<td>Spoken dialogue followed by a very brief choral refrain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv</td>
<td>Brief chorus</td>
<td>A choral refrain interrupted by brief sung and spoken exclamations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v-vi</td>
<td>Spoken dialogue</td>
<td>Spoken passages followed by the FINALE which includes a choral refrain and brief <em>ariettes</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vii</td>
<td>Spoken monologue</td>
<td>Choral refrain framing an <em>ariette</em> which is followed by spoken dialogue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>viii-ix</td>
<td>Spoken dialogue</td>
<td>Spoken passage followed by a sung trio.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Spoken dialogue -- FINALE</td>
<td>Spoken monologue interrupted by a choral refrain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II,i</td>
<td>Chorus, <em>Air</em>, -- Spoken dialogue</td>
<td>Includes sung dialogue and choral refrain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Form</td>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I,i-ii</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Includes choruses, recitatives, airs, ensembles, and spoken dialogue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii</td>
<td>Spoken dialogue -- Couplet(s)</td>
<td>Spoken passages followed by a three-stanza song. (Completely sung.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv</td>
<td>Quintet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v</td>
<td>Spoken dialogue -- Couplet(s)</td>
<td>Spoken passages followed by a three-stanza song. (Spoken scenes.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi-vii</td>
<td>Spoken dialogue</td>
<td>A duet followed immediately by a trio (in sc. ix).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>viii-ix</td>
<td>Duet -- Trio</td>
<td>The trio is interrupted by spoken dialogue, then follows a sung FINALE which includes recitative, choruses, and ensembles. (The FINALE is entirely sung.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ix-x</td>
<td>(Trio) -- FINALE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fra Diavolo (1830)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>II,i</td>
<td>Air</td>
<td>Sung monologue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii</td>
<td>Trio</td>
<td>Spoken monologue followed by a two-stanza <em>barcarolle</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii</td>
<td>Spoken dialogue with <em>barcarolle</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv</td>
<td>Spoken dialogue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v</td>
<td>Spoken dialogue -- Air -- Trio</td>
<td>Spoken dialogue followed by an <em>air</em> which is interrupted by speech, and a trio. This long scene concludes with speech.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi</td>
<td>Spoken dialogue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vii-x</td>
<td>Spoken dialogue -- FINALE</td>
<td>Spoken passage followed by a sung FINALE which includes recitative and ensembles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III,i</td>
<td><em>Air</em> -- Spoken monologue</td>
<td>A sung monologue followed by a brief spoken monologue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii-iii</td>
<td>Chorus -- Sung dialogue with chorus and ensemble</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv</td>
<td>Spoken dialogue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v</td>
<td><em>Romance</em> -- Spoken monologue</td>
<td>A two stanza <em>romance</em> followed by a brief spoken monologue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi-vii</td>
<td>Spoken dialogue</td>
<td>(Two brief spoken scenes.) Includes choruses, recitatives, ensembles, and brief spoken interruptions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>viii-ix</td>
<td>FINALE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the quantity and variety of musical forms featured in 1830s opéras comiques play an important part in setting these operas apart from their predecessors, the primary distinguishing factor in these works is the purposeful use of music, the way in which music actually furthers the dramatic action rather than simply supplementing it. A closer interaction between drama and music (a relationship not yet seen in the development of the genre) is clearly observed in the early 1830s opéras comiques. Rather than having music merely express any on-stage character's emotions or merely provide an atmospheric complement to a scene, we see speech intensified by song under stress of emotion. In other words, music arises from the dramatic situations and not merely from emotions prevalent at a given moment or for purely musical reasons. The important element to note here is the fact that music is introduced into the action for dramatic reasons and not merely for musical entertainment. For example, a character may see the future foretold in the words of a song, and as a result alter his behavior or actions in order to avoid unpleasant consequences. Perhaps none of these musical conventions is wholly unique to the 1830s, but the extent to which they were employed then represents a departure from earlier...
practice.

In this study, we concern ourselves with the texts of musical numbers, and their integration into the drama. These texts can be divided into four principle categories.

The first category of dramatic music consists of musical numbers in which the text involves a conversation, begun in spoken form, furthered to its climax through music, that is to say, a spoken conversation, carrying a certain intensity, usually reaching its peak in a musical setting. The second category of dramatic music involves drama intensified into music under stress of emotion: a series of static reflections growing out of a dramatic situation of high emotional intensity, or elaborations of ideas instigated by or in a spoken conversation which are further developed in music. These songs differ from those of the first category in that they specifically develop, in a musical setting, the emotions or ideas presented in a spoken conversation, rather than furthering the conversation itself through musical gestures. The third category is represented by musical numbers of which the texts serve as aids to characterization. The information revealed in the words of such songs is often crucial to the portrayal of a character, and often has direct bearing on the outcome of the plot, altering the logical course of action. It is interesting to note that this role of character portrayal is most often fulfilled by solo forms, as are the functions outlined in the second and fourth categories of dramatic music. The fourth and final category of dramatic music involves those musical numbers in which the words do not seem, in their textual contents, to be in any way related to the dramatic action. These songs appear at first glance to be
introduced into the libretto for reasons of structural balance--for example, to balance the number of solos sung by two primary characters--and as such would seem to serve no dramatic purpose. However, a closer look at their subject matter (usually love stories, legends or other fantastic subjects) frequently reveals an alternative purpose to these seemingly non-dramatic songs. The stories related in such songs often parallel that of the dramas, and not unfrequently foreshadow the outcome of the plots. This use of musical numbers distinguishes the opéras comiques of the 1830s from their predecessors, and, in fact, signal a new era in the development of the opéra-comique genre.

II. The Libretto and Musical Conventions of the 1830s Opéras Comiques

While scholars of opéra-comique have devoted much time to tracing literary and musical sources and influences, studying recurring literary themes (marriage, love, bandits), and re-searching biographies, few attempts have been made to examine the relationship between music and text. Consequently, the dramatic practices or motivations which guided the placement of musical numbers in the 1830s opéras comiques have not been a subject of scholarly concern.

The libretti themselves represent a large and, for the most part, unexplored body of documents which not only reflect one important element of the 1830s opéras comiques, but also pro-vide, in their internal musical and dramatic structures, clues to the manner in which musical numbers were integrated into the opéra-comique dramas, and how significant this integration was to the development of the genre itself. We find, in modern literature on techniques of dramatic writing, several passages at-
testing to the importance of this musico-dramatic development. As Karin S. Pendle states, "opéra-comique too was changing from a work in which drama was primary, and the music secondary to one in which the two enjoyed equal status." This conclusion is supported by many nineteenth-century writers, poets and composers. Antoine Reicha, for example, explains, in his *L’Art du Compositeur dramatique* (1833), how

tout ce qui est le plus intéressant dans un poème où l’on chante et où l’on parle alternativement, doit être mis en musique sans exception. C’est une faute impardonnable de la part du Compositeur et de la part du Poète de placer un morceau de musique hors de l’action, c’est-à-dire, là où un événement d’une importance quelconque vient de se terminer. Dans ce cas, un morceau de musique ne peut qu’ennuyer, parce qu’il ralentit inutilement la marche de l’action elle-même qu’il faut mettre en musique.

As composers and librettists sought this parity of drama and music, they also realized that "le succès d’un opéra, dépend le plus souvent de la bonté et de l’intérêt du poème, surtout en France." In an attempt to achieve a higher literary quality and more structured libretto most contemporary librettists adapted, in their own manner, Eugène Scribe’s dramatic technique as applied to his well-made plays and libretti. Six features characterize a well-made libretto:

(1) a delayed-action plot whose point and whose central character struggles to overcome obstacles (usually to love and marriage); (2) a pattern of increasingly intense action and suspense carefully prepared by exposition which establishes certain facts for the spectator and causes him to anticipate each significant event (this pattern is supported throughout the play by contrived exits and entrances, letters and other devices for conveying these facts to certain characters while keeping them secret from others); (3) a teeter-totter arrangement of incidents to create successive ups and downs in the fortune of the hero caused by his conflict with one or more opponents and leading to his ultimate triumph or failure; (4) the counterpunch of peripetelia or upset followed by scène à faire or obligatory scene, in which the hero is victorious because of the release to his opponent of the formerly withheld secrets (these have on the latter a devastating effect); (5) a central misunderstanding
or quiproquo, made obvious to the spectator but withheld from the participants; and (6) the reproduction in miniature of the overall delayed-action pattern in the individual acts.

In addition to the improvements made to the opéra-comique libretto, librettists and composers also reviewed their treatment of music, namely its role and placement in the drama. The evidence attesting to this new treatment of music is to be found principally within the contents and structure of the well-made libretti. Thus only through the latter elements can one attempt to understand thoroughly the dramatic role of musical forms in early 1830s opéras comiques. For this reason this study not only examines the role and placement of musical forms in the drama, but also explores the various libretto elements of the opéras comiques of this period.

Given the monumental task that would entail a discussion of each libretto element and musical form present in every opéra comique premiered in the early 1830s we have chosen to limit our study in two ways. On the one hand, our study of the early 1830s opéras comiques focuses on the musical practices exhibited by solo musical forms only. For the purpose of this study, the term "solo" refers to any song sung by one or more characters, and of which each stanza is sung by only one singer at a time. For example, the three stanzas of a strophic couplet could be shared by two characters: one singing the first two stanzas, the other the third, but never do the two characters sing simultaneously. On the other hand, we have restricted our detailed study of solo forms to three opéras comiques representative of this period: Fra Diavolo, ou l'Hôtelerie de Terracine (January 1830: Scribe and Auber), Zampa, ou la Fiancée de marbre (May 1831:
Mélesville and Herold), and Le Prè aux Clercs (December 1832: de Planard and Herold). The reasons governing the scope of our study are as follows.

Solo forms, while representing one of the primary areas of musical development of the opéras comiques of this period, are also the most frequently confronted musical texture. For example, 7 of 17 musical numbers in Fra Diavolo are soli, the remaining ten constituting a variety of other musical forms—duets, trios, ensembles, choruses; similarly 10 of 20 musical numbers in Zampa are soli. Moreover, solo forms have always been a part of opéra-comique musical texture, while other forms (trios, quartets, or morceaux d’ensemble, for instance) have not necessarily been included. Lastly and most importantly, the soli contribute a great deal to the unfolding of the dramatic action; they carry most, if not all, of the expository information essential to the plot, assist in characterization, and provide much of the motivating force behind the action.

As for the aforementioned operas, they have been selected, in part, because of their contemporaneous merit and popular appeal; because they collectively amalgamate, in their musical and dramatic textures, the musical forms and dramatic practices of the period; and because they reflect the subject matter, plots, character types, settings, and libretto elements exhibited in opéras comiques of this period. They have also been selected on the basis of their varied dramatic situations which permit the study of solo forms in a wide diversity of dramatic contexts. Finally, we have focused on these works because of the considerable influence they exerted on other opéras comiques, and because their differing authorship enables
us to observe the proliferation of practices from librettist to librettist and from composer to composer.

However, despite our concentration on the three aforementioned opéras comiques, we have studied all but a few of the opéra-comique libretti of this period in order to ensure that the literary and musical practices observed in the three selected operas were indeed those exhibited in the remaining opéras comiques of the period. Each opera was examined for both literary and musical features: subject matter, character type, setting, libretto structure, types of musical forms used, and the placement of musical forms.

Because knowledge of the libretti and their components is necessary for a thorough understanding of the musical conventions of early 1830s opéras comiques, the following study focuses not only on the musical practices and conventions of solo forms in the opéras comiques of this period but also—by way of introduction—on brief discussions of the subject matter and well-made libretto features of each selected opera libretto.
Notes


3. One scholar's work is an exception to the rule. In one chapter of her volume entitled *Eugène Scribe and French Opera of the Nineteenth Century* (1979), Karin S. Pendle discusses the relationship between words and music in Scribe's opéra comique librettos. It should be noted that our discussion of the placement of musical soli in Scribe's *Fra Diavolo* differs from Pendle's both in focus and detail. Furthermore, Pendle makes little attempt to isolate any apparent trends in the placement of the musical numbers in the various librettos she examines.

4. See note 2 above.


7. *Ibid*.


9. A total of 65 opéras comiques, all premiered between January 1830 and December 1835, were examined for this paper. Among these are: Adolphe Adam's *Danilowa* (1830); Labarre's *Les deux familles* (1831); Herold's *Le Grand Prix* (1831); Carafa's *Le Livre de l'ermit* (1831); Herold's *La Médecine sans médecin* (1832); Carafa's *Le Prison d'Edimbourg* (1833); Berton fils' *Le Chateau d'Urtuby* (1834); Auber's *Lestoq* (1834); Adam's *Le Chalet* (1834); Auber's *Le Cheval de bronze* (1835); Monpou's *Les Deux Reines* (1835); and Halévy's *L'Eclair* (1835).
II. Fra Diavolo, ou l'Abtellerie de Terracine

The subject of *Fra Diavolo* was not unknown to the Parisian public when Eugène Scribe and D.F.E. Auber's opéra-comique appeared at the Théâtre de l'Opéra-Comique in 1830. In fact, for many, the legend of the infamous Neapolitan bandit Michel Pezzo, alias Fra Diavolo, recalled the not-so-distant past.

Larousse recounts the bandit's life:

Il quitta le métier de fabricant de bas pour se joindre à une troupe de brigands dont il ne tarda pas à devenir le chef et qui répandit la terreur dans les Calabres. Sa tête fut mise à prix. Cependant, lorsque le cardinal Ruffo entreprit de contraindre les Français à évacuer le royaume de Naples en 1799, Fra Diavolo obtint son pardon, fut employé par le cardinal et reçut un brevet de colonel ou de chef de bande insurgée. À la tête de sa troupe, il fit la guerre aux Français, continua à se livrer à des actes d'odieuse cruauté, se réfugia dans les Calabres, après la conquête du royaume de Naples, par Bonaparte, y excita des soulèvements, passa dans l'île de Caprée, puis débarqua à Sperlonga avec une troupe nombreuse, signala son passage par des vols, des assassinats, des incendies, et finit par tomber entre les mains des Français, qui lui firent expier ses crimes sur le gibet (1806).... Scribe a poétisé le hideux bandit et en a fait le héros d'un opéra-comique.¹

*Fra Diavolo ou l'Abtellerie de Terracine*, performed on 28 January 1830, remained in the repertoire of the Théâtre de l'Opéra-Comique throughout the 19th century and well into the 20th century. By 1911 it had attained its 909th performance.

An international favorite, it was performed in Brussels, Berlin, Vienna, Budapest, St. Petersburg, London, Copenhagen, Zagreb, Prague, Warsaw, and New York during its first year-and-a-half of life, and was sung not only in French, but also in German, Hungarian, Russian, Italian, English, Danish and Czech. Made into a film in 1931, recorded in the 1950s, it is occasionally performed even today and is thus one of the few works from the French musical stage of its time to show such remarkable longevity,...²
The Libretto:

Part I: Synopsis

Scribe's three-act opera is set in the countryside of Italy, in an inn near Terracina, near Naples. The time is unspecified, but undoubtedly meant to be the recent past—judging by the action and characters. The mise-en-scène does not change drastically throughout the opera, moving from within the inn in Act I to the surrounding grounds in Act III. Nonetheless, the spectator's interest and attention are captured and held by the variety of dramatic situations, characters and musical interest.

The variety of dramatic situations and musical content will be discussed later. As for the characters, they are typical of those found in 19th-century opéras comiques: a villain, an innocent maiden, an heroic lover, soldiers, peasants, and so on. The villain and principle character, Diavolo, "is a ladies' man, well practiced in courtly manner, including singing to the accompaniment of his guitar (Act I, sc. iii), . . ." He is the self-centered and self-righteous seducer-bandit of many 19th-century operas. His accomplices, Giacomo and Beppo, "exhibit the standard proportions of brawn to brain common in most 'thug' types in present day television dramas."*.

The young, sweet, innocent and much in love maiden is portrayed by Zerline. Despite her generally submissive nature, her strong character is not to be underestimated. Lorenzo, her beloved, is the faithful hero, "brave, particularly so since he feels he has nothing to live for if Zerline marries another."*.

The English couple, Lord and Lady Cokbourg (also referred to as milord and Pamela), although characters of secondary importance,
provide a motivating force for the intrigue, and the English accent of their spoken French supplies some measure of comic relief. Milord's jealousy and gullibility provide the Marquis with exploitable weaknesses. As for Pamela, her youth and coquettish nature make her a prime victim for the Marquis's flirtatious advances. Despite the comic relief provided by the English couple, Diavolo's accomplices--Giacomo and Beppo--remain the primary sources of comic relief because of their clumsiness and half-witted remarks. As for the soldiers, "those favorites of both Scribe's and his bourgeois audience", they supply the 'mass' scenes so important in contemporary operatic productions.

Two other secondary characters require brief introductions: Zerline's father--the innkeeper Mathéo--and Francesco, the old neighbourhood "fogey", who is to marry Zerline unless Lorenzo finds his fortune quickly. Although these secondary characters provide an obstacle to the marriage of Lorenzo and Zerline, neither character plays an important role in the opera.

This contrast of personalities gives rise to a wide diversity of intrigues which Scribe works out with his usual mastery. Adapting the six fundamental features of the well-made play (discussed in Chapter I), he unfolds an interesting and stimulating series of events. Nonetheless, despite Scribe's rigid adherence to the well-made play elements and his usual well-formatted structure in the creation of the libretto, the multitude and rapid succession of dramatic events may well have the first-time spectator somewhat confused. Scribe enjoyed misleading the spectator with false information, disguised identities and unexplained events; he took pleasure in withholding important facts from his audience, thus preventing the full comprehension
of a situation.

Glissant avec adresse entre une situation intéressante et une autre de franc comique, il n'aborde réellement ni l'une ni l'autre, se contentant de faire pressentir ce qu'il ne dit point. Il aime surtout à tromper le spectateur, à lui donner des affections qu'il prend ensuite plaisir à détruire, à lui faire croire à des événements qui n'arrivent point, ...

The opera begins in the dining-room hall of an inn. A detachment of Roman soldiers has stopped to rest and eat there. Its brigadier, Lorenzo, has chosen this location because it is the home of his beloved Zerline, the innkeeper's daughter. The soldiers have been pursuing bandits and their infamous leader, Diavolo, who have been terrorizing the countryside with assassinations, thefts, and various other conspiracies. An English couple, the Cokbourgs, arrives at the inn in a state of agitation, and hurriedly explain to the innkeeper that, while en route to Livourne, they were robbed by bandits (Diavolo's men) who, after taking all their valuables, fled into the forest. With this new "signalement", the soldiers leave in pursuit of the bandits. Moments later the mysterious Marquis de San-Marco--who is none other than Diavolo in disguise--arrives at the inn in a luxurious carriage.

The mystery of the "highway" robbery unravels as we are told of the Marquis, who, having departed from Naples at the same time as Lord and Lady Cokbourg, had lodged where they had, and had travelled the same routes. While courting milady, he had discovered their intended route, as well as information concerning the location of her magnificent jewelry case containing diamonds, and of 500,000 francs which milord was to deposit at Livourne. (The money was to be in the form of coins, not bills.) Diavolo learns, upon his arrival at the inn, that
his bandit friends were unsuccessful at retrieving the coins. What is the reason for this unsuccessful attempt? Milord explains to the Marquis that the coins were converted to bank notes and sewn to the lining of his frock-coat. What an ingenious idea! Diavolo now finds a new incentive to complete his previous plan, thus giving rise to new dramatic situations. Lorenzo, who had left in pursuit of the robbers, now returns with milady’s jewelry box and diamonds for which a reward has been offered. Lorenzo refuses the reward money, but Zerline, knowing that this sum will assure their marriage, accepts in his place. Thus ends Act I: the basic intrigue is set, conflicts have been established, and motivating forces for the action have been implemented.

As Act II opens Zerline, voicing her “goodnight” to the guests, prepares to retire for the night. Diavolo and his two accomplices have, by now, infiltrated her room and hidden in her closet. The following monologue (interrupted by the bandit trio, in song) represents a dramatic highpoint in the portrayal of Zerline’s character, and provides an excellent example of Scribe’s ensemble writing with solo. While preparing for bed, Zerline sings of her upcoming wedding to Lorenzo and comments on her good fortune. This expression of vanity prompts an outburst from the hidden trio. Pausing momentarily to listen, she then continues her train of thought. As she slips into bed she places the reward money under her pillow for safekeeping, a place not easily accessible to the robbers. Assured that she is asleep, the trio emerges from the closet, and after a moment of hesitation they decide to kill her to avoid complications while retrieving the money from under her pillow and robbing the
Cokbourgs' in the adjacent room. Lorenzo and his men return just in time to save Zerline. The bandits, startled, quickly retreat to the closet. Zerline awakens. As she descends to prepare refreshments for the soldiers, milord emerges from his room to inquire as to the cause of the commotion. A noise is heard in Zerline's room. As Lorenzo prepares to enter, Diavolo, as the Marquis of San-Marco, of course, exits, under the pretense of having had a rendez-vous with Zerline, or so he tells Lorenzo. To milord, he whispers that he was really there to meet milady. Furious, Lorenzo challenges the Marquis (Diavolo) to a duel at dawn. The second act ends on this note of suspense and tension.

In Act III, Fra Diavolo finally appears dressed as a bandit. He will not keep his rendez-vous for the duel, but instead has sent his men to ambush and kill his opponent. Before Lorenzo's departure for the rendez-vous, unexpected events occur which change the course of action. Zerline overhears the inebriated Giacomo and Beppo (Diavolo's closet accomplices of the forenight) recalling the words she uttered the night before in her chamber. Knowing that she alone should know these thoughts and words, she suspects foul play, and notifies Lorenzo of her suspicion. The two men are stopped and searched. A small note is found on Giacomo's person revealing Diavolo's intention to rob the Cokbourgs while everyone attends the wedding. Lorenzo sets his own trap, in turn, to capture the infamous bandit, and forces Giacomo to give Diavolo the agreed signal. Diavolo is ambushed and arrested after a positive identification by a peasant once held captive by Diavolo's band. There is general rejoicing as all conflicts are satisfactorily
resolved, and the young lovers are reunited. The traditional
wedding of operas comiques does not take place on stage, but is
nevertheless implied.

Part II: The Well-Made Play Elements in *Fra Diavolo*

The well-made play features can nowhere be better seen than
in the structure and content of the opera *Fra Diavolo*. The use
of the delayed-action plot is obvious from the start. As the
curtain rises the primary conflicts and intrigues which are to
be resolved in the remainder of the opera are already set in
motion: Diavolo and his bandits are being pursued by Lorenzo and
his men; Lorenzo's happiness is threatened if Zerline is forced
to marry Francesco; Pamela has been courted by the so-called
Marquis (Diavolo in disguise), and has unknowingly revealed the
whereabouts of her and her husband's valuables to her courter;
and the English couple has consequently been robbed. In the
form of narratives, the background information, explaining all
of the pre-curtain events, is exposed in the first five scenes
of the opera. Nonetheless, a few elements remain a secret for
the time being. We shall see later how some musical soli fulfil
expository roles in the drama.

The plot unfolds with increasing tension through contrived
entrances and exits. Each revelation or turn of events is an-
ticipated, largely because of the information contained in the
first scenes of Act I. For example, no one is surprised when
Lorenzo recovers the English couple's valuables, and thus
assures his marriage to Zerline; or for that matter, when the
Marquis's true identity is revealed at the climax of the opera.
The resolution of these conflicts provides the basis for further
complications in the plot which, in turn, are resolved in
not-so-unexpected ways; for example, Fra Diavolo's determination
to complete the unsuccessful robbery eventually leads to the
revelation of his true identity and his downfall. This downfall
is assisted by the usual contrived entrances and exits (e.g.,
the appearance of a peasant formerly held captive by Diavolo's
band, who can identify Diavolo); letters (e.g., the note found
on Giacomo's person revealing Diavolo's plans); and "other
devices for conveying these facts to certain characters while
keeping them secret from others" (e.g., Zerline's discovery of
Giacomo and Beppo's whereabouts of the forenight). As we shall
see, some soli also occupy such dramatic roles by serving as
devices for the enhancement of a scene (e.g., the signal from
Diavolo to his accomplices in Act II, scene 3), and/or supplying
motivating forces towards other events in the plot (e.g.,
Zerline's couplets in Act I, scene 4).

The ups and downs in the hero's fortune are also obvious
throughout the libretto. As Fra Diavolo begins, Lorenzo is
about to lose Zerline because of his lack of fortune. To assure
his daughter's well-being Matheo has promised her to Francesco,
the old neighbourhood miller. Lorenzo's good fortune is quickly
reestablished as he retrieves the English couple's stolen valu­
ables and consequently earns the promised reward money. Yet,
once again, his fate changes for the worst as he is deceived by
Diavolo into believing in Zerline's infidelity. Emotionally
painstricken, he challenges the Marquis (Diavolo) to a duel,
thus seemingly assuring his own death, for we--the audience--
know of the ambush planned by Diavolo against Lorenzo. As if by
divine intervention, a note found on the person of Giacomo
reveals Diavolo's conspiracy to rob the Cokbourgs when all the guests leave to attend the wedding. Our hero consequently sets up his own ambush for the bandit, and his success once again assures his happiness and good fortune.

The most striking feature of the well-made libretto and of this opera, and one which prevails throughout the libretto until the climax in Act III is the central *quiproquo*. The disguised identity of the bandit—a favorite element of many 19th-century operas such as *Fidelio*—Diavolo as the Marquis de San Marco provides the opera with its central *quiproquo*. Several soli are created because of this feature. Some soli are created to help introduce the idea of a disguised identity; others are used to develop the idea; and others still, to unveil its existence. We shall examine how Zerline's *couplets* (Act I, scene 4) introduces the element of concealed identity, and how a subsequent solo confirms this hypothesis.

The turning point and *scène à faire* of the plot—the revelation of the Marquis's true identity (Act III, scene 12), and the subsequent arrest of the bandit by Lorenzo—are both contained within Act III. The turning point leads to the resolution of all conflicts: Lorenzo's happiness is assured as he will marry Zerline; the Cokbourgs have been saved from a second robbery; and the infamous bandit Diavolo and his band have been apprehended, thus assuring the safety of the countryside.

The sixth feature of the well-made play rests in the structure of the libretti, that is, each individual act displays a structure similar to that of the whole opera, though in miniature. (See the diagram on the following page.) This is an important element in the construction of the well-made libretto,
**Fra Diavolo: Overall Dramatic Scheme**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problems</th>
<th>Resolutions</th>
<th>Problems</th>
<th>Resolutions</th>
<th>Problems</th>
<th>Resolutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Act I</td>
<td></td>
<td>Act II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bandits rob the Cks.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Z is to marry Fr due to L's poor fortune.</td>
<td>L recovers stolen jewels, and assures his marriage to Z.</td>
<td>Entrance of D as the M de S-M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z's life</td>
<td>-Z saved by threatened arrival of by bandits, soldiers.</td>
<td>L to duel with D.</td>
<td>Ambush set for L at duel site.</td>
<td>-L discovers plot to ambush him and rob Cks.</td>
<td>D's men plot to rob Cks again.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Cks=Cokbourgs; L=Lorenzo; Z=Zerline; D=Diavolo; Fr=Francesco; M de S-M=Marquis de San-Marc
though not specifically crucial to our study of the musical soli.

As indicated in the preceding diagram each act introduces a series of conflicts, one or more of which are resolved by the end of the act, while the others await resolution in a subsequent act. In addition, further conflicts are also put forth for resolution in subsequent acts. Ultimately, all conflicts aim to the final and definite climax in Act III, where they are resolved. Each act reflects, in miniature, the problem-resolution format exhibited by the opera’s overall dramatic structure.

Musical Soli

Important in the creation of any opera is the collaboration of playwright and musician. The first chart below clearly exhibits the variety of musical expression afforded to Auber by Scribe’s diversity of characters and dramatic situations. In addition it also displays the distribution of the musical forms throughout the opera, and helps place the soli, the focus of our study, into the structural organization of the opera. The second chart isolates the soli and supplies, for each solo, a brief summary of the dramatic situation in which it is situated.

Musical Distribution in *Fra Diavolo*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Musical forms and characters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Couplets, <em>Je voulais bien</em>: Stanzas 1 and 2 sung by Lord Cokbourg; stanza 3, by Pamela.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Quintet, <em>Un landau qui s’arrête</em>: Mathéo, Lord and Pamela Cokbourg, Zerline, and the Marquis of San-Marco.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 4 Couplets, *Voyez, sur cette roche*: Stanza 1 and 2 sung by Zerline; stanza 3, by the Marquis.

8-9 5 Duo, *Oui, je vais commander*: Pamela and the Marquis; to Trio: Marquis, Lord Cockbourg and Pamela.

9-10 6 Finale: Lord and Pamela Cockbourg, the Marquis, Beppo, Giacomo, Zerline, Lorenzo, the soldiers. Includes choruses, recitatives, airs, ensembles.

II, 1 7 *Recitative and* air, *Ne craignez rien milord!*: Zerline.

2 8 Trio: Zerline, Lord and Pamela Cockbourg.

3 9 Barcarolle, *Agnès la jouvencelle*: the Marquis.

4 10 *Scène du coucher, Oui c'est demain*: Zerline, the Marquis, Beppo, Giacomo. Includes an air with ensemble interludes a prayer, recitative and arioso passages.

7-9 11 Finale: Lorenzo, Lord and Pamela Cockbourg, the Marquis, Beppo, Giacomo, Zerline. Includes recitative, ensembles, airs.

III, 1 12 *Recitative and* air, *Je vois marcher sous mes bannières*: the Marquis.

2-3 13 Chorus with solo interludes for Giacomo, Beppo, and Mathéo.

5 14 Romance, *Pour toujours, disait-elle*: Lorenzo.

8-9 15 Finale: all principals, villagers, soldiers. Includes recitative, arioso, spoken segments, choruses, ensembles.

Solo numbers in *Fra Diavolo*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Cast</th>
<th>Synopsis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I, 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pamela</td>
<td>Brief air: Pamela expresses her agitation after the attack of the bandits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 2</td>
<td>Lord Cockbourg, Pamela</td>
<td>Couplets, <em>Je voulais bien</em>: milord's jealousy is aroused by milady's flirtations with the Marquis.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 4</td>
<td>Zerline, the Marquis</td>
<td>Couplets, <em>Voyez, sur cette roche</em> Diavolo's story is told.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II, 1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Zerline</td>
<td>Air, <em>Quel bonheur!</em>: Zerline's dreams of her forthcoming marriage to Lorenzo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 9</td>
<td>Marquis</td>
<td>Barcarolle, <em>Agnès la jouvencelle</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Scene du coucher: (air within an ensemble)—Zerline preparing to retire, expresses her joy, while the hidden robbers plot their crime.

Scene du coucher: (air within an ensemble)—Zerline preparing to retire, expresses her joy, while the hidden robbers plot their crime.

III, 1 12 Marquis
[Recitative and] air, Je vois marcher sous mes bannières: a monologue on his life.

5 14 Lorenzo
Romance, Pour toujours... Lorenzo, saddened by Zerline's alleged perfidy, expresses his despair.

Keeping in mind he above chart—especially the second which displays the distribution of soli throughout the opera—let us first examine the soli which seem inconsequential, at first glance, to the unfolding of the drama, but which reveal upon closer examination some dramatic purpose. We shall see how such seemingly non-dramatic soli help balance the musical structure of the opera as a whole. There are two such soli in Fra Diavolo: Diavolo's barcarolle, Agnès la jouvenelle (Act II, scene 3), and Lorenzo's romance, Pour toujours, disait-elle, (Act III, scene 5). As Pendle explains,

from the dramatic point of view [these] musical numbers could be eliminated without harm to the plot. . . . The barcarolle is supposedly a signal to Giacomo and Beppo, but even in an opera buffa such a purpose might have been served by such stock dramatic devices as lowering a curtain, opening a window, lighting a lamp, and the like. Lorenzo sings his romance to express his bitterness at the discovery of Zerline's alleged perfidy, something he has already expressed in speech and song (Act II finale). It thus serves no dramatic purpose.

At first glance it would seem, as Pendle has concluded, that these soli could be eliminated "without harm to the plot", and yet at a deeper level each solo reveals its raison d'être.

The Marquis has planned to complete the previously unsuccessful robbery of the 500,000 francs belonging to the Cokbourgs, and, at the same time, to steal Lorenzo's reward money
now hidden under Zerline’s pillow. The Marquis has made arrangements with his men, Giacomo and Beppo, that upon the agreed signal (the barcarolle) they are to join him, and together they are to carry out their crime. Although the song text speaks of fictitious lovers, and thus relates in no way to the immediate story, it nonetheless hints at certain upcoming events:

La nuit cachera tes pas;
Et je suis seule, hélas!
C'est ma voix qui t'appelle,
Ami, n'entends-tu pas?

... ...
L'instant est si prospère!
Ami n'entends-tu pas?

The two calls of the maiden to her love strangely suggests Diavolo’s call to his accomplices who are tardy at making their appearance. The song’s narrative, in some small way, thus parallels the dramatic action simultaneously unfolding.

To a lesser extent there also seems to be an underlying purpose to Lorenzo’s romance. His pain and bitterness triggers an outburst of great pathos, which appears to act as a motivating force for his upcoming duel with the Marquis. More important is the fact that this solo not only permits Lorenzo this outburst of emotions, but also allows him, the hero, to stand in the musical spotlight if only for a moment. A glance at the second table will reveal

... the reasons for these two numbers. Lorenzo, although the hero of the opera and as such an important figure in all the central ensembles of the works, has no solo number which is not part of a larger piece. The romance gives him a chance to sing alone, to claim musically what he otherwise often holds dramatically: the center of the stage, the spotlight. 

While the above-mentioned purpose of each solo seems reason
enough for their existence, another *raison d'être* emerges when one examines the distribution of soli throughout the entire opera—namely musical balance.

. . . There is still another reason for the existence of Lorenzo's romance which is easily seen when considering it in conjunction with the Marquis' barcarolle. The Marquis, while not a hero, is the central figure in the plot and as such is given a lengthy and skillfully composed monologue to open Act III. Why should he then have a second, dramatically insignificant and musically inferior solo number? Again the table provides a clue to the answer. Auber's score abounds in a variety of ensembles, from duo to large scenes involving all members of the cast. By way of contrast, each act is provided with two—and only two—solo pieces, each balancing the other. . . .

Therefore, as observed to by Pendle, Diavolo's barcarolle and Lorenzo's romance serve some dramatic purpose in relation with the opera as a whole, if not in direct relation with the plot. Their respective roles thus support the observation made in Chapter I concerning the growing importance of music in *opéras comiques* of the 1830s.

The remaining soli present a different and more functional role than the two former soli. Given that "the play deals with the culmination of a long story, the greater part of which has occurred before the curtain goes up . . . [and given that] the action is through exposition always delayed until the foregoing events have been related for the audience's benefit . . .," the first few scenes serve as vehicles for relating information about characters and events. This information, in turn, prepares the outcome of the action and helps the audience anticipate the final revelation of the secret. Scribe and Auber have set much of this informative material into narrative text and solo musical forms, rather than ensembles. We shall examine the two types of expository narratives found in this opera: the
one is concerned with events, the other with characters and consequently characterization.

Pamela's brief air (No.1, Act I, scene 1) and Lord Cok-bourg's couplets (No.2, Act I, scene 3), both part of the larger sung Introduction, reveal jointly most of the background information concerning pre-curtain events and characters important to the immediate action surrounding them.

The English couple has just arrived at Mathéo's inn. Pamela, in a state of frenzy, immediately expresses her feelings on what has just happened to them. But what has happened? We are informed of the presence of a bandit, one who is in no way a gentleman. There are hints of a robbery for she rhetorically asks the whereabouts of her valuables. We are told no more of the event until later in Act I. Through Pamela's air we also discover for the first time that the action takes place in Italy ("Je n'avais plus l'envie de revoir l'Italie"), and that she and her husband are visitors there ("Ah! quel abominable voyage... / Je voulais, je le jure, / Plus voyagez avec vous"). It is evident that Scribe has no intention of revealing the mystery all at once, but rather intends to tantalize the audience's curiosity by unveiling the past little by little. In addition to making this air an agent of exposition, Scribe also subtly reveals certain shades of milady's personality: she is naive, simple and of a noble innocence, has a great love for wealth and worldly possessions, and is easily agitated.

Milord's couplets Je voulais bien, je voulais bien follow in scene iii, providing still more insight into the mystery of pre-curtain events. We are told of a stranger who has been following them and also flirting with milady. Here milord
expresses his disenchantment with the whole affair. He finds
the 'seducer' suspicious, but does not suspect him of anything
more than trying to gain his wife's favor. Thus, with milord's
couplets, we learn of another pre-curtain event: the presence of
a suspicious yet noble stranger--this is all revealed in the
first stanza. The second and third stanzas serve principally to
portray the characters of milord and Pamela respectively.
Milord appears as a jealous yet fair husband for he states that
he is willing to spend all his wealth in order that Pamela may
have the latest fashions. On the other hand, he is totally
against being "un mari à la mode"--one blind to all his wife's
activities. Pamela, interrupting her husband, sings the song's
third stanza, thus emphasizing the same innocence and naiveté as
revealed in her air in scene 1.

Like Pamela's air, milord's couplets unveil more details of
past events while leaving others a mystery. The personalities
of Lady and Lord Cokbourg are exposed as they will remain
throughout the opera, for there is little character development
in Fra Diavolo. Moreover, the couplets serve as a motivating
force for the plot by putting into play the elements of suspi-
cion and jealousy, unlike Pamela's air which merely exposes the
details of past events and characterizes Pamela. There is no
clear indication of the stranger's identity, or of his inten-
tions, which, for the time being, seem harmless. These elements
can not help but trigger the audience's curiosity. In addition,
milord's display of jealousy presents a further element for
exploitation, for his jealousy offers much opportunity for
future confrontations with the stranger. The Marquis's
persistent flirtatious episodes with Pamela may in time trigger
enough of Lord Cokbourg’s anger to give rise to an interesting tête-à-tête between the two men. Therefore, through the two soli of the first three scenes of the opera Scribe presents a number of suspenseful events—the presence of a suspicious stranger whose intentions remain unknown, a naive wife whose innocence makes her the object of a stranger’s advances, and a jealous husband whose behavior and reaction to surrounding events are unpredictable—and establishes a means by which to motivate the drama. In this manner, Scribe creates intrigue, and tantalizes the audience’s curiosity from the outset of the opera.

The dramatic motivation created by milord’s couplets is minute when compared with Zerline’s couplets which follow in scene v. In the latter, we find the answer to many questions and the beginning of the principal intrigue. The conflicts, which thereupon emerge, are almost all generated by Zerline’s couplets.

The Marquis of San-Marco finally makes his appearance in scene v. His grand entrance in a luxurious carriage announces more mystery and action. The adventures of Diavolo, about which a song, Voyez sur cette roche, has been written, spring up in a conversation between the Marquis and Mathéo. Zerline, at the Marquis’s request, sings two of the song’s 22 stanzas. The Marquis, interrupting Zerline, adds a third stanza of his own, which deals with the bandit’s use of disguises to infiltrate innocent young maidens’ homes.

Zerline’s couplets, Voyez sur cette roche, serve several dramatic functions, answering some questions on the one hand, and anticipating upcoming conflicts on the other. Karin Pendle
explains how Scribe makes dramatic use of this solo:

"Voyez sur cette roche" . . . is constructed in such a way and placed at such a point within the unfolding of the drama that it serves several purposes. The major function of the piece is narrative, to acquaint the listeners with the nature and adventures of Fra Diavolo, and as such it points the spotlight at a character who is deserving of the special emphasis that music provides. The narrative aspect of the song also serves the ends of the well-made libretto, first preparing the audience for the arrival of the bandit, then providing the first clear indication that Diavolo is indeed already present and is identical with the Marquis de San-Marco. In this function it is not just a static narration but at the same time a motivating force in the opera. This is emphasized musically by assigning the third stanza to the Marquis even though it could have been sung by Zerline with no damage to dramatic logic.\[2]

As Pendle states this solo appropriately serves the "ends of the well-made libretto." Aside from anticipating upcoming events by the contrived entrance of the Marquis and the exit of the English couple, it also establishes the opera's central qui pro quo—Diavolo's disguised identity. Diavolo's hidden identity in turn yields much confusion, misunderstanding, and conflicts among the characters including a duel between Lorenzo and Diavolo at the end of Act II.

The character portrayal of Diavolo is further enhanced in the Marquis' monologue, Je vais marcher sous mes bannières, which opens Act III. This solo traces the thought processes of the bandit Diavolo and isolates Diavolo on stage, thus permitting a closer view of his personality. In a recitative Diavolo announces that his plan to rob the Cokbourgs and Zerline is about to materialize. What then follows is a mixture of static reflections on immediate thoughts and narratives of past conquests.

This monologue, textually a multi-sectional number, begins with a description of his faithful comrades of various national-
ities and social backgrounds. He reflects on their fear and obedience of him, as well as the fear he arouses of himself in all who surround him. In the following section ("On m'amène un banquier: ..." to "et poursuis ton chemin") Diavolo portrays himself as a kind of Robin Hood taking gold from a banker, a noble lord, and a businessman for whom robbery is justice, and giving it to the poor. In the next textual segment ("Là c'est une fillette! ..." to "Je ne suis qu'une pauvre enfant") the Marquis conducts a dialogue with himself in a reconstructed confrontation with young girls who, in fear of him, beg for their lives. But the bandit is not without kindness and sympathy as he reassures his audience: "Nous ne demandons rien aux belles: / L'usage est de les épargner: / Mais toujours nous recevons d'elles / Ce que leur cœur veut nous donner". Then, quite enchanted with his condition, he realizes he must attend to present business; but first he momentarily slips back to his reveries and recalls his exploits with women. He tells of his ability to excite ladies' hearts with love while simultaneously inciting fear and jealousy in their husbands, thus making the one revere him and the other plead for mercy. His dream is interrupted, and he returns to his refrain, stating his present business upon which depends the realization of his daydreams.

This narrative of reflective and active states of mind exposes on the one hand the bandit's thoughts at a given moment in the drama, and on the other, given the textual content, it reveals the details and subtler shades of his personality. Never do we know Diavolo better than after this monologue. In terms of Diavolo's characterization this scene represents a dramatic highpoint.
A similar glimpse at character portrayal is offered by the remaining two soli, both sung by Zerline. This first of the two opens Act II. It subsides the agitated mood of Act I and sets a more relaxed atmosphere for Act II. This solo first begins with a small amount of action, then settles down into a state of static reflections. As Zerline prepares her guests' rooms, she rejoices at being alone, reflects on the day's commotion, and dreams of her beloved Lorenzo, and of how much she loves him. She concludes her brief air while slipping into a state of reverie about Lorenzo.

Quel bonheur! je respire. Oui, je suis seule ici; On me laisse un moment: qu'au moins il soit pour lui!

As brief as this air may be, it serves several dramatic functions. As was mentioned above, one of its roles is to paint Zerline's personality; but this characterization is merely a preparation for the true character portrayal which comes in the next air four scenes later in scene v. What then is its primary purpose? In a straightforward manner, this air establishes the location and atmosphere for the upcoming scenes. In addition it isolates Zerline for her grande scène du coucher in scene v, just as her couplets Voyez sur cette roche in Act I scene v, prepare the refined character portrayal presented in Diavolo's monologue in Act III, scene i.

Aside from its evident role of character portrayal, Zerline's grande scène du coucher offers an excellent example of ensemble writing involving a mixture of solo and 'trio' musical forms. After having bid her guests goodnight, Zerline retires to her bedroom where she prepares herself for bed. Unaware that three men are hiding in her closet, she leaves the closet door
open and begins to undress while reflecting on the events of the
next day, her marriage to Lorenzo. Her static reflections are
intermingled with the bandit trio’s plot to rob and murder. Let
us examine in detail how this solo of static reflections forms a
framework around which a small amount of action takes place.

The static-active element which persists throughout this
long scene is at first established in speech as Zerline prepares
to retire for the night. While Zerline pauses to contemplate
her fate and the reward money which has assured her happiness
and which she places under her pillow, the bandits plot their
next move. She slips deeper and deeper into her daydream as she
begins her cavatine, Oui c’est demain . . . . This first major
section of Zerline’s solo is interspersed with commentary by the
three hidden bandits. Looking forward to her marriage on the
next day, Zerline vows that she and Lorenzo will make "un meil-
leur ménage / Que cette Anglaise et son époux; / Car Lorenzo
n’est pas volage, / Il ne sera jamais jaloux.". Her thought is
interrupted as she pricks her finger. This occasions the first
comment from the closet as Beppo remarks on her beauty, only to
be hushed by Diavolo. Zerline quickly resumes her air confident
that her husband trusts her. Joyfully she reintones her
refrain, after which she pursues her train of thought: she has
not Pamela’s elegance or her looks, but Lorenzo has nothing to
complain about, because for a servant girl she has quite a good
figure. This expression of vanity prompts an outburst of laugh-
ter from the closet, this one heard by Zerline. Thinking that
the noise comes from the Cokbourgs’ room, she once more takes up
her joyful refrain. Thus concludes the first portion of this
long scene, in which Zerline’s static reflections form the
musical framework for a small amount of unfolding action. The following outline provides a structural summary of the scene's first part.

Outline of No.10, Section 1

| Air a | "Oui c'est demain" | Z rejoices at her upcoming marriage. (static) |
| Air b | "Nous ferons bien meilleur ménage" | Z and L will be a better match than the Cockbourgs. (static) |
| Interruption 1 "Elle est jolie" | Comments from the closet. (active) |
| Air a' | "C'est demain" | Variation of the refrain. (static) |
| Air b | "Pour moi, je n'ai pas l'élegance" | Z compares herself to milady. (static) |
| Air c | "Quoi voilà pour un servante" | Expression of vanity. (static) |
| Interruption 2 "Ah! ah! c'est original" | Outburst of laughter from the closet. (active) |
| Air a" | "C'est demain" | Reassured, Z repeats her refrain. (static) |

A change of pace occurs at this point, emphasized by a dramatic pause in Auber's score, and we move to Zerline's prayer, and the second section of this scene. The static-active alternation is nonetheless retained. Intermingled in a prayer to the Virgin for Lorenzo's safety, Zerline intones a warm goodnight to her absent beloved, and falls asleep. The bandits finally emerge from the closet to carry out their plan. While discussing their plan to rob milord they realize the danger Zerline represents to them, and they decide to kill her. According to the revealed plan and the manner in which the drama has unfolded, this should be the point at which Zerline is murdered, and the culmination of the scene; but somehow the audience knows that Zerline will not die. Her prayer for protection provides a glimpse of hope of an unexpected rescue. Indeed, a quite
unexpected element saves her life: in her sleep Zerline repeats her prayer to the Virgin, which startles the bandits until Lorenzo’s appearance. This final intonation of the prayer brings the second section of this grande scène du coucher to a close. Featuring larger and more important action-filled segments, it is dramatically more complex than the preceding section, as the following outline displays.

Outline of No.10, Section 2

a Prayer "Lorenzo que ton doux souvenir"... Z intones a prayer to the Virgin.
...O Vierge sainte...
b Interlude "Bonsoir, bonsoir mon ami" Z bids L goodnight.
a' Prayer "O Vierge sainte..." The prayer is partially repeated as she falls asleep.
v Trio "Que la prudence guide nos pas" The bandits discuss their plan.
d Trio-Dialogue "Elle dort..." More discussion.
c' Trio "Oui la prudence..." Bandits decide Z’s fate.
d' Trio-Dialogue "Et cette jeune fille" c' Trio "Oui la prudence..." In her sleep Z repeats her prayer.
a Prayer "O Vierge sainte..."

This second section is followed by a third and more ensemble-like section, involving the chorus of soldiers, Lorenzo, and the three bandits. Upon hearing the noise of the approaching soldiers, the bandits quickly retire to Zerline’s closet, and not a moment too soon for Zerline awakens from her sleep. The action continues as Lorenzo requests food and drink for his soldiers. The grande scène du coucher then smoothly moves on to a full-fledged ensemble.

As demonstrated above, Zerline’s solo part in the large scene, the most dramatically complex of all soli in the opera, not only spotlights Zerline as a character, and reveals the
subtler shades of her personality, but also provides a point around which a small amount of action pivot, action which is crucial to the rest of the plot. Zerline's moments of reflection act as a framework for the unfolding action of the bandits' crime. Despite the alternation of action and repose/reaction, the presence of the bandits, their plan, and all other movement in this scene, the spotlight remains fixed on Zerline. In addition to the purposeful characterization of this scene, this solo also helps to bring the audience up-to-date on the marriage issue, thus resolving the events and primary conflict of Act I. Simultaneously it also gives rise to new conflicts, and so acts as a motivating force for Act II as well as Act III.

As an opera, *Fra Diavolo* has far greater impact, interest, and musical personality than many of Scribe's other works, e.g., *Le Macon* (1823), *Leocadie* (1824), or even *Le Chalet* (1834).

Its subject is more inviting, its music more varied and colorful. Important changes have taken place, particularly in the work of Auber as a composer, but more important for present purposes are the elements that remain constant: the dramatic structure of [the] libretto, the distribution of the musical numbers, the situations in which music is required and used, the types of music involved. These are elements which [. . .] recur consistently in Scribe's opéras comiques, and they are items that set the pace and the conventions for opéra comique during Scribe's productive life.  

We have observed four dramatic situations in which soli are used: (1) where background information on pre-curtain events and/or characters was needed (Nos.1 & 2, and No.4; Act I, scenes 1, 3, and 5, respectively); (2) for characterization--here usually taking the form of narrative soli (Nos.4, 10 and 12; Act I, scene 5, Act II, scene 5, and Act III, scene 1, respectively); (3) to expose an emotional state of mind, or train of thought of
a character at a given moment in the story (Nos. 7, 10, 14; Act II, scenes 1 and 5, and Act III, scene 5, respectively); and (4) to distribute the number of soli through the opera in a manner that allows a character to occupy his appropriate musical position within the context of the drama (Nos. 9 and 14; Act II, scene 3, and Act III, scene 5, respectively). As stated in the above quotation, the traits exhibited in *Fra Diavolo* were to appear in many other opéras comiques premiered during Scribe's productive lifetime, and were to "set the pace and the conventions..." for the opéra-comique genre. We shall observe similar traits exhibited in the soli of two other contemporary opéras comiques: *Zampa, ou la Fiancée de marbre* and *Le Prê aux Clercs*, (libretti written by Mélesville and E. de Planard, respectively).
Notes


3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., p. 143.


9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.


13. Ibid., p. 172.
III. Zampa, ou la Fiancée de marbre

Zampa, ou la Fiancée de marbre (music by Louis-Ferdinand Herold, words by A.H.L. Mélesville) was performed at the Théâtre de l'Opéra-Comique on 3 May 1831. Like that of Fra Diavolo, its success was immense, as attested to by contemporary reviews, box office receipts and number of performances. In fact, Zampa was produced over 100 times at the Opéra-Comique during the four years following its première. Moreover, the work's popularity extended abroad where it was performed in several different foreign languages including Russian. Its greatest success, however, was achieved in Germany. Raoul Duhamel attributes Zampa's popularity there to its "âme germanique"—the same reason given by Adolphe Adam 76 years earlier.

Zampa a eu un prodigieux succès en Allemagne, où on le regarde à juste titre comme le chef-d'oeuvre de son auteur. En France, nous ne pensons pas de même, et le Pré aux Clercs obtient la préférence: cela est tout naturel. Zampa, plus sévère, convient mieux à l'imagination un peu sombre des Allemands; le Pré aux Clercs, où les mélodies sont plus franches, quoique peut-être moins distinguées, a plus d'attraits pour notre goût.

The Libretto:
Part I: Synopsis

The subject of Zampa, similar Fra Diavolo's, was truly a favorite of the public of the 1830s: a Neapolitan bandit terrorizes a countryside with thefts and assassinations. Unlike Scribe's story, Mélesville's is not based on any pre-existing source or legend. Nonetheless it does share certain elements with a story well-known to the Parisian public of the time, that of Mozart's Don Giovanni with which it not only shares similari-
ties of setting, but also of plot.

Zampa n'est d'autre, en effet, qu'un don Juan corsaire qui pour s'emparer de la fille fait jeté le père en prison et le menace de mort si la fille lui résiste. Cyniquement, il vient bravé la statue venerée d'une jeune femme qu'il a jadis séduite et délaissée; mais finalement, au moment où il s'apprête à commettre un nouveau forfait, il se trouve dans les bras de la statue de marbre, qui s'engloutit avec lui.*

Given its similarities with Mozart's opera, what then are the libretto elements which distinguished it and impelled Herold to set it to music? Duhamel explains that . . . "ce sujet, à la fois lyrique et fantastique, devait séduire Herold par cela même qu'il abondait en situations musicales."* Indeed, Mèlesville's libretto affords a multitude and great diversity of dramatic situations: a love plot interrupted by a villain who intends to claim both the young maiden and her father's wealth; a betrayed former fiancée now dead but whose presence is felt and projected in the animation of a marble statue erected in her memory; a retaliation plot combined with supernatural or mystical happenings; a series of festivities, reunions, and a climactic resolution which combines both supernatural, fantastique and moralizing elements. "Le côté fantastique y est traité avec toute l'ingéniosité possible; l'esprit y abonde, et les scènes de passion y sont développées dans un style entraînant."*

Zampa's characters, analogous to Fra Diavolo's, presented Herold with a great diversity of personalities. Zampa, the debonnaire 'corsaire' whose life consists of debauchery and crime, manifests a personality of colorful and often contrasting traits: at times he seems crude and cruel; at others, however momentary, sincere, gentle and loving. Above all, a mystical quality surrounds Zampa, one which entangles within itself both the spectator and the other two primary characters: Camille and
Alphonse.

Camille, like Scribe's Zerline, is the young innocent victim at the mercy of the bandit's every wish. Her personality is one of pure innocence, gentleness, love and, above all, fidelity as is apparent in Act III when she convinces Zampa, her husband by that point in time, to allow her to enter a convent in order to remain faithful to her beloved Alphonse. Alphonse, the hero "non-hero" and Camille's beloved, like Scribe's Lorenzo in Fra Diavolo, is a brigadier in pursuit of the legendary Zampa. He is a hero in that he defends the victim against the bandit and inevitably triumphs in the end; a "non-hero" in that he does not dominate the stage as traditional operatic heroes do but instead steps aside and yields the stage to the villain. Furthermore, Alphonse is not directly responsible for Zampa's downfall. The betrayed fiancée—the marble statue—like Mozart's Commandatore, brings on the villain's just downfall, and thus saves Camille from the same seduction and betrayal she suffered at the hands of the villain.

Three secondary characters add to the intrigue: Ritta, Daniel, and Dandolo. Ritta, Camille's confidante, is but a bystander for much of the first act. However, with the arrival of Daniel, her long-lost husband whom she believed drowned, Ritta triggers new conflicts. Her persistence and curiosity solves many mysteries for the spectators, as will be seen in the following synopsis of the plot. Daniel, who portrays the "good gone astray", is nonetheless still fearful of God's judgement. [We find no counterpart for this character in Scribe's Fra Diavolo.] Dandolo, Ritta's courter, provides much of the comic relief through his cowardly personality and actions.
Despite the diversity of personalities represented by Mèlesville’s characters, there is no substantial character development in the libretto. The personalities remain throughout the story as they are initially presented. Mèlesville merely exposes different facets of their personalities from various viewpoints.

Zampa’s setting differs from that of Fra Diavolo in that it involves the castle of a rich nobleman, and not the country inn of an undistinguished peasant. While the libretti differ in the social classes they portray, both stories unfold in the neighbourhoods of Naples, and the essence of their respective subject matter is fundamentally the same, if one overlooks the theatrical elements (e.g., the appearance of the vengeful statue in Zampa). In Zampa, as in Fra Diavolo, the plot deals with an infamous Neapolitan bandit who, although pursued by the law, indulges in terrorizing and seducing young women, be they married or not. Furthermore, both villains find their just fate while seeking their fortune at the expense of innocent people. The following synopsis of Mèlesville’s Zampa will reveal its similarities with Scribe’s Fra Diavolo.

Zampa, a famous bandit who has spread terror throughout the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily, is arrested by the viceroy’s guards and condemned to death. For fear he may escape again—as he has many times before—Zampa’s description has been sent to every government officer. Act I reveals Zampa’s true identity: he is of a noble family once favored by the State; he bears the title of the Count of Monza; and has a younger brother named Alphonse whom he has never known and suspects in no way to be his opponent. Alphonse, an army officer, enters amidst the
festivities of his wedding day to rendez-vous with his fiancée Camille, daughter of the rich Lugano. Young girls gather around to congratulate the handsome couple, as Alphonse offers gifts to his guests. In the castle's courtyard, where the first scene unfolds, a marble statue of Alice de Manfredi can be seen. Alice, a victim of seduction and deception, was 'murdered' by the treachery of her lover (later revealed to be Zampa). Her story is told by Camille in a complainte, D'une haute naissance. Camille, like all young girls on the eve of their nuptial engagement, will later invoke Alice as her guardian angel (Saint Alice, Veillez sur nous).

As the action continues, Alphonse is mysteriously summoned to the castle gates by horsemen. Thinking that his callers are his invited friends, he exits and disappears for some time. It is Zampa who appears, bearing a letter addressed to Camille from her father. Lugano, her father, begs her to grant the bandit all he may desire in return for his safe release from prison aboard Zampa's ship. Zampa, happy to find no resistance, objects to the planned nuptial and demands that Camille be his bride. As a frightened Camille retires to her chamber, Zampa and his band celebrate their first victory with a grandiose feast. The festivities are abruptly interrupted at the sight of the marble statue which seems to watch over Zampa with a vengeful eye. The superstitious Daniel, Zampa's right-hand man, recognizes the statue as Zampa's last Neapolitan victim, Alice de Manfredi. To mock Daniel's fear, Zampa defyingly approaches the statue and places his engagement ring on her finger vowing eternal fidelity, at least to the next day. Laughter breaks out and the singing is resumed. Yet the unusual event is not ended.
Before taking leave from his friends, Zampa attempts to retrieve his ring from the statue’s finger. The statue however withdraws its hand holding fast the ring. Zampa is shaken despite his calm exterior appearance, while his accomplices fall to the ground in terror. This *coup de théâtre* brings Act I to a suspenseful climax.

As Act II opens, the preparations for Zampa and Camiile’s wedding are underway. The stage unveils a seashore panorama where women are praying before the madonna. Nothing is more peaceful than this scene after the violent emotions of Act I and of the first scene of Act II in which Zampa sings his forceful cavatina *Toi dont la grace séduisante . . . Il faut souscrire à mes lois*. A brief comical encounter between Daniel and Zampa follows. After Zampa's exit, Ritta, observing from afar, seems to recognize Daniel as her husband, absent now for ten years. At her expression of happiness and constant fidelity, Daniel denies being her absent husband, thus seeking to uncover her true feelings for him. However his anger is triggered when Dandolo arrives and announces the publication of his and Ritta's marriage banns. This episode provides relief and variety from the primary intrigue, and is most effective because of its placement in the plot.

Alphonse finally reappears. He explains to Ritta that his call to the castle gates was a trap laid by Zampa's men from whom he succeeded in escaping. He quickly learns of Camille's intention to marry the stranger whom he recognizes as the infamous Zampa. As Alphonse attempts to arrest Zampa, a messenger arrives with the viceroy's pardon and request for the bandit's services in the State Navy. Through the viceroy's letter
Alphonse discovers that Zampa is his missing brother. Unable to alter the events, Alphonse breaks his sword in fury and walks away as the priest blesses the union of Zampa and Camille. As in Act I, and again to Zampa's surprise and horror, the statue makes a second unexpected appearance in the chapel. The curtain falls.

During Act III the spectator is preoccupied with the bandit's fate, but before satisfying the audience's unsatiable thirst for justice, Mélesville introduces two new events. First, a plaintive nocturne (in the form of a barcarolle) is heard, sung by Alphonse who is expressing his farewell to his beloved. This is answered by Camille who seeks to console him while mourning her own fate. Then follows a charming serenade, sung by the chorus which expresses its good wishes to the newly married couple. Unable to stand the pain any longer, and knowing the reason for Camille's action, Alphonse infiltrates the nuptial chamber with the intention of convincing Camille to escape with him. Her moral conscience prevents her from complying. At this moment, Zampa and his men enter the chamber and seize Alphonse. Zampa's treatment of Alphonse triggers a confrontation between Zampa and Camille. Upon the former's forceful approaches, Camille seeks refuge in the alcove. Zampa pursues her only to find himself in the arms of the icy statue with which he disappears amidst flames. A final tableau shows Camille, her father, and Alphonse reunited on the seashore. The chorus intones the prayer to the madonna, sung in Act II. Thus ends Mélesville's story with the triumph of good over evil, and the reestablishment of happiness and calm.
Part II: The Well-Made Play Elements in Zampa

Scribe's influence on the opéra-comique libretto is most obvious in the structural features of Mélesville's libretto for Zampa. Like Fra Diavolo and most of Scribe's dramatic works, Zampa exhibits the six fundamental features of Scribe's well-made play: (1) a delayed-action plot; (2) a pattern of increasing tension and suspense; (3) ups and downs in the hero's fortune; (4) a scène à faire; (5) a quiproquo, or misunderstanding; and (6) the reflection of the overall structure of the play within each act. Of all these features, the most obvious in Zampa is the delayed-action plot. As the curtain rises, the action is already in motion: Camille and Alphonse have fallen in love and are now preparing to be wedded; Lugano, Camille's father, has been taken prisoner by Zampa's men and held captive for ransom on board the bandit's ship; Ritta's husband, Daniel, presumed dead for ten years, is seen amongst Zampa's men seeking his fortune through crime; and Dandolo is about to marry Ritta. As we have seen in Fra Diavolo, and will see below, much of the background information is revealed in the text of musical numbers, especially solo songs.

A considerable amount of the increase in tension and suspense in this libretto is provided by the repeated appearance of the threatening marble statue. One cannot help but wonder and speculate, with each appearance of the statue, what the outcome of her vengeance will be, and how it will affect the primary intrigue. Camille's dilemma and her seemingly inevitable fate at the hands of Zampa also provide gradual increases in tension and suspense, as each new obstacle or conflict lessens any hope of rescue.
The ups and downs in the hero's fortune are not as pronounced in Zampa as they are in Fra Diavolo. This is primarily due to Alphonse's absence through a large part of the unfolding drama. Nonetheless certain events in the drama may be isolated as high or low points in his fortune. At the opening of the story Alphonse is experiencing a definite high point when he is about to wed his beloved Camille. He has also gained the favour of her father who has assured Alphonse happiness and wealth. For much of the remainder of the opera Alphonse suffers a series of setbacks: he is ambushed by pirates; fights his way to freedom only to discover that his beloved is about to marry someone else who incidentally happens to be his ill-reputed brother; and to add insult to injury, the latter is granted pardon and protection by the viceroy, thus preventing Alphonse from arresting him and regaining Camille. The only glimpse of hope occurs when Alphonse, recognizing the stranger to be the infamous Zampa, attempts to arrest him, and regain Camille. This brief moment of hope is thwarted by the arrival of the letter of pardon. From this point on a second period of despair sets in as Alphonse disappears again only to reappear in Camille's nuptial chamber in an attempt to convince her to escape with him. His prolonged presence there leads to his discovery by Zampa and his men, who drag him out with the intention of killing him. The ultimate triumph of good over evil, and the ensuing happy ending characteristic of all opéras comiques of the period are not provided by the hero, Alphonse, or by an event arising from his actions, as is the norm in these works. Instead, this victory results directly from the final appearance of the previously victimized Alice de Manfredi, in
the form of the commemorative marble statue, who seizes Zampa and drags him down amidst flames. The destruction of the villain by this means is responsible for restoring the elements—calm, order and happiness—usually reinstated by the story's hero. In this sense Alphonse, the so-called hero of the story, is not really a hero. It is possibly for this reason that the ups and downs in his fortune are not as pronounced as those of other opéra-comique heroes such as Lorenzo in *Fra Diavolo*.

In *Zampa* the scène à faire—the statue carrying Zampa off amidst infernal flames—is much more spectacular than that in *Fra Diavolo*. This scene represents a true coup de théâtre. Reminiscent of Mozart's last scene in *Don Giovanni*, this scene could not help but astound the Parisian public of the period.

Like many of the features of the well-made play, the *qui-proquo* in *Zampa* is not observed as strictly as in Scribe's operas. Zampa's disguised identity is revealed mid-way through the opera in Act II rather than at the opera's climax as in *Fra Diavolo*. One may speculate that the reason for this departure lies in the fact that Zampa's secret identity is not as crucial to the plot as Diavolo's is in Scribe's opera. Zampa's true identity is suspected from the beginning and is confirmed very early in the opera as Camille reads her father's letter informing her of his dilemma and the name of his oppressor. Although Zampa's true identity is not revealed to other characters until Act II, the audience is aware of it. The relative unimportance given this *qui-proquo* by Mélesville is attested to by the fact that, as Zampa's true identity is revealed—an event which would normally resolve all conflicts and bring the opera to an end—new conflicts emerge to carry on
the unfolding of the drama. The revelation of Zampa's true identity thus seems to have no negative effect on the continuation of the drama or its conclusion.

The dramatic structure of the whole libretto as well as that of each individual act is comparable to that of Fra Diavolo. Each act begins by exposing a series of conflicts, one or more of which are resolved at the climax of the act. The remaining conflicts are carried through; these are resolved either in the next act, or at the climax of the last act where all conflicts are resolved. The chart on the next page outlines the structural organization of Zampa. It reveals the work's overall pattern of conflicts (problems) and resolutions and those of each individual act.

Musical Soli

Whereas Scribe applied a set number theory in the distribution of the musical numbers in Fra Diavolo, Mélesville's distribution seems to be determined by the course of the unfolding action. Regardless of the approach Mélesville used in his placement of musical numbers, he still warranted for this aspect of his work praise from nineteenth-century critics. Fétis, in fact, seems to single out Mélesville's drama from other contemporary works:

... Un mérite assez rare et assez remarquable de ce drame est celui de la position des morceaux de musique qui sont en général bien amenés. Enfin Zampa me semble à la lettre un fort bon poème d'opéra.
Zampa: Overall Dramatic Scheme

Problems → Resolutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Act I</th>
<th>Act II</th>
<th>Act III</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problems</td>
<td>Resolutions</td>
<td>Problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L imprisoned</td>
<td>by Z.</td>
<td>Z and men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z and men</td>
<td>Z arrested</td>
<td>then pardoned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z and men</td>
<td>Z arrested</td>
<td>then pardoned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A de M now</td>
<td>Statue appears in chapel.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Da and R to be married.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Z=Zampa; C=Camille; Al=Alphonse; A de M=Alice de Manfredi; L=Lugano; R=Ritta; D=Daniel; Da=Dandolo
Comments like Fétis' and the following by Larousse, in which Zampa and Le Pré aux Clercs are compared, imply that the drama Zampa deserved special merit not necessarily attributed to other opéras comiques of its time:

... au point de vue du style, de la manière d'écrire, de la fécondité des ressources musicales, de la clarté du discours mélodiques, Zampa offre un ensemble de qualités supérieures. Les situations dramatiques y sont accusées par le musicien avec plus de fermeté que tous ses autres ouvrages, ...10

This comparison could be made with several other contemporary operas and Zampa's dramatic merit would still stand out. The musical quality of the score may not concern us here, but the suitability of the musical forms to their respective dramatic situations does. The following chart displays the distribution of the musical numbers in Zampa.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Incipits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I, 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>INTRO: Chorus, Air</td>
<td>&quot;Dans ces présens&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Couplets</td>
<td>&quot;A ce suprême bonheur&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Complainte (Ballade)</td>
<td>&quot;Mes bons amis&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Trio</td>
<td>&quot;D'une haute naissance&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Quatuor</td>
<td>&quot;Qu'as-tu donc?&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>FINALE: Chorus</td>
<td>&quot;Le voilà que mon âme est émue&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Couplets</td>
<td>&quot;Au signal . . .&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Chorus</td>
<td>&quot;Que la vague écumante&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Chorus</td>
<td>&quot;Au plaisir . . .&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II, 1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Prière (à 5 voix)</td>
<td>&quot;Aux pieds de la madone&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Cavatine</td>
<td>&quot;Toi dont la grâce séduisante&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Duo</td>
<td>&quot;Juste ciel! . . .&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Duo-Trio</td>
<td>&quot;Pourquoi vous troubler&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>FINALE: Chorus</td>
<td>&quot;L'écho de nos montagnes&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Ronde</td>
<td>&quot;Douce jouvencelle&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Chorus</td>
<td>&quot;Que vois-je . . .&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Musical Distribution
### Musical Soli

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location Number</th>
<th>Cast</th>
<th>Synopsis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I, 1</td>
<td>1a</td>
<td>Camille, overwhelmed with happiness, awaits her fiancé Alphonse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I, 2</td>
<td>1b</td>
<td>Alphonse invites everyone to his wedding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I, 4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Camille tells the story of Alice de Manfredi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I, 13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Zampa sings to entertain his companions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II, 1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Zampa, awaiting Camille as she prays at the chapel, forcefully states his intentions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above chart enables us to view the musical soli in terms of the opera's entire musical structure. The majority of the musical soli in opéras comiques of the period—and Zampa is no exception—are often concentrated in the first few scenes of the first act; the remaining soli are grouped in the opening scenes of subsequent acts with one solo being reserved for the finale of each act. The expository nature of the first three soli of Act I and the role of character portrayal of the opening soli of Acts II and III explain their placement in the opening scenes of each act, as we shall discuss later in more detail.

The respective location and dramatic situations of each solo are illustrated in the following chart.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Act</th>
<th>Scene</th>
<th>Character(s)</th>
<th>Event(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>II, 1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Zampa</td>
<td>RONDE: Zampa, awaiting Camille, entertains his friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III, 1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Alphonse/Camille</td>
<td>BARCAROLLE: Alphonse has come to say farewell to his beloved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III, 8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Zampa</td>
<td>CAVATINE: Zampa tries to resuscitate Camille who has fainted.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the curtain rises for Act I, revealing a gothic room where a celebration is underway, we are soon made aware of the day's events. A chorus of young maidens informs the spectator of an upcoming wedding, that of Camille and her beloved fiancé whose name is not revealed. Camille, anxiously awaiting the arrival of her husband-to-be, sings a brief *air* in which she expresses her emotional and mental states. This song, *A ce suprême bonheur* (No.1a: Act I, sc.1), not only serves to introduce Camille as the central character of the love plot, but also exposes her state of mind, and reveals some pre-curtain events essential to the plot. Each section of this rondeau form solo (ABAC with a choral refrain preceding and following it) reveals a small piece of the unfolding puzzle. In the first section (A) Camille senses an overwhelming joy, yet one in which she dares not believe when her beloved is absent. The first contrasting segment (B), *Idole de mon père*, takes Camille one step into the past and away from her immediate emotional state to inform us that her father's full consent to this marriage has been given, and this to Camille's great contentment because "L'époux que je préfère / Est celui qu'il choisit . . .". This glance into the recent past is but momentary for Camille soon returns to her dream-like refrain (A). Section C, *Mais quand je vois Alphonse*, reveals for the first time the name of her beloved. In addition, through a description of the calming effect his presence
impresses upon her, his gentle, faithful and strong character is also revealed. The refrain is not repeated after this contrasting section; instead Mélesville has chosen to move ahead to the next scene to Alphonse's couplets, *Mes bons amis* (No. 1b: Act I, sc. 1), by way of a brief chorus. In his strophic song, Alphonse extends his invitation to his friends to attend his wedding. While Camille's air merely introduced Alphonse and prepared his arrival, Alphonse's couplets unveil more refined traits of his character and status in life: he is not rich, yet generous and kind, grateful for Lugano's generosity, and most of all madly in love.

Both soli are part of a larger entity called the "Introduction"—a term often used in opéras comiques of the period and one which usually encompasses the first three or four scenes of the first Act. As shown above, these soli pieces serve to: (1) introduce two characters who are essential to the plot; (2) expose parts of their respective personalities and present states of mind; (3) reveal some background information necessary to the unfolding drama; and (4) introduce the love and marriage theme which will prevail, in one form or another, throughout the drama. Thus, these first two songs serve a dual purpose: that of "introduction" and of "exposition". One must not underestimate the importance of these two soli, for, although they reveal but a small portion of the necessary background information, they are nonetheless instigating forces in propelling the drama forward. Like Scribe, Mélesville unveils the elements of his drama in a very gradual manner, on one hand tantalizing the spectator's curiosity and thus drawing him further into the story, and on the other, satisfying part of his
appetite in order to appease any great anxiety.

With the third solo Camille's _complainte, D'une haute naissance_ (No.2: Act I, sc.2), Mélesville captures the audience's curiosity and the drama begins to unfold. A source of possible conflict and of definite suspense and mystery is unveiled as Camille sings of a young betrayed maiden in whose memory her people have raised a marble statue. At the urging of Alphonse whose curiosity is kindled at the mention of the madonna's name, Camille narrates in her ballade-like _complainte_ the story of Alice de Manfredi, her seduction, and her consequent fate. The strophic song with refrain tells of a young 16-year-old Florentine girl of noble birth, whose innocence and beauty charmed all men and made her the victim of deception and seduction at the hands of a mysterious stranger. A prayer to the madonna for protection acts as a refrain to the narrative:

*Ah! soyez-nous propice*
*Sainte Alice*
*Veillez sur nous;*
*Nous prierons Dieu pour vous!*

This solo is obviously of a narrative nature. At this point in the libretto its significance is difficult to assess, for it is only later that we discover (1) the identity of the seducer, Zampa; (2) that he is Alphonse's older brother; and (3) the reason why the statue, yearning for revenge . . .

*Semble toujours gémir!*
*Quand, la nuit, on l'assure,*
*Le vent gronde en fureur.*
*Ce marbre encor murmure*
*Et nomme le trompeur!*

Thus, this seemingly secondary solo acts as a motivating force for the opera's primary intrigue. It introduces the character of Zampa by name, thus anticipating his appearance, reveals an
unresolved portion of his past which may return to haunt him, and prepares the appearance of the statue and the fate she prepares for her betrayer. (The identity of the seducer, as Alphonse's brother, the Count of Monza, is revealed by Alphonse in a dialogue with Camille, immediately following the latter's narration.)

Zampa has now been introduced, although in a mysterious and suspenseful manner, and the fundamental traits of his personality have also been unveiled through the narration of Alice de Manfredi's story. But his full portrait is far from complete. This task is reserved for two other soli, both sung by the infamous bandit himself: the first is a lengthy monologue which opens Act II (No.7: *Toi que la grâce séduisante*), and the second is a brief plea to Camille to listen to him in Act III scene 8 (No.13: *C'est un amant qui vous supplie*). A third solo can also be attributed a similar role of character portrayal: Zampa's couplets in Act I's Finale scene 13 (No.5: *Que la vague écumante*). For the moment, let us concentrate on the first two soli mentioned above.

The curtain rises on a seashore plain at the foot of the mountain range of the Val-Démoné. Near the gothic chapel where Camille and the women are praying, Zampa patiently awaits his bride-to-be. In the recitative, which sets the tone for his monologue, Zampa expresses his uneasiness in feeling tenderness for Camille. The *cantabile* which follows clearly shows the hold which Camille has on him.

*Toi que la grâce séduisante,*
Porte en mes sens le trouble et le bonheur
Viens, que ta voix douce et touchante
Retentisse encore à mon coeur!
Nonetheless, as any terrorist who desires to be always in control, he quickly dismisses these weak feelings in the second half of the cantabile.

Beauté faible et craintive,
Te voilà ma captive!
De l'amour de Zampa
Rien ne te sauvera!

His pride takes over as he pursues this train of thought in his refrain, Il faut souscrire à mes lois! Like Diavolo's monologue Je vois marcher sous mes bannières in Act III of Scribe's Fra Diavolo, Zampa's monologue traces the bandit's thought processes at a given moment in the opera, thus permitting a closer view of his personality.

The text alternates between static reflections and more direct narrative portions. In the first section, which serves as a refrain, Zampa paints himself as a vrai forban who always gets his lady. The next section recalls Leporello's Catalogue Aria in Mozart's Don Giovanni. Zampa lists his love conquests in India, Italy, Spain, Arabia, and England. After the refrain Zampa tells how he would kidnap any beautiful woman and flee with her. He explains his captive's gradual submission.

A mes accens son coeur est sourd
Le premier jour,
Mais dès le second, la pauvrette
Ne pleure plus autant...
Et le troisième... en soupirant,
Je l'entends qui répète:
Il faut souscrire à ses lois!...

The refrain is then repeated. In terms of Zampa's character this scene represents a dramatic highpoint. Never do we know him better than after this monologue. Thus, given its placement in the drama, this cavatine provides a motivating force for Zampa's action and moreover for the primary intrigue.
A different facet of Zampa’s character momentarily emerges in Act III scene 8 when Camille faints as Alphonse is dragged out of the nuptial suite by Zampa’s men. Zampa here displays genuine sincerity and concern for Camille as he attempts to revive her.

C’est un amant qui vous supplie,
Ne tremblez plus auprès de moi!
Vous adorez, voilà ma vie;
Vous obéir, voilà ma loi!..

These feelings of concern and tenderness should not come as a total surprise, for they were anticipated in the confusion and anxiety the bandit felt in Act II scene 1 and were expressed in his cavatine (No.7). In fact, Zampa’s cavatine emphasizes the weakest aspect of his character which is "... respectueuse et presque craintive comme un premier aveu d’amour." In terms of the drama, the cavatine’s strength cannot be denied: "La puissance dramatique de ce morceau et son expression passionnée ont fait croire à bien des personnes que l’opéra de Zampa aurait mieux convenu à la salle de la rue Lepelletier [the Opéra] qu’à l’Opéra-Comique."

Zampa sings two other solo songs in the opera, both of which are part of Finales: the first is a ballade-couplets in scene 13 of Act I (No.5), the second, a ronde in scene 11 of Act II (No.10). Both soli are sung as divertissements, that is, as entertainment for his wedding guests. The first is sung after Zampa has successfully overtaken Lugano’s castle and interfered with Camille’s wedding plans. It immediately precedes the first appearance of the statue involving the incident with the ring. The first few lines of the first stanza subtly foreshadow Zampa’s fate.
Que la vague écumante,
Me lance vers les cieux;
Que l'onde mugissante,
S'entrouve sous mes yeux!

(The spectator, of course, is not aware of this clue until later in the opera when the presence of the statue is further explained.) Zampa then intones a toast, a refrain repeated by a chorus of men, which manifests Zampa's nonchalant nature. He raises his glass to good times.

Quand d'aussi bon vin
Mon verre est plein...
Buvons, car peut-être un naufrage
Finira demain
Notre destin.

He does not seem to be concerned about his actions, tomorrow or dying for that matter. The second stanza emphasizes this carefree nature as he states his indifference at a lady's infidelity. This ballade thus reveals Zampa as a fearless, carefree, indignant and unfaithful individual. In addition to the role of characterization, this ballade also anticipates the disclosure of Zampa's identity as Alice de Manfredi's seducer.

Above all, this solo's primary function is to musically spotlight Zampa for the first time since the opening curtain, and as such serves to introduce the principal character of the plot.

This ballade also prepares the climax of Act I. As Bel-laigue confirms, Act I's Finale with the solo affords a great outpouring of emotions and passions with the statue's appearance and the resultant action.

... festin de pirates italiens--grandiose éclat. Quel débordement de passions, d'instincts effrénés!.. Les brigands boivent en gentilhommes; c'est une fête de grands seigneurs plus qu'une orgie de bandits. Zampa lance son couplet bachique d'une voix qui ne tremble pas. Il faut être maître de soi pour lever aussi son verre, pour rythmer aussi
fièrement un toast magnifique. Il y a quelque chose de Byron dans ce personnage de Zampa et dans ce brindisi de patricien.  

The barcarolle of Act II (No.10), like the previous ballade, is also an invitation to Zampa’s wedding. As Zampa again awaits Camille—this time for the wedding itself—he sings to entertain his friends. Zampa’s barcarolle emphasizes the carefree nature of his personality seen in other soli. Although the spotlight is once again on Zampa, it does not reveal anything new of his personality. What then is its purpose? A careful look at the text reveals a certain parallel with the immediate action: the text first calls upon the “douce jouvenelle” to come, then reassures her that even . . .

Si ton coeur n’aime déjà,
Sois moins fière
Moins sévère,
Car bientôt ton tour viendra.

Like the jouvenelle’s seducer, Zampa calls upon Camille several times to give in to him, reassuring her that one day she will accept her fate and even possibly love him. The second stanza sees the young girl dreaming of a young husband and of happiness. To her yearning the echo answers

Patience
Et constance,
Car bientôt ton tour viendra.

This last expression of reassurance anticipates Camille’s eventual rescue from the grips of the bandit. Of course, one can only speculate on this deeper meaning of the text, for there is no way to prove that such a parallel was indeed intended by the librettist. Nonetheless such speculative observations cannot be entirely dismissed for similar parallels have been observed in soli of other operas comiques of the period.
Superficially, Zampa's barcarolle may be said to occur for reasons of musical balance. The finale of each act contains a solo which is contained within an ensemble number and which is sung by Zampa: Act I scene 8 *Que la vague écumante*, Act II scene 9 *Douce jouvencelle*, and Act III scene 8 *C'est un amant qui vous supplie*. If one compares this libretto's structure to a sonata form, whereby Act I is the exposition, Act II the development, and Act III the recapitulation with Coda, we can see that Zampa's soli also occupy the most important and strategic points in the structure. His first solo ends the Exposition with motivation and a certain climax. The Development consists of Zampa's long monologue and barcarolle (the only two soli in the entire act). Furthermore, these two soli expand dramatic ideas introduced in Act I, thus supporting the idea of Act II as a development section. The Recapitulation reunites Alphonse and Camille as at the beginning of Act I, the Exposition, while the Coda begins with a brief cavatine by Zampa and climaxes with an ensemble number accompanying Zampa's destruction.

The remaining solo is shared by Camille and Alphonse, the two lovers, and opens Act III. "C'est une barcarolle [labelled *nocturne* in the libretto] plaintive chantée par Alphonse, qui s'éloigne, et par Camille, qui cherche à le consoler tout en gémissant sur sa propre destinée." With the exception of his brief air in Act I scene 2 (part of the Introduction), Alphonse has no other solo despite his position as Zampa's chief rival. Therefore, this should be reason enough to assign him this solo and to place him in the musical spotlight, but Mélesville has another motive in mind. For the first time in the opera, he permits us to observed Alphonse's personality. Despite the fact
that he does not possess "l’allure chevalresque [de Zampa]", he nevertheless displays great emotional potential when "... il soupire au troisième acte une délicieuse barcarolle." This barcarolle truly reveals his kind, caring and loving personality. It is worth noting, however, that Alphonse's barcarolle could be eliminated without causing harm to the drama. He has come to express his farewell to Camille, something which could have been more briefly conveyed in speech or by a letter. His stanza simply expresses his farewell to his country and homeland, of course, containing an indirect reference to Camille. Camille, recognizing his voice from inside the castle, takes over in the number, and reassures him of her eternal faithfulness and love as she also sings her farewell. The solo reveals nothing except for the love and hurt of the lovers. Alphonse's subsequent escalade to Camille's chamber triggers more tension and suspense than does this solo. The nocturne itself thus serves no dramatic purpose, with the exception perhaps of providing a musical spotlight for Alphonse.

Many similarities can be seen between the uses of soli in Mélesville's Zampa and those in Scribe's Fra Diavolo. For instance, Alphonse's barcarolle could be compared to Lorenzo's non-dramatic nocturne in Act III of Fra Diavolo. They are both utilized to spotlight the protagonists of their respective dramas (although neither Alphonse nor Lorenzo are prevailing figures) and for musical balance between the number of soli assigned to the antagonists and those given to the protagonists.

Other more significant parallels are manifested by the other soli. As in Fra Diavolo, Zampa's soli fit into five distinctive dramatically functional categories: (1) expository
soli which reveal background information on pre-curtain events and characters—EXPOSITORY soli (Nos. 1 and 2 in Fra Diavolo and Nos. 1 and 2 in Zampa); (2) those used for characterization, revealing strong as well as subtler shades of personalities (No. 4 in Fra Diavolo Voyez sur cette roche, and No. 7 in Zampa); (3) those exposing a character's thoughts and ideas at a given moment in the opera (No. 12 in Fra Diavolo and No. 10 in Zampa); (4) those revealing the emotional state and/or state of mind of a character at a given moment (Zerline's soli in Act II of Fra Diavolo: Nos. 7 and 10, and the two first soli of Act I in Zampa); and (5) those used purely for musical balance, or for that purpose in combination with one of the above four purposes (Nos. 9 and 14 in Fra Diavolo, and No. 11 in Zampa).

Other noted trends which emerge in the study of opéra-comique solo forms appear in the placement of certain categories of soli within an opera. For example, it was previously noted in our discussion of soli nos. 1a, 1b and 2 of Zampa and soli nos. 1, 2 and 4 of Fra Diavolo that expository soli occur within the first five scenes of the first act of both operas. This would seem to be the practice common to other operas of the period. Similarly, it was observed that the third acts of these two operas often begin with lengthy monologues sung by the principle antagonists of each opera. This appears to be the practice in three-act opéras comiques of the 1830s. Moreover, these third-act monologues represent dramatic highpoints in the characterization of the antagonists. One further feature of these third-act monologues is the fact that narratives infiltrate the soli textures. Expository soli also often exhibit narrative textures, as do some seemingly non-dramatic
soli in which narratives are used to entertain other characters (i.e., Diavolo's barcarolle *Agnès la jouvencelle* and Zampa's *Douce jouvencelle*). Thus, one can begin, through the recurrence of certain soli in certain dramatic situations, to isolate common trends exhibited in 1830s opéras comiques—common dramatic practices which appear in *Le Pré aux Clercs* (as we shall see in the next chapter) and in other works surveyed but not herein discusses.
Notes

1. A.H.J. Mélesville is a pseudonym for Anne Honoré Joseph Duveyrier (1787-1865).


7. Ibid.


14. Evidence of such narrative soli appears in works such as: Scribe's Fra Diavolo (1830) as mentioned above; Vial and Duport's Danilowa (1830): Eliska's ronde "Dès que nos fôrets" (II, ii); E. de Planard's Les deux familles (1831): Fabio's couplets "Antonia, triste et dolente" (II, iv); Scribe's Lestocq (1834): Catherine's couplets "Le pauvre Ivan" (II, i); and de Planard's L'Eclair (1835): Lionel's song "Finir ma peine" (II, v); to name but a few.


17. Almost every opéra comique examined presented its 'expository' soli within the first few scenes of its first act. For example, the 3 expository soli in the one-act opéra comique Le Chalet (1834) are found within the first six scenes of the first act; 3 in the first 5 scenes of Les deux familles (1831); 4 in the first 7 of Le Livre de l'ermite (1832); and 2 in the first 4 of L'Eclair (1835).
IV: Le Pré aux Clercs

The dramatic quality of Eugène de Planard's libretto Le Pré aux Clercs was praised repeatedly by nineteenth-century critics.

Of the work, Fétis, in 1832, wrote:

On voit qu'il y a de l'intérêt dans le sujet: ... Les personnages sont bien dessinés; ... M. Planard a d'ailleurs l'habitude d'avoir tracé de belles situations musicales et d'avoir bien servi le génie du compositeur. Tous les morceaux de musique sont bien placés et bien coupés; enfin, à mon sens, le Pré aux Clercs est un des meilleurs drames lyriques qui aient été donnés depuis long-temps à l'Opéra-Comique.²

Fifty to sixty years later an unsigned article in Larousse's Grand Dictionnaire du xixe siècle restated the same praise:

"L'inspiration du célèbre compositeur français a été provoquée et soutenue par un excellent livret."³

Le Pré aux Clercs was premiered at the Théâtre de l'Opéra-Comique on 15 December 1832. It instantaneously gained public favor, was performed more than 150 times in its first thirteen months of existence,⁴ and remained in the Opéra-Comique's repertoire well into 20th century. Like Zampa its reputation quickly spread to many parts of Europe and North America.
The Libretto

Part I: Drama-Characters-Synopsis

Planard’s libretto presents a skilful arrangement of certain episodes derived from Mérimée’s *La Chronique du règne de Charles IX*, published in 1829. Absent from Planard’s story are the passionate outbursts of Mérimée’s characters, and the extremely sensuous and cruel elements of the story. Nonetheless *Le Pré aux Clercs* skilfully combines...

Of the three opera libretti studied herein, *Le Pré aux Clercs* exhibits a wider variety of character types and dramatic situations.

The characterization in Planard’s libretto is far superior to that of either of the two other libretti previously discussed. The primary difference between them lies not so much in a greater diversity of character types, but rather in the refinement and historical accuracy of the character portrayal. Camille Bellaigue remarked, in 1886:

As was the case in *Fra Diavolo* and *Zampa*, there is little character development in *Le Pré aux Clercs*. Nevertheless, its
dramatis personae are much more complex than Scribe's or Mélesville's, displaying a greater diversity of emotions and states of mind. In Isabelle, for example, we see sweet innocence mingled together with perseverance and even obstinace; in Mergy, tenderness, chivalry, anger and defiance; in Marguerite, cunning, reverie and gentleness; in Comminge, vanity and brutality; in Cantarelli, timidity and cowardice; and in Nicette and Girot, innocence and assertiveness, and impudence and a carefree nature, respectively. The conflicts of such personalities as Mergy and Comminge, and the concordance of others such as Isabelle and Mergy, and Marguerite and Isabelle, enhance several of the dramatic situations by adding to the mounting suspense and tension of a situation, or by relaxing existing anxieties.

This variety of personalities or at least the interest created by this colorful array of characters is, in large part, due to the historical nature of the story. Both Fra Diavolo and Zampa are staged in contemporary surroundings—early nineteenth-century Italy—whereas Le Prè recalls sixteenth-century France, more specifically Paris of 1582. Thus the decor of Le Prè aux Clercs is considerably different to that of the other two operas. Furthermore, the forest and country scenes of Planard's drama take place not in any forest or countryside clearing, but rather in a true Prè aux Clercs where

le matin, quand il était à peu près désert, c'était le lieu de rendez-vous des duellistes; le soir et aux belles heures de la journée, c'était la promenade où grands seigneurs, officiers et belles dames ne craignaient pas de venir se mêler à la jeunesse toujours un peu turbulente des écoles.

The libretto's historical nature gives Le Prè aux Clercs its uniqueness of plot and a certain dramatic refinement.
Unlike the other two libretti which dealt with lighter and more amusing subjects, *Le Pré*’s storyline is of a more serious nature, introducing a new quality to the opéra-comique genre—one which anticipated the infiltration of tragic elements in later opéras comiques like Bizet’s *Carmen*. Like its predecessors, Planard’s libretto possesses a happy ending, but unlike them its intrigues neither involve fantasies, nor are they light-hearted or simply amusing. They embrace a serious and serene nature rarely featured in opéras comiques of the previous generations. Before examining the use of solo forms in *Le Pré aux Clercs*, we shall first offer a synopsis of the action and then briefly discuss the dramatic structure of Planard’s libretto.

**Synopsis**

Planard’s drama tells the story of how Marguerite de Valois, Charles IX’s sister, brought about the marriage of Isabelle de Bearn and the young Baron Mergy, Henri III’s messenger. As the curtain’s ascent displays a country inn at le Pré aux Clercs, we are told of the upcoming wedding between Marguerite’s goddaughter Nicette and the innkeeper Girot. In a duet sung by Nicette and Girot, *Les rendez-vous de noble compagnie*, the Pré aux Clercs’s reputation as a place for lovers and for those engaging in duels is revealed. It is at Girot’s inn that Mergy—the hero—arrives, exhausted from his long trip. He has been sent to Charles IX’s court by Henri III to retrieve the latter’s wife Marguerite de Valois and her lady-in-waiting, Isabelle. Soon after Mergy’s entrance on the scene, the king’s guards and Cantarelli—the court’s concert organizer—appear. Mergy
discretely inquires from Cantarelli of the whereabouts of the Queen and Isabelle. As Mergy and Cantarelli reminisce about a past encounter, Comminge—the ruthless and arrogant captain of the guards and Mergy's principle rival—enters in a fury. He has been kept from joining the royal hunt by an impertinent and foolish young man who dared challenge him to a duel. Comminge calmly describes how he—impatient and unable to tolerate such impertinence—had killed the young man before the appointed duel time. Tired of following the hunt, Queen Marguerite and her lady Isabelle seek rest at the inn. There, the Queen confronts her lady with her concern of her well-being. She inquires as to the reasons for Isabelle's unhappiness and disregard for the court's gentlemen who have been making advances. Isabelle replies that the reason for her reclusive behavior is her longing to return home: "madame, quand je vous suivis à Paris, vous n'y deviez rester que peu de jours, vous deviez retourner auprès du roi, votre époux, et me ramener dans le château où je suis née...". To recall her past happiness, Isabelle often dreams of the homeland she describes in her couplets, Souvenirs du jeune âge. A sung dialogue between Marguerite and Isabelle follows the latter's song, in which Marguerite informs Isabelle of the king's intention to marry her to Comminge. Isabelle's horrified cry brings forth Mergy, who runs to embrace his beloved. Marguerite now understands Isabelle's unhappiness and vows to help them, but for the time being their love must remain a secret to all and especially to Comminge who comes running in. Mergy is introduced as Henri III's messenger, and nothing is said of Mergy's acquaintance with Isabelle. In an attempt to lighten the mood and change the subject, Nicette informs her
godmother, Marguerite de Valois, of her upcoming marriage, and the latter invites her and her husband-to-be to the Louvre to claim her dowry. In Marguerite's invitation to Nicette there is a hint of mystery: Marguerite sees in Nicette's visit a plan to help unite Isabelle and Mergy. At this point we can only be sure that Marguerite has a plan in mind, but nothing more is revealed. As all part company, the curtain falls.

Act II takes place in Charles IX's palace at the Louvre. Alone, Isabelle sings of her love for Mergy in the magnificent air, O jours d'innocence. In scene 2, Marguerite's plan is revealed: she will arrange to secretly marry the young lovers in an obscure country chapel and then, with Cantarelli's help, will mastermind their escape. To obtain Cantarelli's co-operation, Marguerite must blackmail him with a letter to M. de Guise—a letter written by an unidentified person—in which Cantarelli has scribbled something incriminating. (The exact contents of the letter are never disclosed.) Marguerite explains the plan. During the masquerade, Cantarelli is to bring Mergy to the back door of Marguerite's chamber. From there, they—along with Marguerite—are to proceed to the country chapel. After Marguerite's exit, the terrified Cantarelli comes face to face with Comminge, the one he has been forced to betray. Comminge, angered by jealousy, vows that if he discovers a conspiracy to unite Mergy and Isabelle, all involved will face his wrath. In order to appease Comminge and explain Mergy's presence in Marguerite's chamber, Cantarelli deceives Comminge into believing in a love affair between Mergy and the Queen. All seems well; the plan is in motion. But suddenly a change of events occurs to shed gloom over the lovers' fate. Henri III's request is
partially refused: Marguerite may return home but is not to be accompanied by Isabelle. The news has a devastating effect on all concerned. To further complicate matters, Isabelle is unexpectedly summoned by the king and given in marriage by him to Comminge, and Mergy is ordered to leave. At this point, Comminge, believing that Mergy wishes to secretly meet with the Queen before he leaves, offers to help. Mergy, offended by what he believes to be Comminge’s sarcastic behaviour, challenges the latter to a duel at dawn at the Pré aux Clercs. Before the curtain falls, Mergy is given a note by Nicette informing him of Marguerite’s intention to pursue her plan to unite him with Isabelle. The wedding is to take place after the vows are given by Nicette and Girot. The curtain falls on a note of hope for the young lovers.

Act III takes place at the Pré aux Clercs. Nicette and Girot’s wedding celebrations are underway at the inn. At the chapel, Mergy and Isabelle have been united and Mergy now attempts to divert Isabelle and Marguerite’s attention away from the site before Comminge’s arrival. The duel has been kept a secret from all. Cantarelli arrives breathless, with passports out of the city for the couple. He must hurry for he must serve as second to Comminge’s duel with Mergy. Cantarelli’s announcement of Comminge’s imminent arrival gives an excuse for both Mergy to hide and for the women to join the festivities at the inn. A rendez-vous for the escape is set for eight o’clock. Mergy’s duel with Comminge forces the “cat out of the bag”: it is not Marguerite he loves but Isabelle. This triggers Comminge’s anger, but the news of the lovers’ secret marriage is the last straw, and the battle grows more violent. Comminge is
killed, and, as customary with dead opponents in duels, his body is transported by boat to the church of Chaillot where the monks will dispose of the body. As Cantarelli runs in to inform the guests that Comminge's adversary is Mergy, the boat carrying a body comes into sight on the river. All believe Mergy to be the victim, but the latter's entrance reassures all. As the wedding festivities continue, Isabelle and Mergy makes good their escape with Cantarelli as their guide. The final curtain falls; evil is destroyed, and virtue rewarded.

Part II: The Well-Made Play Elements in *Le Pré aux Clercs*

So far we have seen that Planard's libretto differs from Scribe's and Mêlesville's in plot, setting and intensity of character portrayal. This difference also extends to the libretto's dramatic and structural features. Like Mêlesville's, Planard's libretto diverges in some aspects from Scribe's well-made play features. The delayed-action plot is made obvious by the following pre-curtain events: Nicette and Girot have already met, fallen in love and are now preparing their wedding celebration; Marguerite de Valois and Isabelle have travelled to the court of Charles IX and are now held there against their wills; Mergy has been sent to the Louvre by Henri III to retrieve the two women; and to we are led to suspect Mergy's love for Isabelle. These pre-curtain events do not seem to have the impact of those encountered in *Fra Diavolo* or *Zampa*. They merely appear to set up the immediate action, and do not have any crucial bearing on the unfolding action or its outcome. They do not seem to embody the motivating force which Zerline's couplets *Voyez sur cette roche* or Pamela's brief air *Ah quel*
abominable voyage, for instance, have in terms of the drama in Fra Diavolo. The intense emotional drive is missing from the first scenes of Le Prê aux Clercs in which these pre-curtain events are introduced. It is not until the conclusion of Act I, after the exposition of the plot, that the tension begins to mount. Thus Planard does not utilize the pre-curtain events with the same intensity or with the same intentions as Scribe and Mélesville: instead of serving as primary motivating forces for the drama, these events merely serve to introduce the characters and set the drama in motion. They do not possess or create the initial outburst of emotions present in the first scenes of the other two operas discussed. Planard preferred to create tension gradually throughout the entire first act. In this manner, Act I is almost entirely expository in nature and content: introducing the characters and the primary intrigues of the drama.

In Le Prê aux Clercs the second feature of the well-made play—"a pattern of increasingly intense action and suspense carefully prepared by exposition which establishes certain facts for the spectator and causes him to anticipate each significant event"—provides an excellent example of Planard's understanding of Scribe's dramatic technique. Unlike Scribe and Mélesville's libretti in which the suspense and tension constantly fluctuate after a dramatic and intense opening, Planard's work opens in a much more subdued and relaxed atmosphere, allowing room for emotional and dramatic expansion. With each new scene and each newly introduced character the tension mounts as the action becomes more complex, and conflicts begin to intertwine.
Each new situation is clearly anticipated by a previous event, a contrived exit or entrance, or by another dramatic device. For example, Comminge's rivalry with Mergy comes as no surprise once we are told of the two men's love for Isabelle. Each significant event is anticipated in one way or another, and supported by dramatic devices of various kinds. For example, the conspiracy to help the lovers entails elements of secrecy, mysterious letters (one used to blackmail Cantarelli and another to inform Mergy of the plan), and contrived exits and entrances. This latter feature is frequently employed in Act II when the plan is already in motion, and is complicated by unexpected entrances of various characters. Moreover, the plan is further complicated when—due to the element of secrecy surrounding the conspiracy—various pieces of the plan are revealed to different characters at different times, thus leaving Marguerite the only person to know the whole plan.

Act II indeed presents a maze of exciting situations: Isabelle is summoned by the king and informed by him that she is to marry Comminge, Mergy's rival; Mergy's request for the release of the Queen and Isabelle is denied, and he is ordered to leave the court immediately; Cantarelli deceives Comminge into believing in the love of the Queen for Mergy; Mergy, who is to meet Marguerite secretly in her chamber is confronted with Comminge; the confrontations between Mergy and Comminge involve an array of misunderstandings, and lead to a duel between the two men; and Isabelle is the last to be informed of happenings. Thus the tension and suspense gradually increase as the plot grows more and more complex.

As for the third feature of the well-made play—the fluctu-
ations in the hero's fortune—it is more pronounced in Le Pré aux Clercs than in the other two operas. This factor is primarily due to the fact that Mergy, the hero, appears on stage much more frequently and plays a more active part in the unfolding drama than do Lorenzo or Alphonse in Fra Diavolo or Zampa, respectively. The opera opens with Mergy at a disadvantage: his beloved has been taken from him, and he now wonders if time has changed her heart. To further complicate his position, we are told by Marguerite, that the King, Charles IX, plans to give Isabelle in marriage to Comminge. A ray of hope emerges as the lovers are reunited at the inn, and find in Marguerite a friend and savior. Mergy's good fortune seems assured through the Queen's protection and plan to unite the lovers. Unfortunately, an obstacle arises which creates an atmosphere of gloom, this despite the Queen's successful plan and the consequent union of the couple. Mergy challenges Comminge to a duel, a duel from which Mergy is surely to emerge the victim for Comminge has never been defeated. The principal obstacle remains to be conquered; Comminge must be defeated to assure the couple's happiness. Our hero's success and the rival's death assure the couple's safe escape from the city, and thus restore peace and good fortune in our hero's life.

The scène à faire in Le Pré aux Clercs is of an unusual nature. It occurs after the Mergy's marriage to Isabelle, and as such after the principal resolution of the love intrigue. It consists, as in most opéras comiques, of the destruction of "evil". In Fra Diavolo the villain was arrested after having been identified by a former victim; thus, Scribe ensured the safety of the citizens, the inevitable marriage of the happy
couple, the good fortune of Lorenzo, and as a result, made possible the happy ending. Similarly, in Zampa, the antagonist meets his just fate at the hands of a former victim who, as the Commandatore in Mozart's Don Giovanni, embraces the villain and disappears with him into the infernal flames. By this turn of events—the destruction of Zampa—Camille is free to marry Alphonse, and the safety of the people is assured. In Le Pré there is no real oppressor. Comminge is indeed Mergy's rival and, as such, presents a threat to the couple's happiness. But his destruction is only an added security for the young couple since Comminge's death occurs after their marriage. Nothing can reverse the church's sacrament. The villain's destruction merely assures the success of the couple's escape from Paris and, indirectly, their marriage or happiness for that matter. Therefore, of the three operas, this scène à faire is possibly the weakest in terms of its impact on the outcome of the drama.

Similarly, there is no prevailing quiproquo, at least not in the same sense as found in the other two operas: there is no single disguise which runs through the plot. Nevertheless, there are secrets and misunderstandings which intertwine within the drama, complicating its course and outcome. For example, Mergy and Isabelle's love for each other is kept a secret from their rival Comminge, as is Marguerite's plan to marry them and help them escape. Furthermore, an important misunderstanding arises between Mergy and Comminge, in Act II, as Comminge offers to help Mergy meet his 'beloved' whom Comminge believes to be the Queen. Mergy, certain that Comminge is alluding to Isabelle and as such is mocking him, challenges his rival to a duel. This misunderstanding is finally resolved at the Pré aux Clercs
at the appointed time of the duel when Mergy declares: "Mais je vous brave tous, les trahis, les jaloux, votre cour si perfide!.. Celle que j'aime est à moi pour jamais! et la mort seule peut me séparer d'Isabelle!" This last revelation then necessitates the scène à faire. Comminge's elimination becomes crucial to couple's happiness, for the angered Comminge now vows to kill his opponent whom he was previously prepared to spare. Despite the lack of a prevalent qui-pro-quo, this misunderstanding adds as much suspense and tension to the unfolding drama as do the disguises of the villains in Fra Diavolo and Zampa.

Given the dramatic complexity in Le Pré aux Clercs and the numerous intertwining situations, the dramatic structure of each act in relation to that of the whole is not as clear-cut as the structures observed in Fra Diavolo and Zampa. Nevertheless, as with the other two libretti, a similar all-encompassing structure can be observed: each act presents its conflicts and solutions, which in turn interact with the whole as demonstrated by the diagram on the following page.

Musical Soli

Planard's primary use of the musical solo forms is that of characterization. This latter category of soli may be subdivided into two distinct sub-classes: the first adds to characterization the role of exposition, relating pre-curtain events or introducing characters; and the second combines with a deeper level of characterization to present the emotional and mental states of a character at a given moment in the drama. Before discussing each musical solo and its role in Le Pré aux Clercs let us establish, by the use of the following two charts, the
**Le Pré aux Clercs: Overall Dramatic Scheme**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problems</th>
<th>Act I</th>
<th>Act II</th>
<th>Act III</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N and G to be married.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-N and G married.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M comes to retrieve H III's wife and Is.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-M ordered to leave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C desires to marry Is.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-Is returns home with M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is homesick; -Is and M reunited.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Is promised to C.</td>
<td>-C killed; Is freed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C becomes M's chief rival.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Duel between C and M.</td>
<td>-M and Is married.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma plans to unite Is and M.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Plan jeopardized by King's orders.</td>
<td>-Plan succeeds and Is and M unite. Is and M escape.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Is=Isabelle; M=Mergy; C=Comminge; Ma=Marguerite de Valois; N=Nicette; G=Girot; H III=Henri III.
musical distribution in this opera and the placement of the soli within the drama.

**Musical Distribution in *Le Prê aux Clercs***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Incipits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I, i</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>INTRO: Chorus</td>
<td>&quot;Ah quel beau jour&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sung Dialogue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chorus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I, ii</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Duo</td>
<td>&quot;Les rendez-vous de noble compagnie&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I, iv</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Air</td>
<td>&quot;O ma tendre amie&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I, viii</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ensemble</td>
<td>&quot;Allons, a table&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I, xii</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FINALE: Romance</td>
<td>&quot;Souvenir du jeune age&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sung Dialogue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ensemble</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II, i</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Air</td>
<td>&quot;O jours d'innocence&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II, vi</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Ensemble</td>
<td>&quot;Vous me disiez&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Chantons, dansons&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II, xii</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>FINALE:</td>
<td>&quot;Tout est dit...&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(chorus, air, ensemble)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III, i</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Chorus/Sung Dialogue</td>
<td>&quot;Pour bien passer la vie&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Romance</td>
<td>&quot;A la fleur du jeune age&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chorus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III, iii</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Trio</td>
<td>&quot;C'en est fait!&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III, vi</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>FINALE:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(air, chorus, ensemble)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Musical Soli in *Le Prê aux Clercs***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Cast</th>
<th>Synopsis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I, iv</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mergy</td>
<td>AIR: Mergy arrives at the inn. He dreams of his beloved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I, xii</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Isabelle</td>
<td>ROMANCE: Is. explains to Marguerite the reason for her unhappiness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II, i</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Isabelle</td>
<td>AIR: Alone Is. pledges her love to Mergy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III, i</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Nicette</td>
<td>RONDE: Nicette entertains her wedding guests with a sung story of love.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is interesting to note that there are two isolated soli, which are not included within a larger ensemble context, in Le Prê aux Clercs. The first occurs in Act I scene 4 and is sung by Mergy (No. 3), the male party to the love intrigue; the second occurs in Act II scene 1 and is sung by Isabelle (No. 5), the female party. Both soli are airs, and both deal with the characters' past and love for one another.

Mergy's air, O ma tendre amie (No. 3), like that of Isabelle, is a sung monologue. The recitative which precedes the air expresses Mergy's agitation in arriving "dans cette ville immense / Qui m'a ravi tout mon bonheur". His agitation changes to hope and memories of joy as the air begins. In the contrasting section of this ternary form, Mergy wonders if time has changed his beloved's feelings for him. This moment of doubt is but short-lived for, as Mergy repeats the opening melody, he optimistically believes that he will see her.

Functionally, this solo serves first to introduce Mergy as a primary character to the plot, and does so by isolating him on stage. On a deeper level, this solo also serves two other purposes: that of characterization and of exposition. In the former role, it reveals Mergy's mental and emotional states at this given moment in the drama. It does so by tracing his present train of thought, which reveals his caring and loving nature, as well as his faithful devotion to his beloved. On the exposition level, three elements from his past are uncovered: 1) the existence of a loved one is clearly indicated; 2) there is an hint of a past traumatic separation of the lovers; and 3) the location of his beloved is also alluded to in the following words: "Malgré le vain délire / Des plaisirs de la
"...". As is the case in most expository soli of this nature, the details of each item alluded to remain unclear. For example, we do not know the precise location of the beloved, her name or even the cause of the separation.

Isabelle’s air (No. 6), *O jours d’innocence*, which opens Act II, also traces this character’s train of thought at a given moment in the drama. In her song, Isabelle recalls her mistress’s reassuring words of protection and help. She also expresses her deep love and devotion to Mergy. This solo, like Mergy’s, is static in nature, marking a moment of reflection rather than action, and thus permits a glimpse at the subtler shades of Isabelle’s personality. In addition to tracing Isabelle’s thought processes, this song also serves to set the atmosphere of tension and the theme of hope of the second act which revolves around the plan to unite the lovers.

The remaining two soli are both enclosed within larger ensembles. The first solo, Isabelle’s romance (No. 3) *Souvenirs du jeune âge*, belongs to the larger finale ensemble of Act I. Its primary purpose, like that of the entire first act, is expository; it introduces Isabelle as a principle character in the plot. The action unfolds on the shores of the river Seine, near the Louvre. Marguerite de Valois is held prisoner at the court of Charles IX, her brother. With her, Marguerite retains a young Béarnaise girl named Isabelle. Marguerite is happy at her brother’s court, but such is not the case with Isabelle her attendant, who does not share the same ease and contentment as her mistress. Isabelle’s indifference toward gentlemen callers and her reclusive behavior have attracted the royal family’s displeasure. They,
in turn, have requested Marguerite to inquire as to the cause of Isabelle's unhappiness. Isabelle's response takes the form of the following romance in which she recalls the beauties of her homeland for which she longs.

ROMANCE

Premier couplet

Souvenirs du jeune âge
Sont gravés dans mon cœur;
Et je pense au village
Pour rêver le bonheur.
Ah! ma voix vous supplie
D'écouter mon désir:
Rendez-moi ma patrie,
Ou laissez-moi mourir.

Deuxième couplet

De nos bois le silence,
Les bords d'un clair ruisseau,
La paix et l'innocence
Des enfants du hameau...
Ah! voilà mon envie,
Voilà mon seul désir:
Rendez-moi ma patrie,
Ou laissez-moi mourir.

Through this reflective song we discover Isabelle's deeply emotional personality and the grave despair she feels by being away from her beloved homeland. Unlike Isabelle's reflective air which follows in Act I (No. 6 discussed above), this solo, by its placement within the drama and by its very nature as a reply to Marguerite, involves a small amount of action. Furthermore, it also acts as a motivating force for the unfolding drama: her plea to Marguerite, "Rendez-moi ma patrie, / Ou laissez-moi mourir", cannot help but touch the compassionate Queen and inspire her to help the young lovers.

The second solo encased in an ensemble is Nicette's ronde in Act III scene 1 (No. 10). Within the dramatic context in which it is found, this ronde acts as an accompaniment to a
dance performed by the wedding guests; as such it could be eliminated without causing harm to the drama. It is nevertheless interesting to note that, although the song's text superficially appears to be totally unrelated to the immediate drama, the narrated story strangely parallels in mood and nature the events of the principal love intrigue between Mergy and Isabelle: a young man meets a fair maiden at a court ball; they fall in love; and, because of circumstances surrounding them, they must keep their love a secret. We have previously encountered two such narratives--told at the urging of other characters--in Fra Diavolo and Zampa. In all three cases, the soli served as entertainment pieces, and as such all three could be eliminated from the libretto without ill effect to the plot. Nonetheless, their placement in the drama and more importantly, their strongly suggestive texts would seem to propose a foreshadowing role, anticipating the conclusion or outcome of the unfolding drama in most cases.

In accordance with the observed importance given to character portrayal by Planard, the soli in Le Pré aux Clercs act primarily as agents of characterization, exposing not only thought processes but also mental and emotional states of individuals at given moments in the drama. This factor of intense characterization--combining the role of characterization with other dramatic functions--represents the primary aspect in which Planard's use of solo musical forms differs from that of Scribe and Mélesville. Nonetheless, like certain soli encountered in Fra Diavolo and Zampa, some soli in Le Pré also serve single functions, such as introducing the plot's characters, and uncovering subtler shades of personalities.
Another category of soli encountered in all three operas is that of soli of "exposition". Although Planard uses Mer­
gy’s air and Isabelle’s romance in Act I to clarify pre­
curtain events and/or elements of the dramatic situation, his
use of expository soli is limited in comparison with that of
Scribe and Mélesville. Firstly, Planard only uses two such
soli in his opera, as opposed to four in Fra Diavolo and three
in Zampa. Secondly, Planard’s expository soli are situated at
some distance from one another in the drama, thus limiting
their cumulative expository effect. In Fra Diavolo and Zampa,
the expository soli are concentrated within the first five
scenes of their respective first act. Also, Planard’s soli do
not reveal the same wealth of background information as do
those of Scribe and Mélesville, these soli’s primary purpose
being characterization and not exposition.

Therefore, in the category of exposition, we observe on
one hand that such soli in Le Pré aux Clercs share two funda­
mental features with those of the two previously discussed
operas namely, the exposition of details of past events
important to the immediate action, and the characterization of
the plot’s personalities. On the other hand, they differ from
their counterparts in one fundamental way. Despite the fact
that Planard’s expository soli serve, to some extent, an
"introductory" purpose, their primary task is that of charac­
terization. In both Fra Diavolo and Zampa, characterization
remains the secondary function of the expository soli. In
this fundamental distinction may lie the reason for the
unusual placement of Planard’s soli in Act I.

Despite the above dissimilarities, one category of soli
does appear in all three operas: the seemingly non-dramatic solo used as an entertainment piece, and/or as a foreshadowing agent. We have seen how Diavolo's barcarolle, Agnès la jouvencelle (Fra Diavolo: Act II, 3), anticipates the bandit's crime and the arrival of his accomplices; and how Zampa's barcarolle, Douce jouvencelle (Zampa: Act II, 10), foreshadows Camille's eventual rescue from the villain's grip. In the same manner, Nicette's ronde, A la fleur du jeune age (Le Pré aux Clercs: Act III, 1), parallels the love intrigue between Mergy and Isabelle by means of its emphasis on the two primary elements, secrecy and true love.

In summary, Le Pré aux Clercs presents categories of soli similar to those observed in Fra Diavolo and Zampa, and thus confirms our previous categorization of the soli into five distinctive functional groups: soli used for (1) the exposition of pre-curtain events and the introduction of the cast; (2) characterization; (3) the revelation of the thought processes or the emotional state of an individual at a given moment in the drama; and (4) the foreshadowing of upcoming events and, in some cases, (5) for musical balance. The concluding chapter which follows will briefly summarize the use of solo forms observed in the three examined opéras comiques and thus as practiced by three different librettists of the 1830s; it will also deal with the significance of these practices in terms of the opéra-comique's development.
Notes


V: Conclusion

As seen by the evidence presented in the three previous chapters, Fra Diavolo, Zampa, and Le Pré aux Clercs exhibit—in their respective placement of musical soli within the drama—traits which are characteristic of opéras comiques of the period. Our brief study of other 1830s opéra-comique libretti supports our hypothesis that certain practices were indeed used by other contemporary librettists in the placement of musical numbers within the drama. More important, however, is the fact that these exhibited features, peculiar to the mid-nineteenth-century opéras comiques, are not usually observed in works of the preceding century. One must attribute the credit for these changes to Augustin-Eugène Scribe.

In the history of French opera of the nineteenth century the libretti of Eugène Scribe represent an area of stability and continuity which spanned two-and-a-half decades. In his craft Scribe crossed generic lines by bringing together a number of consistent structural principles and applying them with necessary modifications and great technical skill to a variety of theatrical genres including those of the musical theatre. Scribe's operas and opéras comiques not only had a strong basis in the popular theater, but this popular theater itself was in good part the result of Scribe's own contributions in his comédies-vaudevilles.¹

Scribe's contribution to both French Grand Opera and opéra comique is not only quantitative, but also qualitative. His tremendous output of dramatic works could not help but exercise a considerable impact on the Parisian stages. What was to have an even greater effect on dramatic works of the period, however, were his writing techniques and dramatic conventions.

Changing times meant changing styles, but the basic strength and validity of Scribe’s writing techniques is demonstrated by the fact that his influence can be traced in the works of later writers. Because Scribe provided libretti for the most popular operas and opéras comiques of his day, works that were performed with repeated success long after his death, his example was ever present in the world of French
opera. Moreover, this influence extended not only beyond his own time, but beyond the boundaries of his own country. Creator of a tradition, Scribe sustained this tradition for years and in it provided a foundation for modern libretto techniques. 

Indeed, several of Scribe's contemporaries adopted elements of his writing style, integrating them into their works. We have seen how Scribe's use and treatment of musical soli in his opéra comique libretto influenced both Mélesville's and Planard's works. We have also observed how the soli of Fra Diavolo, Zampa and Le Pré aux Clercs can be grouped into five "functional" categories in accordance with their placement and role in the drama.

The soli of the first category—those used for exposition—usually delay the action and its unfolding. Most frequently occurring within the first four or five opening scenes, they serve to expose background information on a person or event, and/or to elaborate on information revealed in speech. The related events are most often pre-curtain happenings having direct influence on the outcome of the opera's primary conflict. These expository soli are characteristically narrative texts: a story told at the urging of other characters. An excellent example of this type of solo is Zerline's ballade Voyez sur cette roche (Fra Diavolo: Act IV, scene 4) in which Zerline, at the urging of Mathéo and the Marquis (Diavolo in disguise), describes the reputation of the infamous bandit Diavolo—information essential to the unfolding drama.

The second type of solo deals with characterization. Airs, cavatines and other brief songs are usually used in such dramatic situations where character portrayal is the key objective. Furthermore, these soli are frequently static and reflec-
tive in nature, tracing the progress of a single idea as viewed by a character. For example, Zampa’s cavatine, *Toi dont la grâce séduisante*, paints a very clear picture of Zampa’s personality by recounting his past activities, and thus establishing his reputation.

The soli of the third type usually expose the train of thought—intimate thoughts—of a character at a given moment in the drama; those of the fourth are more concerned with the individual’s emotional state. These two aspects of a character’s personality are often found within a single solo and for this reason, it is sometimes difficult to view the two categories as separate from one another. Nonetheless, soli of the more "cerebral" or intellectual genre can be observed in dramatic situations in which the character, usually alone on the stage, recalls his/her past life. For example, in his cavatine (*Zampa* Act II, scene 1) Zampa first describes himself as a *vrai forban* who always gets his way, and then recalls his love conquests in India, Italy, Spain, Arabia, and England. In terms of Zampa’s character, this solo represents a dramatic highpoint. A similar solo appears in Act III scene 1 of *Fra Diavolo* where Diavolo recounts, in a sung monologue, his life as a bandit. As in *Zampa*, this solo also represents a highpoint in terms of describing the individual’s character.

In opéras comiques of the 1830s the most frequently encountered soli are those of a reflective and intensely emotional nature. This type of musical number is primarily used to express a character’s sentiments about a situation presented in the course of the unfolding action. These reflections of sentiment are often the inevitable result of a past event (e.g.,
an inflicted separation of two lovers, a pre-arranged marriage
(to the disfavour of one lover), unrequited love, and so on) and
often occur following a disturbing event which triggers the
memory and/or the emotions. An excellent example of such a solo
is found in Act I of Planard's Le Pré aux Clercs where Isabelle,
confronted with her Queen's question concerning her unhappiness,
expresses her deep despair in being kept prisoner in a foreign
land, and her desire to return home.

The fifth category comprises the more "non-dramatic" soli:
(a) those of which the texts are indirectly linked to the drama;
and (b) those which merely exist for the musical balance of the
opera. In the three opéras comiques examined, and in many
others surveyed, at least one solo number of this fifth category
was found. These soli are most frequently used to foreshadow
upcoming events or even to anticipate the resolution of the
primary intrigue by simply relating, usually in narrative form,
a story parallel to that of the immediate drama. For example,
Nicette's Ronde (Act III scene 11 of Le Pré aux Clercs), while
relating the story of two young lovers who--forced to hide their
love for one another for some time--triumph in the end,
anticipates the success of the plan to unite the two lovers and
ensure their future happiness. Despite the subtle significance
of the texts of some such soli, other similar narrative soli
merely serve as dramatic devices or entertainement pieces. For
example, Diavolo's barcarolle in Act II of Fra Diavolo acts as a
signal to his accomplices, and Zampa's couplets, Que la vague
ecumante, in Act I of Zampa, serve to entertain his comrades and
wedding guests on the eve of his wedding day.

The above-mentioned practices in the use and placement of
musical soli signify an important development in terms of the
genre's history. There is a clear breakaway from the
eighteenth-century opéra-comique conventions. Instead of the
decorative or merely elaborative soli of the eighteenth-century
opéras comiques—soli which merely "coloured" facts already
exposed in speech, and consequently provided no essential
element to the unfolding drama—we observe, in works of the
nineteenth-century, musical soli which serve a multitude of
dramatic purposes. Contrasting with the largely non-dramatic
musical numbers of eighteenth-century opéras comiques are the
more dramatically significant and purposeful soli contrived by
Scribe and copied by his contemporaries: the musical soli of
nineteenth-century opéras comiques help move the drama forward,
add depth to certain dramatic situations by revealing subtler
shades of characters, explain events crucial to the outcome of
the plot, and/or act as structural devices in balancing the
musical contents of an opera. They are no longer simply
decorative and entertaining pieces.

The above-mentioned developments, which emerge in the 1820s
with La Dame blanche and become standard features in the works
of Scribe, Planard and Mélesville (as well as in the works of
other 1830s librettists), truly mark a new era in the opéra-
comique genre. As we have seen, opéras comiques of the 1830s
become dramatically more structured and consistent, and gain new
musico-dramatic significance.
Notes


2. Ibid.
Select Bibliography


