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MICHEL CAMILLE LANDRY

Date of Birth — Date de naissance	Country of Birth — Lieu de naissance
JULY 9, 1955	CANADA

Permanent Address — Résidence fixe

301, 10435 - 78 AVE
EDMONTON
T6E 1P1

Title of Thesis — Titre de la thèse

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1981	BRIAN HARRIS

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MASSENET'S USE OF LEITMOTIVE IN ESCLARMONDE

by

MICHEL LANDRY

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PERMANENT ADDRESS:

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DATED September 30 19 81

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled .....

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.....

submitted by Michel Landry .....

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Music (musicology) .....

Brian L. Harris .....

Supervisor

.....

.....

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ABSTRACT

In his autobiography, Jules Massenet stated that he idolized the music of Berlioz and Wagner. As a composer, he aimed at variety of musical expression and of harmonic and orchestral colouring, and he found the scope he needed for such variety in many diverse subjects.

Wagnerian influences are particularly evident in the areas of libretti and use of Leitmotive. Even if taken as coincidental and superficial, these aspects of Massenet's operas are too striking to be ignored, for the oft used and well-integrated Leitmotive and the orchestra's symphonic-expositional treatment all pay homage to Wagner. By grafting these elements onto the French opera tradition, Massenet earned and occupied for many years a position in France analogous to that of Wagner in Germany and of Verdi in Italy.

Its combination of realism and fantasy makes Esclarmonde (1889) a concentrated summation of the subjects Massenet treated in his operatic output. The work is therefore much more of a music drama than any of his earlier operas, and yet it remains entirely French in perspective. Massenet had earlier experimented with Leitmotive in Manon (1884), and in Esclarmonde, he adopted the technique with greater resolution. Though subtitled "Romanesque Opera," Esclarmonde is essentially a dramatic symphony.

In the first chapter, a discussion of Wagner's use of Leitmotive is presented. This is followed by a review of the state of French opera in the nineteenth century. The second chapter follows Massenet's

development as a composer of operas. The final chapter discusses Esclarmonde: its origins, its influences, and Massenet's use of Leitmotive in the work.

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Wagner's use of Leitmotive

From Wagner's earliest operas, one finds contrived, associative themes--recurrent motives which, by reason of their character and their association with some element in the drama, are heard as a commentary on the words, or as a further expression of their meaning--which have such immediacy that they are easily identified and recalled in respect to the idea musically created or depicted. These themes must not be viewed as mere identification tags, nor the score a mere patchwork made up by introducing motives at appropriate points in the drama. Wagner's motives have a much more fundamentally psychological significance, and his score is a continuous symphonic development of them; the continuously unfolding web of sound reflects upon the continuous psychological, often subconscious, development of the drama. Grout says that

> Wagner's greatness as a composer lies just in this power of evoking in the listener's mind such conceptions, in all their emotional depth and complexity, by means of music in which every detail is consciously or unconsciously directed toward the expressive purpose.[1]

After Lohengrin (1848), one finds that Wagner's Leitmotive abandoned their former qualities of length and lyricism. They rather take the form of a "harmonic complex, a rhythmic configuration, a melodic outline,

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1 Donald Jay Grout, A Short History of Opera, second edn. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), p. 400.

or any combination of these."[2] These motives, unlike the earlier musical "tags" inserted nearly at random into the texture, are succinct enough to paint their descriptive images without interrupting Wagner's ceaseless flow of poetic imagery. They often succeeded one another quickly, they could be contrapuntally combined, and they were also capable of endless rhythmic, harmonic, and instrumental transformation to display a shifted status in the dramatic psychology. Relationship of ideas may be illustrated by thematic relationships among the motives, although some of the resemblances may not be intentional.[3] For example, one of the simplest transformations of the "ring" motive occurs when its harmonic basis is changed to a major key, and it becomes associated with the majestic brass motive of "Walhall." The melodic similarity between the two establishes the similarity in the ultimate aims of Alberich and Wotan--absolute power.

Tristan und Isolde (1859) perhaps represents the most refined carrying out of Wagner's theories about Leitmotive. The score has uninterrupted continuity with comparatively few Leitmotive, and many of the principal motives are so similar and chromatic that it is difficult to distinguish, extract, and label them clearly. Moreover, the division into acts and scenes serves as little more than a method of giving musicians and audience chances to relax, rather than showing that one episode is over and another is about to begin, as is often the case

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2 Robert Gutman, Richard Wagner: The Man, his Mind, and his Music (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1968), p. 363.

3 For an excellent illustration of these thematic relationships, see Deryck Cooke, An Introduction to Wagner's Der Ring des Nibelungen (London RDN S-1).

in Italian operas. In Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg (1867), one finds a less developmental approach and even a partial return to the old set-number scheme that may be partially explained by the longer and more vocal characteristics of the motives in the work. Even so, "the orchestra still performs the same function of articulating the existential drama, the flow of life and feeling inwardly experienced by the characters."[4]

According to Gutman, Wagner described motives of reminiscence as being derived from a vocal line; when later reiterated, these motives were to represent the idea denoted by the words originally sung.[5] However, the very first motive in Das Rheingold (1854)--the "original" motive--is not a vocal melody, nor do words underline its significance; it is heard the first time while the stage curtain is down. Since it is without textual reference, it becomes a vague musical symbol associated throughout the tetralogy with the river Rhine, nature in general, Erda (the earth goddess), and, when inverted, it symbolizes the end of the cycle--the fall of the gods.[6] Though he employed motives of reminiscence and of presentiment, Wagner tended increasingly toward the latter, motives which were purely musical in

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4 Bryan Magee, Aspects of Wagner (New York: Stein and Day, 1969), p. 23

5 Gutman, Richard Wagner, p. 365.

6 These allusions are, quite obviously, bound together by a coherent poetic concept. However, it is interesting to note how motives often considered to be very distinct are in fact closely united--by means of a motive transforming itself as it takes on new implications--if they express diverse aspects of the same basic idea. See, for example, the motives of "joy in the gold" and "lament" in Das Rheingold.

conception and much more general in reference.

Different analyses distinguish from seventy to 200 Leitmotive in the Ring tetralogy, but few of these motives are sung. Each is expressed as the focal point of a certain dramatic idea with which it remains associated throughout the remainder of the cycle. The clue to the association of the motive with the idea is to be found, naturally, at its first appearance. For example, the "Walhall" motive is first heard at the opening of the second scene of Das Rheingold when the newly completed castle is revealed; as is usual at the first statement of a motive, it is repeated and developed so as to impress itself on the memory of the listener. The motives are generally short and are essentially harmonic and rhythmic rather than melodic.

Wagner must have realized that purely orchestral motives upset his theory that "music must serve the drama." In Wagner's defense, Gutman relates how the composer explained that "their function [is] that of kindling presentiments or preparing for what was yet to materialize, of manifesting the instinctive desire of perception to take objective form."[7] However, once such a musical presentiment had attached itself to the dramatic concept (or lack of the same), it was thereafter manipulated in the same manner applied to a reminiscence motive, compounding its poetic ambiguities.

There are numerous instances in Wagner's later operas in which his combinations of motives have extraordinary dramatic appropriateness. Although his juxtaposition of motives into contrapuntal webs tended to tangle allusive ideas, Wagner was able to fuse his musical motives and

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7 Gutman, Richard Wagner, p. 365.

their symbolic significance in order to achieve a common purpose. Examples of this are found in the finale of Götterdämmerung (1874) or the prelude to Tristan und Isolde.

Wagner's systematic means of achieving musical and dramatic unity included not only the repetition, transformation, and combination of individual motives, but also the transference of whole orchestral sections. In Götterdämmerung, for example, the music accompanying Siegfried's death utilizes the music heard earlier during the awakening of Brünnhilde in the last act of Siegfried (1871). A species of reminiscence motive also results when Wagner transplants sections of a vocal line to a new place in the score. One extremely dramatic use of this technique occurs during the third act of Götterdämmerung, when Hagen, carrying Siegfried's body into the Gibichung hall, sings the motive introduced in Das Rheingold as "Alberich's curse." An equally dramatic effect is achieved when the motive introduced in Das Rheingold as "renunciation of love" is later sung by Siegmund as he draws the sword from the tree in the first act of Die Walküre (1856).

Not all recalled motives have such clear dramatic implications, however. It is interesting to note that Wagner's attitude toward his musical material began to change during the composition of Siegfried; Die Walküre seems to stand at the summit of his art for the way in which the poetry and the music are "counterpoised in artful equilibrium."[8] After Die Walküre, Wagner's music and text were no longer in relative balance with each other, but rather accommodated (somewhat

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8 Ibid., p. 368.

uneasily at times) the poetic intent in a relatively dense texture. From Siegfried onwards, one is still relatively comfortable associating dramatic situations with motives, although with regard to motivic relevance, one finds that the relationship between the text and the music becomes increasingly superficial. The appearance of motives is no longer vindicated by the drama, for the musical tags are only loosely related to the ideas mentioned in the text; these motives often act as little more than opportunities or excuses for the "floods and ebbs of a symphonic tide and reappear so often that their efficacy as mediums of reminiscence is quite blunted."[9] In Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg, for example, the orchestral weaving of the motives into long, extended passages is often more justified by their intrinsic beauty than by their dramatic relevance to the situation. Gutman even concludes that occasionally Wagner "seemed unable to let his motifs go without having lovingly teased them into symphonic play."[10] With Die Meistersinger, one often finds that the music no longer interprets the text; instead, the main action has been transferred to the orchestra, and the vocal lines comment upon this action. There are times when the orchestra, through motives, even "speaks" with or to the characters on stage. In the second act, for example, Eva hears the motive of Sach's renunciation sounding with the notes of his cobbling song; she becomes suddenly aware of his love, pain, and personal sacrifice. Dumesnil explains that the orchestra's wordless language nevertheless

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9 Ibid., p. 370.

10 Ibid.

remains sufficiently precise for the listener to understand what ordinary dialogue hides.[11]

Wagner's early motives were often accompanied with convenient chordal figures, but the motives themselves gradually became increasingly harmonic in character. The motive of "magic sleep" from Die Walküre, for example, is really a succession of ambiguous and tonally uncommitted chords. Though Die Walküre uses much "traditional" accompaniment, its harmonies and motives stir with signs of a forecoming coalescing. By the time of Tristan, the harmonic structure was being formed largely of motives and counterpoints to them. In this intricate texture, motive and harmony are one. The voice part, which in Oper und Drama Wagner identified as the source of the motive, was often treated as an obbligato instrument, differing from the other instruments only in that it bore a text. Gutman even claims that

> Given the text and the orchestral accompaniment, a good musician, well versed in Wagner's music, would be able to insert suitable vocal parts in the empty spaces, just as a sculptor can restore the missing hand of a statue. But one could as little restore the lost orchestral accompaniment of Hans Sachs' or Eva's vocal parts as create the whole statue with only the single hand to go on.[12]

Although the chromaticism in Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg--used largely in creating more personal or emotional moods--is often melodic or ornamental, harmonic progressions became Wagner's primary means of interpreting the text musically. In general, Wagner's chromatic

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11 René Dumesnil, "La nature du drame wagnérien," Richard Wagner, ed. by Gaston D'Angelis, collection "Génies et réalités" (Paris: Librairie Hachette et société d'études et de publication économiques, 1962), p. 203.

12 Gutman, Richard Wagner, p. 371.

alterations, suspensions, appoggiaturas, and passing notes enriched an essentially diatonic structure, though they nonetheless helped to break down the tonal system. His works made seventh and ninth chords seem consonant and reposeful so that the erstwhile powerful notes of diatonicism lost their prerogatives--especially after Tristan und Isolde.

> What Wagner gave most effectively to opera per se were liberty and scope, not, primarily, modes of expression or, fortunately, subject matter. Music in general was his real heir ... no composer since Wagner has been uninfluenced either in harmony or orchestration by his revolutionary practice.[13]

In conclusion, the Leitmotive constituted the very essence of Wagner's scores, for,

> Altogether, the statement, recurrence, variation, development, and transformation of motifs is analogous to the working out of musical material in a symphony.[14]

French Opera in the Nineteenth Century

Even before the French Revolution, two distinct tendencies had become apparent in the French lyric theatre: the grand operas and the opéras-comiques. The term "grand opera" is essentially differentiated from opéra-comique by the technical distinction that the latter used spoken dialogue to connect the musical numbers whereas the former made use of continuous music (recitatives).

The form of grand opera, in the line of descent from Lully, Rameau, Gluck, and Spontini, conservatively retained its division into five acts as well as its detachable numbers. A ballet was usually

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13 Wallace Brockway and Herbert Weinstock, The Opera: A History of its Creation and Performance (New York: Pantheon, 1962), p. 287.

14 Grout, A Short History of Opera, p. 410.

inserted in the fourth act. The orchestra, though given a prominent place in certain decorative scenes, was often reduced to simple accompaniment so as not to deter from the bel canto style of the vocal writing. Subject matter was frequently drawn from medieval or modern history, often emphasizing contemporary issues, introducing religious motives, and favoring acts of violence and passion.[15]

The form was primarily cultivated in France by the Berlin-born Giacomo Meyerbeer (Jakob Beer, 1791-1864) and his librettist Eugène Scribe (1791-1861), who also worked with Daniel Auber (1782-1871) in refining the opéra-comique. Their monumental stage epics--sheer spectacles larger than anything previously attempted--were accepted as the pinnacles of entertainment throughout Paris in the early nineteenth century. Scores became longer and more complex, novel orchestral effects were exploited, ballets became more elaborate, crowd scenes abounded, and solo parts expanded in range and expression.[16] Examples may be found in Robert le Diable (1831) and Les Huguenots (1836), which established the style, and in Le Prophète (1849) and L'Africaine (1865).

Of the French composers of the time, the least appreciated, though perhaps the greatest, was Hector Berlioz (1803-1869). His melodic lines were utterly faithful to the text, rather than being treated as vehicles for Italian operatic opulence.[17] He was no Wagnerian either. He cared for none of the German master's music later than

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15 Ibid., pp. 315-316.

16 Ibid., p. 316.

17 Ibid., p. 326.

Lohengrin. Although he did work towards reforming opera, Berlioz was largely concerned with concision and concentration rather than with elaborate development as advocated by Wagner.

Although they were heirs to the vocal tradition of Meyerbeer, Charles Gounod (1818-1893) and Ambroise Thomas (1811-1896) continued the eighteenth-century French operatic tradition by liberating their operas of foreign influences. Their works were characterized by "suave, polished surfaces ... decorative details ... voluptuousness ... and long, complicated, and expensive ballets,"[18] and their line of development was continued by Léo Delibes (1836-1891) and Jules Massenet (1842-1912).

Opéra-comique was cultivated in France during the nineteenth century in both a serious and a lighter genre. While not pretending to be as formal as grand opera, some opéras-comiques approached the style of this genre by incorporating ballet and serious themes and attitudes toward the subject matter. Less pretentious than grand opera yet more serious than operettas, this type of opera is better described by Grout's term, "lyric opera."[19] This depolarization of the two forms was reflected in the style of the music and is illustrated by the active composers' contribution to both fields. The frivolous type continued to develop parallel to this more serious opéra-comique. Characteristic of the vaudevillian style were the amusing libretti based on improbable situations and set to extremely simplistic (though

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18 Brockway and Weinstock, The Opera: A History, p. 317.

19 Grout, A Short History of Opera, p. 330.

eclectic) music.[20] Typical examples of this style are found in the works of Jacques Offenbach (1819-1880) whose tuneful Orphée aux enfers (1858) and La Belle Hélène (1864) are as romantic as they are humorous.

The state of operatic taste in mid-nineteenth-century Paris may thus be summarized as an adoration of Meyerbeer and a craze for operetta. However,

> Undiscriminating acceptance of incongruous musical styles on the one hand and a frivolous addiction to the trivialities of operetta on the other were succeeded by a strenuous effort to restore in modern terms the great musical individuality which had belonged to France in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries.[21]

By the end of the nineteenth century, the old distinction between grand opera and opéra-comique had largely disappeared, for the latter had practically abandoned the traditional spoken dialogue.

French opera in the second half of the nineteenth century might therefore appear to be in a state of chaos. The composers who gained popularity were at first little influenced by Wagner. As in Italy, the salient appetite was for bel canto opera, although many composers understood that melody was not the only essential element of lyric theatre. Wagnerism, contested and fought against, entered French music after the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-1871, but never enjoyed popularity as an official school. The Wagnerists were viewed as "opponents of native taste."[22]

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20 Ibid., pp. 330-331.

21 Ibid., p. 425.

22 Brockway and Weinstock, The Opera: A History, p. 317.

Nearly all of the French operas produced between 1870 and 1890 show the serious attempts by composers to integrate Wagner's theories, though without abandoning the consecrated vocal domination. Leitmotive are employed, as are Wagner's harmonies and instrumental effects.[23] The Bayreuth influence, both in literary and musical treatment, is felt most strongly in the works of Vincent d'Indy (1851-1931; Fervaal, 1897), Ernest Chausson (1855-1899; Le Roi Arthus, produced in 1903), and Emmanuel Chabrier (1841-1894) whose Gwendoline (1886) even has a long love duet in the second act and a love-death at the end of the third. Chabrier excelled both as a composer of lighter music and as a symphonist. Wagner's influence is primarily prominent in the thematic architecture of Chabrier's works. Three other figures from the French school successfully integrated Wagner's theories in their own works: Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921), Ernest Reyer (1823-1909), and Jules Massenet. Massenet was primarily a theatre composer who excelled in the musical depiction of sentimental, capricious women and their passionate love affairs. He most resembles Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924) in his position as a mediator between the two schools.[24]

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23 Arthur Hervey, French Music in the Nineteenth Century (London: Grant Richards, 1903), p. 214. Though from the very beginning of his career Wagner turned to Leitmotive to unify his music dramas, he was hardly its inventor. References to chorale tunes punctuate and enrich many of Bach's large-scale choral works; Mozart provided the Commendatore with similar music--chordal progressions, mood, and color--to represent his two manifestations in Don Giovanni (1787); and Berlioz composed a recurring subject--a flexible idée fixe--in many of his works. Romantic composers freely mixed the literary with the musical--this mixture is the connotative essence of the Leitmotiv--and they tended toward a homogeneous structure by reiterating themes (as opposed to the principles of contrast upon which Classical music was built).

24 Grout, A Short History of Opera, p. 441.

The universal influence of Wagner became manifest in the whole of artistic thought in post-1885 Paris. Writers discussed musical subjects, literature, philosophy, and painting from a Wagnerian point of view.[25] But no consistent school grew out of attempts by the French opera composers to assimilate Wagner's methods; along with the many experiments, the line of lyric opera in descent from Gounod and Thomas continued to flourish.

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25 Romain Rolland, Musicians of Today, second edn. (New York: Holt, 1915), p. 253, quoted in Grout, A Short History of Opera, p. 429.

CHAPTER II: JULES MASSENET: MAN AND MUSICIAN

Massenet was born on May 12th, 1842 at M[redacted], a small community near Ste-Etienne in the province of Loire. T[redacted]enth child in the family, he was instructed in the rudiments of [redacted]sic by his mother. On January 11th, 1853, he successfully auditioned for entrance to the Paris Conservatoire. There he studied the piano with Adolphe Laurent, solfège in the class of Marie Gabriel Augustin Savard, the organ with François Benoist, and harmony with Henri Reber. On November 2nd, 1861, Massenet became a student in Ambroise Thomas' composition class, where he quickly became the professor's favorite pupil.[1] In 1863, he was awarded the first prize in counterpoint and fugue and the Grand Prix de Rome from the Institut de France for his cantata, David Rizzio.

During his two years of obligatory study at the Villa Medici in Rome, Massenet met Franz Liszt. Liszt had been giving lessons to young women, but decided to abandon this occupation as he turned more towards religion near the end of his life; he asked Massenet to replace him as the teacher of Madame de Sainte-Marie and her daughter. When Massenet returned to Rome after a year-long tour of Austria, Hungary, and Germany, he married Mademoiselle de Sainte-Marie.

In October of 1878, the year after the première of his first successful opera, Le Roi de Lahore, Massenet was named professor of

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1 Louis Schneider, Massenet: L'homme - Le musicien (Paris: L. Carteret, 1908), p. 14.

counterpoint and fugue and of composition at the Conservatoire, a post he held until his retirement in 1896.[2] His pupils during this eight-year period included Alfred Bruneau, Gustave Charpentier, Xavier Leroux, and Gabriel Pierné. Cooper says that

> Very few French composers who made their names between 1890 and 1920 remained uninfluenced by [Massenet's] teaching, even if it was only when this inspired a determination to break away from the French operatic concention that he represented.[3]

By the time of his death on August 13th, 1912, Massenet had produced many successful works, including compositions for piano, songs, oratorios, symphonic music, incidental music, ballet music, and thirty-three operas.[4]

Massenet was well aware of Wagner's influence since he, like so many others, made an artistic pilgrimage to Bayreuth.[5] But he never

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2 Further awards/achievements by Massenet include his election to the Institut des Beaux-Arts on November 30, 1878, giving him two prestigious honors the same year).

3 Martin Cooper, The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, sixth edn., ed. by Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1980), XI, p. 801.

4 He left all the manuscripts of his lyric-dramas and opéras-comiques to the Opéra library. For a complete catalogue of these works, see Table I at the end of this chapter.

5 Hughes Imbert, Profiles d'artistes contemporains (Paris: Librairie Fischbacher, 1897), p. 226 relates the following story by de Wyzéwa about a Bayreuth production of Parsifal in August of 1888, when he was seated next to Massenet, who was probably seeing the work for the first time. Massenet "was trembling with fever, he was gasping for breath, his large, somber eyes twinkled in the night. And, when the piece was over, I heard him tell someone in the lobby of the theatre: 'Ah! I am in a hurry to return to Paris so that I may burn my Wertner!'" ("... frémissant de fièvre, son souffle haletait, ses grands yeux sombres étincelaient dans la nuit. Et, quand la pièce fut

committed himself to particular theories, Wagnerian or otherwise;[6] he analyzed the German titan's works, cultivated Wagner's style in his French garden, and must have laughed when Manon (1884) was pejoratively proclaimed a Wagnerian epithet.[7]

Parsifal had not yet appeared when the influence of the creator of the "music drama" revealed itself in Massenet's choice of operatic subject matter: in 1877 with Le Roi de Lahore; in 1889 with Esclarmonde; in 1891 with Le Mage; in 1906 with Ariane, where the sirens recall the Rhinemaidens, and the fight with the minotaur recalls Siegfried's fight with the dragon; and, in 1909 with Bacchus.[8] These texts are legends and myths, somewhat like Der fliegende Holländer and Tannhäuser but without Wagner's philosophical overtones. Unlike Wagner, Massenet did not believe that he was an artistic, political, and philosophical spokesman for his country.[9] Rather, he chose his texts for their intrinsic musical possibilities, and was highly sensitive to popular taste.[10] Evidence of this attitude is to be found in the variety of

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jouée, j'entendis qu'il disait à quelqu'un dans le couloir du théâtre: Ah! il me tarde de rentrer à Paris pour brûler mon Werther!")

6 Grout, A Short History of Opera, p. 435.

7 Henry Maret quoted in Xavier Leroux, "L'oeuvre de J. Massenet," Musica, 120 (1912), p. 167.

8 Eliane Bouilhot, Massenet: son role dans l'évolution du théâtre musical (Ste-Etienne: Bornier-de-Mans, 1969), p. 27. Note the author's two errors in dates: Esclarmonde is dated 1899 and Le Mage is dated 1851.

9 Ibid.

10 Grout, A Short History of Opera, p. 435. J. Combarieu, Histoire de la musique: Des origines au début du XXe siècle, 3 vols. (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1947), III: De la mort de Beethoven au début

styles he adopted: Esclarmonde, composed along Wagnerian guidelines; La Navarraise (1894), formulated after the verismo style of Mascagni's triumphant Cavalleria Rusticana (1890); and, Cendrillon (1899), probably suggested by Humperdinck's successful Hänsel und Gretel (1893).

The music-drama influence on Massenet was particularly manifest with regard to continuity. Manon represents a first stage in this evolution. Although it maintains the traditional division of duos, trios, recitatives, and arias, it does display more continuity than is evident in the previous operas. The recitatives are supported by continuous music and dissolve into arias. In this opéra-comique, Massenet accompanied the spoken dialogue with an orchestral commentary in the manner of mélodrame. With Werther (1892), we find even more progress. There are few abrupt divisions, the recitatives are treated rhythmically more than melodically, and there are few arias. Finally, with the miracle[11] Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame (1902), we find a continuous first act.[12]

Less radical than Wagner, who wrote that the orchestra was the

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du XXe siècle, p. 414 points out that the editor Harmann played an important role in the choice of subject texts which Massenet would set to music. Hartmann would look for and study libretti; he even refused, by his own authority, those which he considered unsuitable for the musician.

11 Arthur Pougin, Massenet (Paris: Librairie Fischbacher, 1914), p. 121 explains that the medieval "miracle" was an opera with a religious subject, publicly performed before the doors of a church.

12 Bouilhot, Massenet, p. 32. Henry Theophilus Finck, Massenet and his Operas (New York: J. Lave Company, 1910), p. 90 relates that Méhul wrote an opera in which he substituted violas for the violins because he wanted a more sombre atmosphere; the result was judged monotonous. However, Massenet tried a much more revolutionary experiment--this opera does not contain a prima donna; many scholars consider it one of his finest works.

drama,[13] Massenet was nevertheless sufficiently inspired by Wagner's ideas to make the orchestra participate prominently in the drama.[14] Liberated from the strict role of accompanist, Massenet's orchestra became a symphonic commentator on the action and a reflection of the affective repercussions of the plot on the characters.

Massenet apparently strove to maintain a just equilibrium between the vocal and the instrumental elements. There is a general lack of virtuosic vocal display which, in conventional operas, was frequently combined with little musical inventiveness in the accompaniment; one also notes the lack of complex thematic development in the accompaniment. Massenet's concern for clarity often forced him to reject polyphonic complications and combinations of instrumental timbres.

Massenet employed solo instruments carefully, selecting them according to the expressive quality demanded by a given situation. The strings are employed in lyrically effusive passages, as in the Méditation or the death of the heroine in Thaïs (1894). The woodwinds dominate in passages poetically evocative of pastorales, as in the opening of the fourth act of Esclarmonde or the Rêve de Des Grieux[15]

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13 See Richard Wagner, Opera and Drama, 2 vols., transl. by Edwin Evans (London: Wm. Reeves, n.d.), II, pp. 610-618.

14 Charles Bouvet, Massenet: Biographie critique (Paris: St-Laurens, 1929), p. 79 relates that Massenet once said that the orchestra is one of the principal characters in his Werther.

15 Bouilhot, Massenet, p. 67 says the following about the music to Des Grieux's dream: "A veritable symphonic tissue, evocation more than harmonization, a twittering, murmurring picture, like the evoked birds and streams, in a clear register and with calm movement like the described scene, creates a sonorous atmosphere like that of pre-Debussyist poetry, already impressionistic, and this in 1884. Poetry which literally transports us, by the sole magic of sound, without the

in Manon. Following Bizet's example in L'Arlésienne, Massenet used the saxophone in the orchestra. Invented by the Belgian Adolphe Sax in 1844, this relatively new instrument is given an important exotic role by Massenet in Le Roi de Lahore, Hérodiade (1881), and Werther. The cor anglais also assumes a prominent position in Massenet's orchestration. He often used it to replace the oboe in particularly moving scenes, where the more expressive sonorities of the instrument are required. He also used it in Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame to convey the convent atmosphere, while the viola d'amore implied earlier times. In various works, Massenet used brass instruments in passages where the French horn states his famous fate motive.[16]

It is also from Manon onwards that one finds reminiscence motives in the work of Massenet. Already apparent in this opera is Massenet's solicitude in giving his motives psychological significance; he

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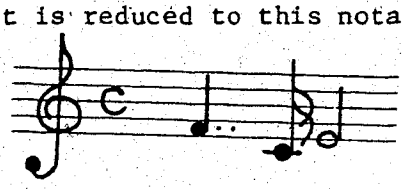
help of props, to the site imagined by Des Grieux.... Massenet, carrier of the first seeds of the new orientation of French music, would play, in a sense, the role of a musical Manet." ("Véritable tissu symphonique évocateur plus qu'harmonisation, un dessin gazouillant, murmurant, comme les oiseaux et les ruisseaux évoqués, dans un régistre clair et un mouvement calme comme le tableau décrit, d'une poésie pré-Débussyste, déjà impressionniste, et ceci en 1884. Poésie qui nous transporte littéralement, par la seule magie des sons, sans le secours des décors, dans le site imaginé par Des Grieux... Massenet porteur des premiers germes de l'orientation nouvelle de la musique française jouerait, en quelque sorte, le rôle d'un Manet musical.")

16 See ibid., p. 56. A common Leitmotiv is found in nearly all of Massenet's works whenever there is a gloomy foreboding or mention of a menacing destiny. It is reduced to this notation:



See, for example, "Vision fugitive" in Hérodiade, "Ah! fuyez" in Manon or "Voilà la terrible cité" in Thaïs.

apparently attempted to represent the emotions of the characters rather than the characters themselves. His rhythmic and melodic development of these motives enabled him to portray the complexity of the characters and then reflect upon their different moods. In Werther, for example, certain motives undergo transformations, evolving directly with the metamorphic moods of his characters.[17] Though the announcement of a motive often clarifies the thoughts of a character, the orchestra sometimes even delves into a character's subconsciousness to reveal these innermost impulses to the listener. In Manon, for example, the audience is already aware of the nascent though subconscious love between Des Grieux and Manon at their first meeting by way of the powerfully dramatic juxtaposition of the "Des Grieux" and "love" motives. Occasionally, the orchestra even tells all as, for example, in the scene in which Albert makes Charlotte give Werther's messenger the revolvers in Werther, or the erotic interlude between the scenes of the second act in Esclarmonde.

In this era when Verdi's music was considered the epitome of Italian composition, and the German school led by Wagner was threatening to engulf all music, there was thus created in France a school of opera composition whose principal representatives included Berlioz, Bizet, Délibes, Gounod, Lalo, Saint-Saëns, and Thomas. But while there seemed to be a sense of anticlimax in post-Verdi Italian opera, the opposite effect is seen to occur in French opera of the post-Gounod period. Massenet composed intimate operas in which the chief emphasis was placed on melody and depiction of the personalities and emotions of the

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17 Ibid., pp. 34-35.

characters; the arias have the charm of bel canto, and the music remains submissive to the text. His melodies are lyrical, sensuous, and often melancholic; a prominent melodic characteristic is the displacement of the musical accent in order to follow more closely the natural speech rhythms.[18]

> Like Puccini and Richard Strauss, Massenet enjoyed a popularity and a corresponding financial success that reveal how faithfully his music reflected the ideas, prejudices, anxieties and preoccupations of his contemporaries.... If Massenet was musically the least ambitious, it was because he wrote primarily for the French public, which had always been one of the most conservative and still regarded the opera as a social function, as one of the higher forms of hedonism rather than as a potential source of spiritual experience.[19]

By grafting the French opera tradition onto Wagnerism, verismo, and theatrically conventional characterization, the eclectic Massenet earned and occupied for many years a position in France analogous to that of Wagner in Germany and of Verdi in Italy.[20]

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18 James Harding, "Massenet" in Dictionnaire de la musique, 4 vols., publ. under supervision of Marc Honegger (Paris: Bordas, 1970), II: Les Hommes et leurs oeuvres L - Z, p. 695. He goes on to suggest that a certain languor presages the fluidness of Debussy's Pelléas et Mélisande.

19 Cooper, New Grove, XI, pp. 802-803.

20 John W. Klein, "Jules Massenet: 1842-1912: A Centennial Appreciation," Musical Opinion and Trade Review, July 1942, p. 337.

TABLE I: CATALOGUE OF MASSENET'S OPERAS

TITLE	TYPE	LIBRETTIST(S)	LIBRETTO SOURCE	FIRST PRODUCTION	FIRST CAST
La Grand' Tante	opéra-comique in one act	Jules Adenis & Charles Grand-vallet	comedy	Paris: Opéra-comique, April 3, 1867	Alice de Kerdrel: Heil-bronn Le comte, Guy de Kerdrel: Capoul La Chevrette: Girard Conductor: Tilman
Don César de Bazan[21]	opéra-comique in 4 acts	Adolphe Philippe d'Ennery & P. E. Chantepie	based on d'Ennery & P. E. Pinel Duma-noir's play	Paris: Opéra-comique, November 30, 1872	Lazarille: Galli-Marié Maritana: Priola Don César: Bouhy Charles II: Lhérie Don José de Santarem: Neveu Conductor: Deloffre
Le Roi de Lahore	opéra in 5 acts and 7 tableaux	Louis Gallet	legend-ary drama	Paris: Opéra, April 27, 1877	Alim: Salomon Scindia: Lassalle Timour: Boudouresque Indra: Menu Sita: J. de Reszké Kaled: Fouquet Chef: Auguez Conductor: Deldevez

Hérodiade	opéra in 4 acts and 7 tableaux	Paul Milliet & Henri Grémont (Georges Hartmann)	based on Flaubert's Biblical tragedy	Brussels: Théâtre de la Monnaie, December 19, 1881	Salomé: Duvivier Hérodiade: Deschamps Jean-Baptiste: Vergnet Hérode: Manoury Phanuel: Gresse Vitellius: Fontaine Conductor: J. Dupont
Manon	opéra-comique in 5 acts and 6 tableaux	Henri Meilhac & Philippe Gille	based on Prévost's novel	Paris: Opéra-comique, January 19, 1884	Manon: Heilbronn Des Grieux: Talazac Lescaut: Taskin Le comte des Grieux: Cobalet Guillot de Morfontaine: Grivot Brétigny: Collin Conductor: J. Danbé
Le Cid	opéra in 4 acts and 10 tableaux	Adolphe Philippe d'Ennery, Louis Gallet, & Edouard Blau	based on Corneille's tragedy	Paris: Opéra, November 30, 1885	Chimène: Fidès Devriès Rodrigue: J. de Reszké Don Diègue: E. de Reszké Le comte de Gormas: Plançon Le roi: Malchissédec L'Ombre de Saint Jacques: Lambert Conductor: Altès
Esclarmonde	opéra romanesque in 4 acts and 8 tableaux	Louis Gallet & Louis de Gramont	chivalrous novel	Paris: Opéra-comique, May 14, 1889	Esclarmonde: Sibyl Sanderson Parséis: Nardi

					Roland: Gibert Phorcas: Taskin L'évêque: Bouvet Enéas: Herbert Cléomer: Boudouresque, fils Conductor: J. Danbé
Le Mage	opéra in 5 acts and 6 tableaux	Jean Richepin	legendary drama	Paris: Opéra, March 16, 1891	Varédha: Fiérens Anahita: Lureau-Escalaïs Zarastra: Vergnet Amron: Delmas Le roi: Martapoura Conductor: A. Vianesi
Werther	drame lyrique in 3 acts and 4 tableaux	Edouard Blau, Paul Milliet, & Georges Hartmann; translated into German by Max Kalbeck	based on Goethe's novel	Vienna: Court Opera, February 16, 1892	Werther: Van Dyck Albert: Neidl Charlotte: Renard Sophie: Forster Schmidt: Schlittenhelm Johann: Félix Le Bailli: Mayerhofer Conductor: Jahn
Thaïs	comédie lyrique in 3 acts and 7 tableaux	Louis Gallet	based on Anatole France's novel	Paris: Opéra, March 16, 1894	Thaïs: Sibyl Sanderson Athanaël: Delmas Nicias: Alvarez Palèmon: Delpouget Crobyle: Marcy Myrtale: Néglon Conductor: P. Taffanel

Le Portrait de Manon	opéra-comique in one act	Georges Boyer	novel	Paris: Opéra-comique, May 8, 1894	Des Grieux: Fugère Aurore: Laisné Jean: Elven Tiberge: Grivot Conductor: J. Danbé
La Navarraise	épisode lyrique in 2 acts	Jules Claretie & Henri Cain	realist novel	London: Covent Garden, June 20, 1894	Anita: Calvé Araquil: Alvarez Garrido: Plançon Remigio: Gilibert Ramon: Bonnard Bustamente: Dufriche Conductor: Ph. Flon
Sapho	pièce lyrique in 4 acts	Henri Cain & Arthur Bernède	based on Daudet's realist novel	Paris: Opéra-comique, November 27, 1897	Fanny Legrand: Calvé Divonne: Wyns Irène: Guiraudon Jean Gaussin: Leprestre Caoudal: Nohel Césaire: Gresse La Borderie: Jacquet Cabassu: Dufour Conductor: J. Danbé
Cendrillon	conte de fées in 4 acts and one tableau[22]	Henri Cain	based on Perrault's fairy tale	Paris: Opéra-comique, May 24, 1899	La fée: Gréjean-Gravière Pandolfe: Fugère Cendrillon: Guiraudon Madame de la Haltière: Deschamps-Jehin Le prince charmant: Emelen Noémie: Tiphaine Dorothée: Marié de l'Isle

					Le roi: Dubosc Le doyen: Gourdon Le surintendant: Troy Le premier ministre: Huberdeau Conductor: A. Luigini
Grisélidis	conte lyrique in 3 acts and one prelude	Paul Armand Sylvestre & Eugène Armand	medieval drama	Paris: Opéra-comique, November 20, 1901	Le diable: Fugère Alain: Maréchal Le marquis: Dufranne Le prieur: Jacquin Gondebaud: Huberdeau Grisélidis: Bréval ~~Fiamina: Tiphaine~~ Bertrade: Daffetye Conductor: Messager
Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame	miracle in 3 acts	Maurice Léna	medieval drama	Monte-Carlo, February 18, 1902	Jean, le jongleur: Maréchal Boniface: Renaud Le prieur: Soulacroix Conductor: Jehin
Chérubin	comédie chantée in 3 acts	Francis de Croisset (F. Weiner) & Henri Cain	comedy	Monte-Carlo, February 14, 1905	Chérubin: Mary Garden Nina: Carré L'ensoleillad: Cavalieri La comtesse: Doux La baronne: Deschamps-Jehin Le philosophe: Renaud Le comte: Lequien Le duc: Nerval

					Le baron: Chalmin Ricardo: Paz Don Sanche: Girerd Conductor: Jehin
Ariane	opéra in 5 acts	Catulle Mendès	tragedy	Paris: Opéra, October 31, 1906	Ariane: Bréval Phèdre: Grandjean Perséphone: Lucy Arbell Cypris: Demougeot Eunoé: B. Mendès Chromis: Lante Thésée: Muratore Pirithoüs: Delmas Conductor: Vidal
Thérèse	drame musical in 2 acts	Jules Claretie	revolutionary drama	Monte-Carlo, February 2, 1907	Thérèse: Lucy Arbell Armand de Clerval: Clément André Thorel: Dufranne Morel: Chalmin Conductor: Jehin
Bacchus	opéra in 4 acts and 7 tableaux	Catulle Mendès	mythological drama	Paris: Opéra, May 5, 1909	Bacchus: Muratore Ariane: Bréval Amahelli: Lucy Arbell Kéléyi: Laute-Brun Silène: Duclos Le révérend: Gresse Mahouda: Triadou Pourna: Nansen Ananda: Cerdan Conductor: Rabaud

Don Quichotte	comédie héroique in 5 acts	Henri Cain	based on Cervantes' Don Quixote and on Jacques Le Lorrain's Le Chevalier de la longue figure	Monte-Carlo, February 19, 1910	La belle Dulcinée: Lucy Arbell Don Quichotte: Chaliapine Sancho: Gresse Pedro: Brienz Garcias: Brielga Juan: Delmas Rodriguez: Warnery Chef des bandits: Delestang Conductor: Jehin
Roma	drame lyrique in 4 acts	Henri Cain	based on D. A. Parodi's tragedy Rome vaincue	Monte-Carlo, February 17, 1912	Fausta: Kousnezoff Posthumia: Lucy Arbell Junia: Guiraudon La grande Vestale: Peltier Galla: Doussot Lentulus: Muratore Fabius Maximus: Delmas Lucius Cornelius: Clauzure Vestapor: Noté Conductor: Jehin
Panurge	comédie lyrique in 4 acts	Georges Spitzmüller & Maurice Boukay	based on Rabelais farce	Paris: Théâtre de la Gaîté, April 25, 1913	Panurge: Vanni Marcoux Frère Jean: Gilly Pantagruel: Martinelli Angoulvent: Audoin Gringoire: Raveau

					Alcofribas: Alberti Brid'oye: Delgal Trouillogan: Lacombe Rondibilis: Godet Raminagrobis: Royer Malicorne: Garrus Colombe: Lucy Arbell Ribaude: Doria Baguenaude: Muratet Conductor: Amalou
Cléopâtre	drame passionnel in 4 acts and 5 tableaux	Louis Payen (Albert Liénard)	tragedy	Monte-Carlo, February 23, 1914	Cléopâtre: Kousnezoff Octavie: Grenville Charmion: Carton Adamos: Magliani Spakos: Rousselière Marc-Antoine: Maguenat Ennius: Marvini Amnhes: Clauzure Severus: Feiner Conductor: Jehin
Amadis[23]	opéra légendaire in 4 acts	Jules Claretie	fairy tale	Monte-Carlo, April 1, 1922	Amadis: Vecla Floriane: Martyl Orlande: Korsoff Béatrice: Florence Galaor: Lantéri Le roi Raimbert: Huberdeau Conductor: Jehin

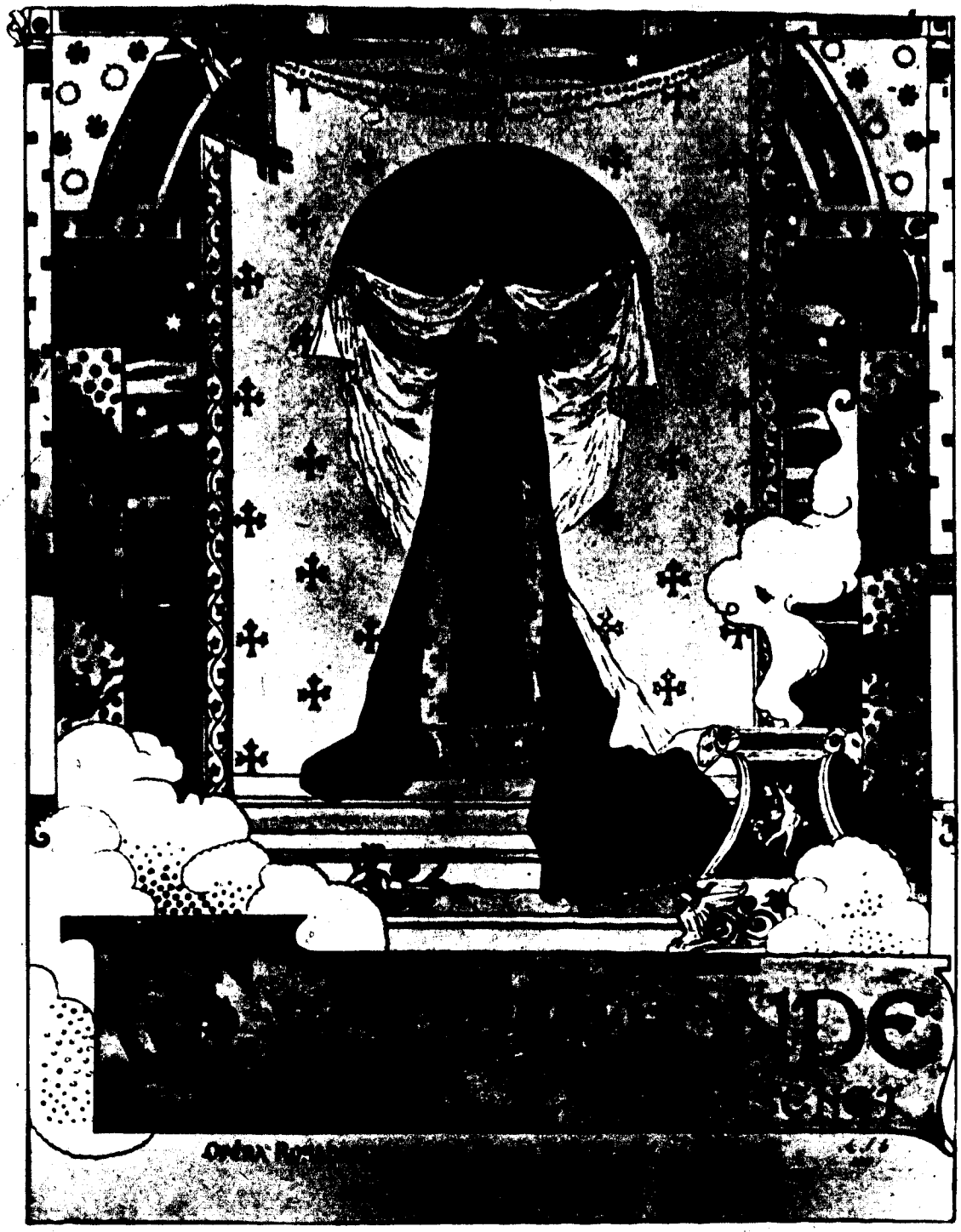
21 Louis Schneider, Massenet (1842-1912) (Paris: Bibliothèque Charpentier, 1926), p. 64 relates that the original manuscript was destroyed in the fire which burned down the Opéra-comique in 1887. Massenet rewrote the music, reset the text, and re-orchestrated the work in 1888; however, it was never revived in Paris.

22 There also exists a Préface to this work. This Préface was a way to make known to the audience the characters of the opera. These characters would appear together before a second curtain which was painted with principal scenes from the Perrault tale. A few days prior to the first production, this Préface was suppressed and disappeared from the manuscript.

23 According to Schneider, Massenet (1842-1912), p. 230, this work was actually completed around 1902.

Other operas by Massenet include: Esmeralda, libretto based on Hugo, completed c. 1864 (lost); La coupe du roi de Thulé, libretto by L. Gallet, completed c. 1866; Manfred, libretto after Byron, c. 1869 (incomplete); Méduse, libretto by M. Carré, 1870 (incomplete); L'adorable bel'-boul', libretto by Louis Gallet, produced in Paris at the Cercle des Mirlitons on April 17th, 1874 (lost); Les templiers (incomplete); Bérangère et Anatole, libretto by Henri Meilhac and Paul Poirson, produced in Paris at the Cercle de l'Union artistique in February, 1876; Robert de France, completed c. 1880 (lost); Les Girondins, completed in 1881 (lost); L'écureuil du deshonneur, an early work (lost); and Montalte (lost).

PLATE I: Poster announcing Esclarmonde



CHAPTER III: MASSENET'S ESCLARMONDE

To help celebrate the Paris exposition of 1889, Massenet was asked for a work to be performed during the festivities. His Werther was requested, but he offered instead Esclarmonde, an opera for which he had an excellent interpreter--Miss Sibyl Sanderson.[1]

The libretto by Alfred Blau and Louis de Gramont is based on Denis Pyramus' thirteenth-century French romance, Partenopéus de Blois. The story deals with the love of the magician Melior, daughter of the dethroned Byzantine emperor, and the young Partenopéus, son of the count of Blois. In Massenet's opera, the two heros have their names changed, but the story is otherwise nearly identical with the medieval version. In 1882, Blau and de Gramont offered a version of the story, called Pertinax, to the composer François-Auguste Gevaert, who refused it. Massenet, on the other hand, was attracted to the story by the magic and love elements; he had the libretto reworked and shortened, and it emerged under the title Esclarmonde.

Massenet began work on the opera in Paris in December of 1886. As was the case with Bellini, it was Massenet's practice to memorize a

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1 Sanderson, only twenty-four when she created the role of Esclarmonde, Marie Heilbronn, creator of Manon, and Lucy Arbell, creator of Thérèse and Dulcinée in Don Quichotte rank among Massenet's most important interpreters. Identified with the leading roles in Massenet's operas, they were all women whom the composer adored. For them, "he dropped the precious dots of ink on paper instead of buying them pearls in the Rue de la Paix." See Frederick Herman Martens, Little Biographies: Massenet (New York: Breitkopf Publications, Inc., 1925, p. 5). For a short discussion of Sibyl Sanderson's influence on the composition of Esclarmonde, see Appendix I (p. 57).

libretto before working with it. Consequently, he conceived the music in his mind, and did not use a piano to compose; like Mozart, he simply thought out the music, which he heard already arranged for the orchestra.[2] Massenet continued the work at Vévey on the shores of Lake Geneva during the summer of 1887. He completed the opera in Paris on October 14th, 1888.

Massenet took full control of the production. Not only did he inspect all aspects of the design, he was also allowed twenty-two rehearsals with the singers and fifty-seven more on stage, of which ten were with the orchestra. The work was first performed on May 14th, 1889 at the Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt.[3] Though Cooper calls the work a failure,[4] it was performed nearly a hundred times.

Influences

Massenet was well acquainted with the music-drama theories of Richard Wagner, whose works he would have analyzed in his studies at the Conservatoire. Esclarmonde represents Massenet's response to those theories. "Wagnerian" elements incorporated by Massenet include the legendary subject, with a preponderance of supernatural elements; the

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2 Massenet's official manuscripts, preserved at the Bibliothèque de l'Opéra, are therefore very clean. Detractors have taken this as evidence that he did not revise his music. However, a first draft of Esclarmonde also exists; it contains corrections, cancellations, and omissions--in particular the extremely high notes which appear in the final form of the cadenzas. See Richard Bonynge and Jeremy Commons, brochure for Massenet: Esclarmonde (Decca OSA 13118, p. 7).

3 The Opéra-Comique on Rue Favard was burned down in 1887; the company carried on productions at the Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt until the re-opening of the building in December of 1898.

4 Cooper, New Grove, XI, p. 801.

large orchestra; the dramatic effects induced by orchestral sonorities; and an overall importance of the orchestra for the presentation of well-integrated Leitmotive.[5]

The action has all of the necessary ingredients: passion, forcefulness, movement, and human elements. The voluptuous atmosphere, the contrasting episodes, and the suggestive poetry are all integrated into the development of the drama. The libretto even has several points in common with the libretti of Wagner: Phorcas' long recitative at the beginning of the opera recalls the opening scene of Lohengrin; the reversal of the ordinary order of things--the heroine who falls in love with the hero, and her efforts to win his love with supernatural assistance--reminds one of Tristan und Isolde; the fanfare which introduces the hero long before he appears recalls the announcement of Siegfried in Der Ring des Nibelungen; Roland's sword is reminiscent of Siegmund's "Nothung"; Esclarmonde's enchanted sleep recalls that of Brünnhilde; and the love that is lost when Esclarmonde's face is exposed is similar to Lohengrin's love for Elsa when he reveals his name to her.

The influence of Wagner is therefore evident. It is also apparent in the overall conception of certain scenes. In the scene in which Esclarmonde tries her magic power, one finds savage rhythms and violent harmonic audacity that remind one of the ride of the Valkyries. In the scene of the enchanted isle, we are reminded of Parsifal, but a Parsifal who will transform into a Tristan to sing, with the loved one,

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5 For a detailed synopsis and identification of Leitmotive in Esclarmonde, see Appendix II (pp. 59-78).

the passionate duo.

As in Wagner's works, love, with its inherent vicissitudes, is the motivating force of Esclarmonde. Massenet had already set texts in which love had been combined with exoticism and religious mysticism (Le Roi de Lahore and Hérodiade), but these operas can be seen as preparations for the mature treatment of the subject in Esclarmonde. Of all his works, this drama is the "most overflowing in frenetic tenderness, sentiment, and sensuality."[6] Nothing, for example, is more audacious than the suggestive nuptial scene in the second act; the polychromatic orchestral conclusion is particularly fervent. Finck draws a parallel between this second act and the second act of Wagner's Tristan und Isolde, calling both "a lava stream of passion."[7] Bellaigne adds: "Never had anyone composed a more staunch and detailed sonorous description of the physical manifestation of human tenderness."[8]

The libretto also anticipates other operas. Years later, Puccini used much of the opening format in Turandot: the scene of the mandarin intoning his pronouncement directly after the rise of the curtain; the great engulfing sound of the chorus; and the central figure's total silence throughout her entire first appearance. Lawrence also points out that "The massive resonance of [Esclarmonde's] finale [and] its blissful outcome strongly presage the Alfano ending for Puccini's Turandot."[9] The text can also be seen to anticipate that of

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6 Schneider, Massenet (1842-1912), p. 111.

7 Finck, Massenet and his Operas, p. 194.

8 Camille Bellaigne, quoted in ibid., pp. 194-195.

9 Robert Lawrence, "Magic Carpet" in Opera News, December 11, 1976, p. 33.

Richard Strauss' Die Frau ohne Schatten: Esclarmonde, inhabitant of a magic world, goes outside its boundaries in search of love, her efforts ultimately culminating in benediction.

Musically, Esclarmonde reveals parallels with French operas as well. Roland's calling to arms in the first scene of the third act is reminiscent of Aeneas' vow to defend Dido against the Numidians in Berlioz' Les Troyens, as well as of Samson's encouraging the Israelites to overthrow their Philistine masters in Saint-Saëns' Samson et Dalila.[10] Lawrence also points out that the scene of the herald's announcement of the tournament at the beginning of the fourth act suggests a reworking of the royal hunt and storm scenes in Berlioz' Les Troyens.[11]

Use of the Leitmotive

The musical form of Esclarmonde is remarkably tight, due primarily to Massenet's use of the Leitmotive technique and to the sustained atmosphere of magic and sorcery. The two main motives related to magic thus play a very significant role in the structure of the opera, and both of them generate families of motives.

The first family is generated by the twisting "magic" motive.

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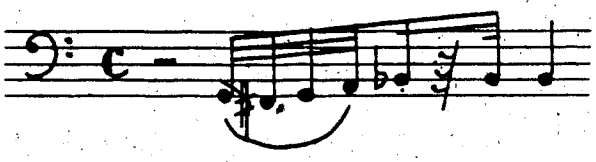
10 It should be pointed out, however, that the première of Saint-Saëns' opera was in Weimar (December 2nd, 1877, in German). The French première was in Rouen on March 3rd, 1909 (that is, after the première of Esclarmonde), and the Parisian première was given seven months later.

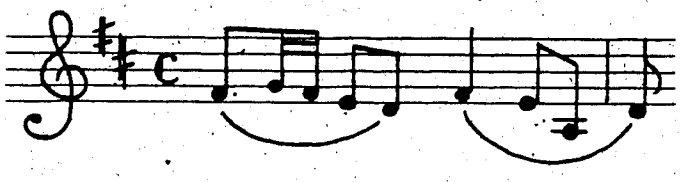
11 Lawrence, Opera News, p. 33.

Example 1. Measure 33 of the violoncello part.



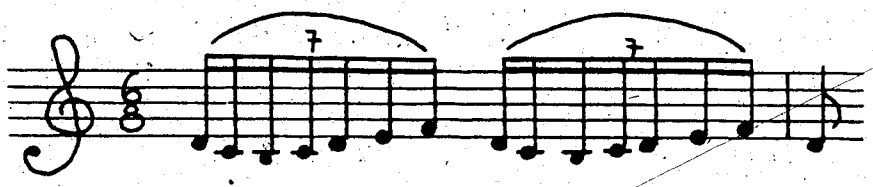
When Esclarmonde receives the crown and sceptre from her father, a motive associated with the royal insignia is introduced by the clarinet. The first part of this motive is actually a transformation of the "magic" motive:[12] the inversion of the original motive effectively implies an inversion of its meaning, dramatically suggesting that fate will also play a great part in Esclarmonde's future as a ruler.

Example 2. Measures 105-106 of the clarinet part.[13]



The next transformation of the "magic" motive is much simpler: by developing the twisting element and extending its range on both ends, a new motive associated with a "phantasmagorical spell" is created.

Example 3. Measures 546-547 of the violin and viola parts.

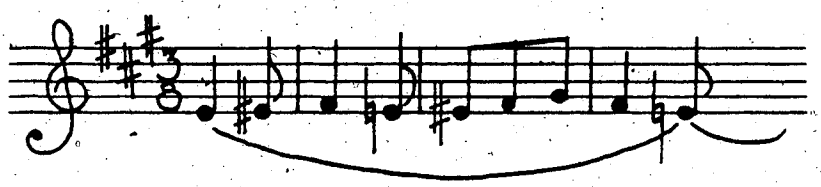


12 The second part of this motive employs an ascending perfect fourth which will be discussed as an association with the family of Regal motives.

13 For the purpose of convenience, all transposing instruments have been here transcribed at concert, not written pitch.

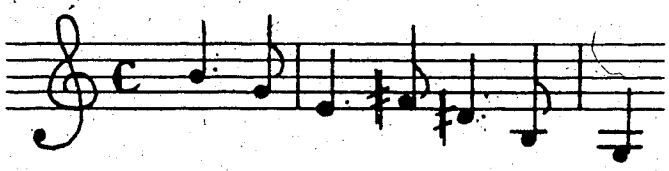
Yet a third transformation of this "magic" motive occurs in the second act. The twisting element is inverted and developed by augmenting the time values; the new motive depicts Roland's confusion when he finds himself on the magic island without knowing how he has come there, or why.

Example 4. Measures 832-835 of the flute, English horn, and clarinet parts.



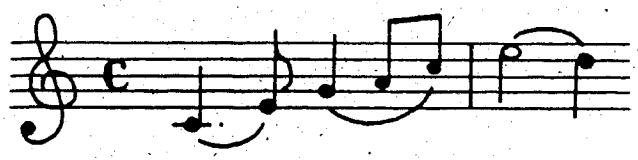
The second family of Magic motives is generated from a descending minor triad followed by a descending augmented triad with a major seventh; it is associated with the "casting of a spell."

Example 5. Measures 36-38 of the clarinet part.



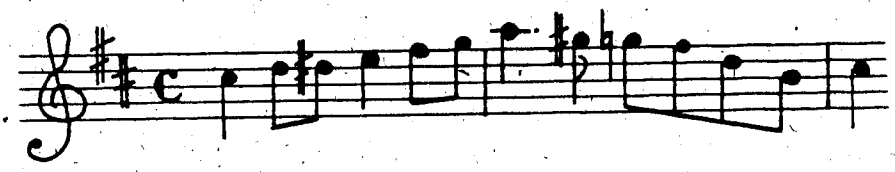
The first transformation of this motive is the most dramatic in the opera. The descending minor and augmented triads are changed to an ascending major triad followed by an ascending minor to form Esclarmonde's motive. This motive will be the definitive generating force of the new family.

Example 6. Measures 47-48 of the violin part.



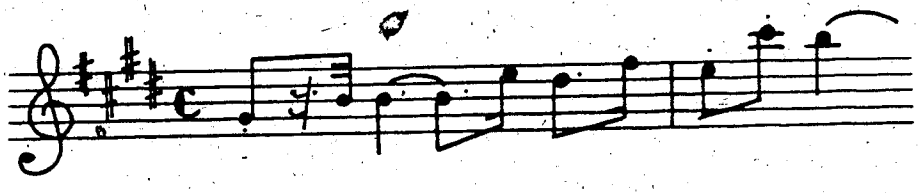
The next transformation is actually a development of the "Esclarmonde" motive. By filling in the thirds with chromatic conjunct motion, the new motive becomes associated with Esclarmonde as ruler.

Example 7. Measures 99-100 of the clarinet part.



The motive associated with Parséis' fiancé, Enéas, is the ascending major triad heard in first inversion form.[14]

Example 8. Measures 374-375 of the flute part.



The next transformation develops the initial major triad and symbolizes the love of Parséis and Enéas.

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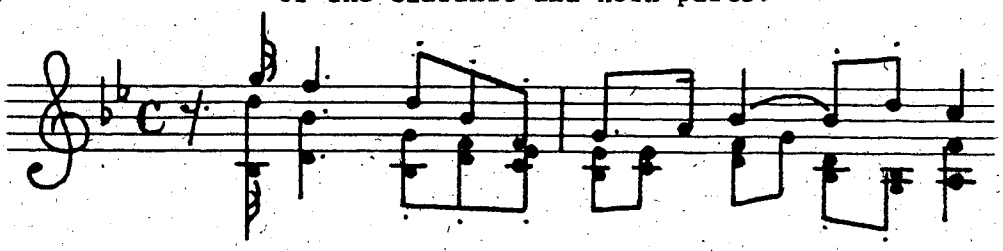
14 For Enéas, Massenet created a motive which bears a certain affinity to Wagner's motive of Walther von Stolzing in his Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg:

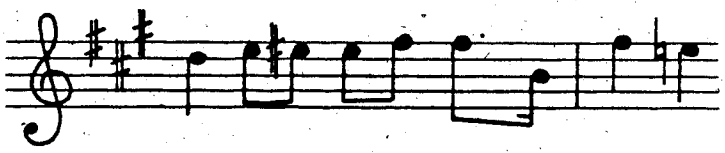
Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg, measures 1427-1428 of the clarinet and horn parts.



Example 9. Measure 440 of the flute, clarinet, and bassoon parts.

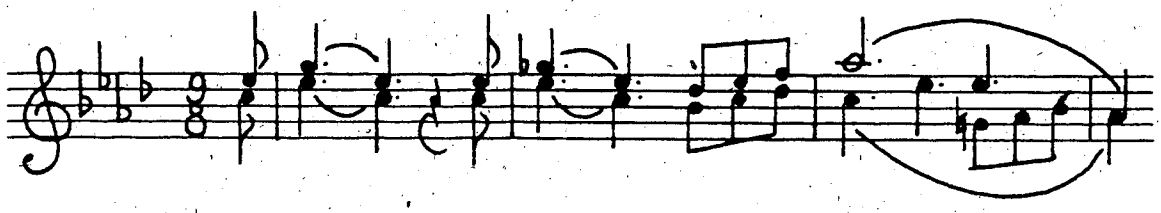
A development of the interval of the major third sets up a sub-family of motives which appear whenever the love element becomes the driving force. In the second act, chromatic conjunct motion and repeated notes fill in the interval of the major third to form a motive associated with Esclarmonde's nuptial promise to Roland.

Example 10. Measures 1241-1242 of Esclarmonde's part.



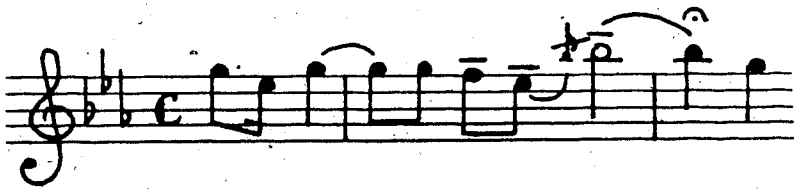
This filling in of the interval disappears in the next transformation. It is associated with the "nuptials" motive, and presents the Love family with its definitive motive.

Example 11. Measures 1283-1287 of Esclarmonde's and Roland's parts.



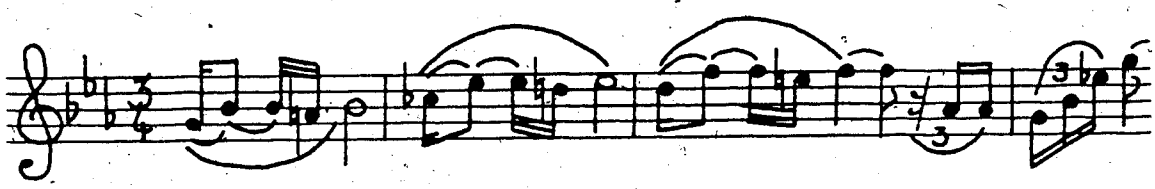
Since "rapture" is also a strong feeling which fills the mind, Massenet dramatizes the emotion by depicting it musically as the opposite of love: the major third is inverted in the second transformation.

Example 12. Measures 1415-1417 of Esclarmonde's and Roland's parts.



The next transformation presages the dramatic climax of the opera. The "nuptials" motive is a major third followed by a minor third. The transformation inverts the order to form the motive of Esclarmonde's vow. She promises to visit him each night, a practice that will eventually lead to the Bishop's tearing away her veils, her identity becoming known to Roland, and her eventual separation from him.

Example 13. Measures 1492-1495 of Esclarmonde's part.



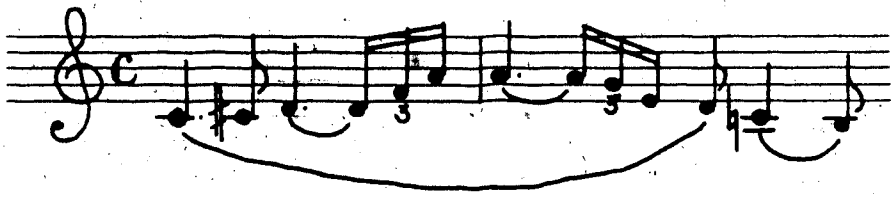
There remain three metamophoses of the original "casting of a spell" motive to be considered. The first of these provides the motive for "Roland's vow" to Esclarmonde; it is constructed by developing the initial ascending triad of the first transformation.

Example 14. Measures 1447-1448 of the violin part.

The second transformation, rhythmically related to the first measure of Esclarmonde's motive, is heard in association with King Cléomer's daughter, Bathilde. The similarity ironically implies a foiling of

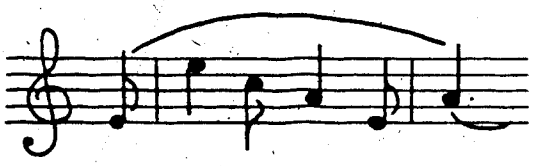
Esclarmonde's plans.

Example 15. Measures 2006-2007 of the English horn, bass clarinet, and horn parts.



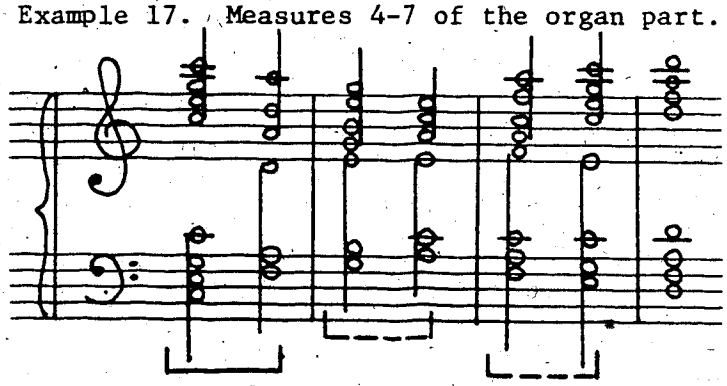
The final transformation recalls the "casting of a spell" rather than the "Esclarmonde" motive. The minor triad is extended to form the motive which Esclarmonde sings after Roland has betrayed her and thus loses the power of his magic sword.

Example 16. Measures 2487-2489 of Esclarmonde's part.



"Kingdom" is the first motive presented in the opera and is one of Esclarmonde's three chordal motives. It has, however, a bass-line movement which introduces another family of motives. This family utilizes the perfect fourth as its fundamental element and is associated (appropriately) with the Regal elements in the opera.

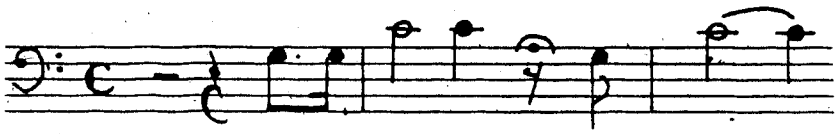
Example 17. Measures 4-7 of the organ part.



This Regal family is more definitively presented by the introduction

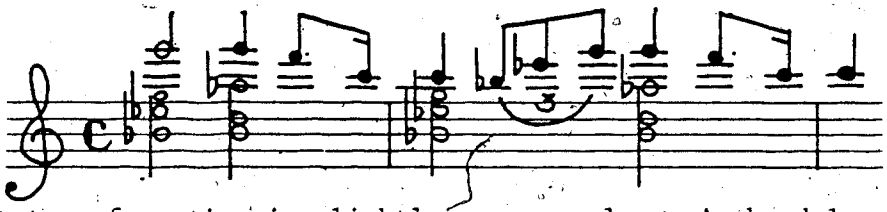
of Phorcas' "announcement" motive which is made up exclusively of an ascending perfect fourth.

Example 18. Measures 14-16 of Phorcas' part.



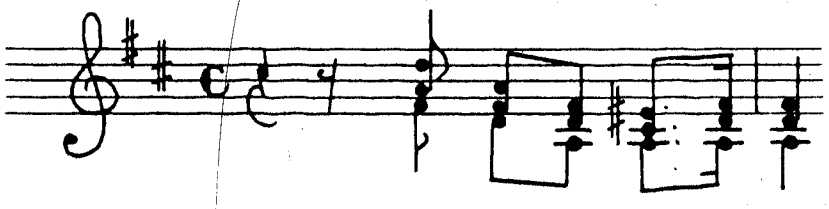
The first transformation of this original motive is a simple one: it is inverted. When Phorcas imposes the condition that Esclarmonde must conceal her face with veils from the eyes of men, a motive associated with this is heard. Its construction, a descending perfect fourth followed immediately by an ascending perfect fourth, reveals that she is not yet a ruler, but soon may be.

Example 19. Measures 67-69 of the flute, oboe, and clarinet parts.



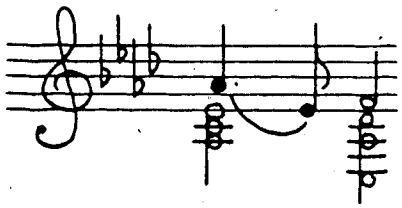
The next transformation is slightly more complex. A chordal motive based on an ascending minor second is associated with Phorcas' retirement. When the ruler tells Parséis of his secret location, a motive based on both the inverted Regal family and the inverted retirement motive is heard. The obvious implication is that Phorcas will have to come out of retirement to take command of the situation.

Example 20. Measures 106-107 of the flute and English horn parts.



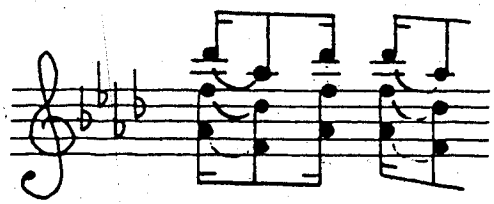
A third transformation occurs when the descending fourth in the motive depicting Esclarmonde's beauty suggests that this element may prevent her from becoming ruler and will lead to her ultimate downfall.

Example 21. Measure 125 of the string parts.



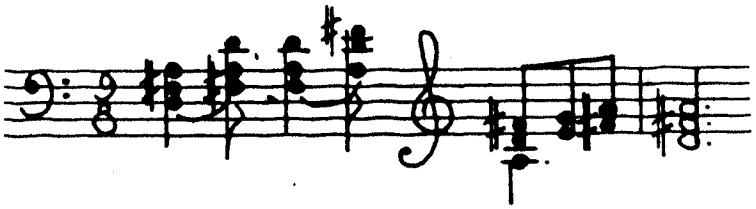
The next transformation produces a motive associated with the common people, based entirely on the descending perfect fourth. Thus the motive of royalty is inverted to produce the motive of peasantry.

Example 22. Measure 140 of the violin and viola parts.



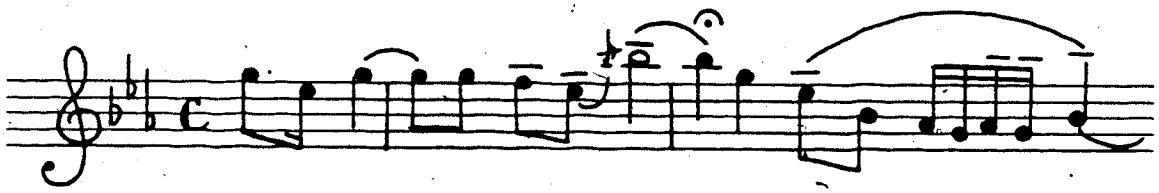
To depict musically Princess Esclarmonde's remote "magic isle," the ascending perfect fourth of the original motive is slightly developed to include, as its melodic outline, an entire major triad. Thus, as Wagner began his great Der Ring des Nibelungen with a rising major arpeggio presented by the horns to depict nature as the source of all existence, so Massenet slowly builds up to a dramatic climax with much the same element and for much the same purpose.

Example 23. Measures 473-474 of the horn parts.



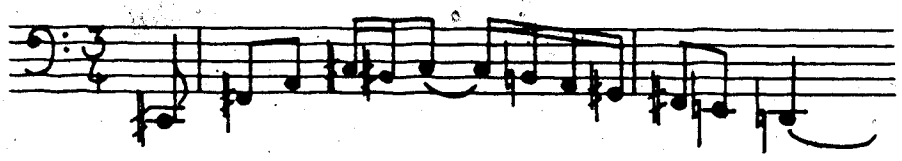
The second part of the "rapture" motive, presented at the beginning of the second scene of the second act, is also a transformation of this Regal family. Its descending perfect fourth implies that the princess has lowered herself to the level of peasant by having spent the previous night with a man who does not know her identity. She declares, in this motive, that she calls herself "happiness."

Example 24. Measures 1415-1417 of Esclarmonde's and Roland's parts.



The last two transformations are more radical. The original Regal motive is shifted into the minor mode, implying a darker or more negative aspect. The first transformation, associated with Sarwégur, a rival of Roland, is an ascending minor arpeggio, followed by a descending scale.

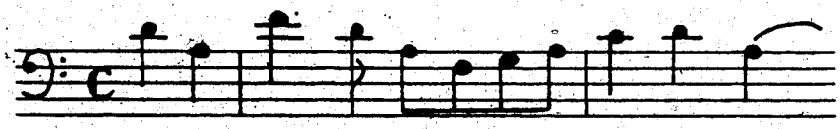
Example 25. Measures [illegible]69 of the bassoon, violoncello, and double bass parts.



The second and final transformation is perhaps more dramatic in conception. It is a chiastically shaped minor triad, presented by the Bishop

of Blois, and associated with the driving out of the "evil spirit," the Bishop being convinced that Esclarmonde is a personified demon.

Example 26. Measures 2466-2468 of the trombone and tuba parts.



Although they occur relatively rarely, there are some instances of contrapuntal combinations of motives. The "magic" motive is combined with the "casting of a spell" motive when the latter is first presented. This "magic" motive is also heard as an accompaniment to the "Phorcas' retirement" and the "Phorcas' secret location" motives. At measure 294, the "magic" motive is juxtaposed with the "tournament" motive, falsely insinuating that magic will play a prominent part in the event. When Esclarmonde conjures her spell in the first act, the "magic" and "Roland" motives are contrapuntally combined; while the spell is being realized, a contrapuntal combination of "phantasmagorical spell" and "casting of a spell" is heard. A more dramatic juxtaposition of motives is found at the beginning of the third act: "desolation near Blois" is heard with "Sarwégur," the perpetrator of this destruction.

By adding new words, two motives become more elaborate in their significant layers. The "magic isle" is associated with love, and the "calling to arms" with a glorification of Roland the hero.

Re-use of extended sections is equally rare. At the end of the fourth act, a herald announces the impending tournament. This presentation (measures 2707-2711) is a musical transplant of Phorcas'

announcement of the tournament in the first act (measures 75-79). A second example of verbatim re-use of material occurs in the initial twenty-four measures of the Epilogue, which is exactly the same (including the text) as the opening twenty-four measures of the opera.

By tracing the first appearances of certain motives, one can perceive an effort on Massenet's part to associate realms of meaning with certain keys. The main elements of the plot are set in C: "kingdom," "announcement," "Esclarmonde," "tournament," "Roland," "phantasmagorical spell," "sword," and "Bathilde."[15] The motives related to Enéas are all in E major. Many motives associated with the love of Roland and Esclarmonde are in E-flat: "Esclarmonde's veiled face," two of their "love" motives, "rapture," and "Esclarmonde's vow." Their two other "love" motives, the "nuptials" motive, and the motive depicting "Esclarmonde's beauty" are in A-flat.

The unity and dramatic implications arising from the motivic scheme are further deepened by the instrumental associations. All of the motives associated with the love of Roland and Esclarmonde are first presented by the vocal lines, while most of the other motives are first presented by the instruments of the orchestra. The secondary characters, Enéas and Parséis, are associated with the woodwind section. The motives associated with the exotic elements of the opera--"Roland," "magic isle," and "sword"--are presented by the French horns.

In order to be effective, the Leitmotiv system can not be employed arbitrarily or in a random manner: the dramatic situation must justify

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15 According to Martin Cooper, New Grove, XI, p. 806, "Like Gounod, Massenet retained an ill-justified belief in the virtue of an almost completely diatonic C major to express nobility, forthrightness or simplicity of character."

their use, and for this, there must be a necessary link between these situations. The primary function of the characteristic motives is psychological rather than representative. They do not follow the coming and going of the characters--we have them before us--but rather express their feelings and translate their thoughts. It is therefore not sufficient for a theme simply to reappear; it must become the driving force of the action. This evolution calls for complex harmony and a dislocation of the melody; juxtaposed with cantilenas at equilibrated periods, the Leitmotiv can become little more than an accompaniment.[16]

In Esclarmonde, the themes related to magic play a very significant role. The "magic" motive is heard 111 times and the "casting of a spell" motive seventy-eight times. Esclarmonde is nearly always present in the light, sliding, arpeggiated theme with which she is identified and which is heard a total of sixty-one times. Generally, the Leitmotive are played and transformed by the orchestra, though at times the voice regains its dominance. However,

> This transformation, premeditated and successful with a surprising energy, could obviously not be accomplished without momentarily veiling Massenet's personality.[17]

Massenet did not adopt the Leitmotive without regard to French taste; he brought to it a requisite sobriety in near-perfect measure. He never altered the motives to a point where the listener would have trouble recognizing them, nor to a great extent did he explore their

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16 Imbert, Profiles d'artistes, p. 205.

17 V. Wilder, quoted in Eugène de Solenière, Massenet: étude critique et documentaire (Paris: Bibliothèque d'art de "La critique," 1897), p. 46.

contrapuntal possibilities. The secondary motives, introduced when necessitated by the dramatic situation, are heard as simple recalls to accentuate the continuity of the progressive development. Therefore, where the action is at its height--as in the third and fourth acts of Esclarmonde--we are hardly aware of the presence of Leitmotive. When the motives do impinge upon our consciousness, the effect is to underline a character's thoughts as he or she sings otherwise "typically melting and expressive Massenet lines."[18]

Massenet's Leitmotive, longer than those of Wagner, did not readily lend themselves to the thematic continuity of "endless melody" encountered in Wagner's music dramas. The tight weaving of material, essential to this compositional process, requires a highly concentrated and meticulous approach; the results would contradict the sort of nonchalance which characterizes Massenet's works. As Mesnard, points out, this predominant use of Leitmotive brings the mood even closer to Wagner's final music dramas; the intermittent use of these musical formulae mixed with other distinct elements provided homogeneity in the operas of Massenet.[19]

Massenet had earlier experimented with Leitmotive in Manon, and in Esclarmonde, he adopted the technique with greater resolution. But it is essential to understand that rather than copying Wagner, he was inspired by him. With the delicate and exquisite modulations of the Leitmotive in Esclarmonde, Massenet shows his refined knowledge of

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18 Bonynge and Commons, brochure for Massenet: Esclarmonde, p. 8.

19 Léonce Mesnard, "A propos d'un Leitmotiv d'Esclarmonde," Essais de critique musicale III (Paris: Librairie Fischbacher, 1892), pp. 516-517.

Wagner's procedures.

Where Esclarmonde remains curious among Massenet's works is in the descriptive nature of much of the orchestral writing.[20] While he gives the orchestra an important role--now expressive, now evocative, now tragic and catastrophic--Massenet never allows it to overstep its part, to overpower the vocal lines. Unquestionably a master of orchestration long before this work, in Esclarmonde, Massenet gave the orchestra a more important symphonic-expositional role than ever before; the result is the most unified music drama which he had composed to that date. Though subtitled "Romanesque Opera," Esclarmonde is essentially a dramatic symphony.

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20 No exotic instruments have been included in this work. Therefore, all the orchestral effects are gained by exploiting the different registers and combinations of instruments of a normal orchestra.

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APPENDIX I: SIBYL SANDERSON AND ESCLARMONDE

Sibyl Sanderson was born in Sacramento, California on December 7, 1865. Seeking a career in opera, she relocated in Paris in 1886, accompanied by her mother and sisters. She studied with Mathilde Marchesi, a teacher with a special gift for developing the female voice. Invited by some American friends to a dinner at which Massenet was a guest, Miss Sanderson came prepared for a request to sing. The composer was very impressed with her agility and the quality of her voice. He considered Sibyl as the ideal embodiment of his Esclarmonde, and indeed, she proved to be personified inspiration to him. She went with him to Vévey, Switzerland accompanied by her mother and sisters; each evening the composer had her interpret the newly composed pages of the score. Taking advantage of her top range, Massenet included the diva's high G, known in its day as the "Sol Eiffel," since it seemed to reflect the prodigious height of Paris' newest landmark. Massenet considered her role as collaborator so important that he asked her to sign, with him, the last page of the manuscript, and he dedicated the work to her.[1] After her death on May 15, 1903, Massenet refused to let others interpret the role.[2]

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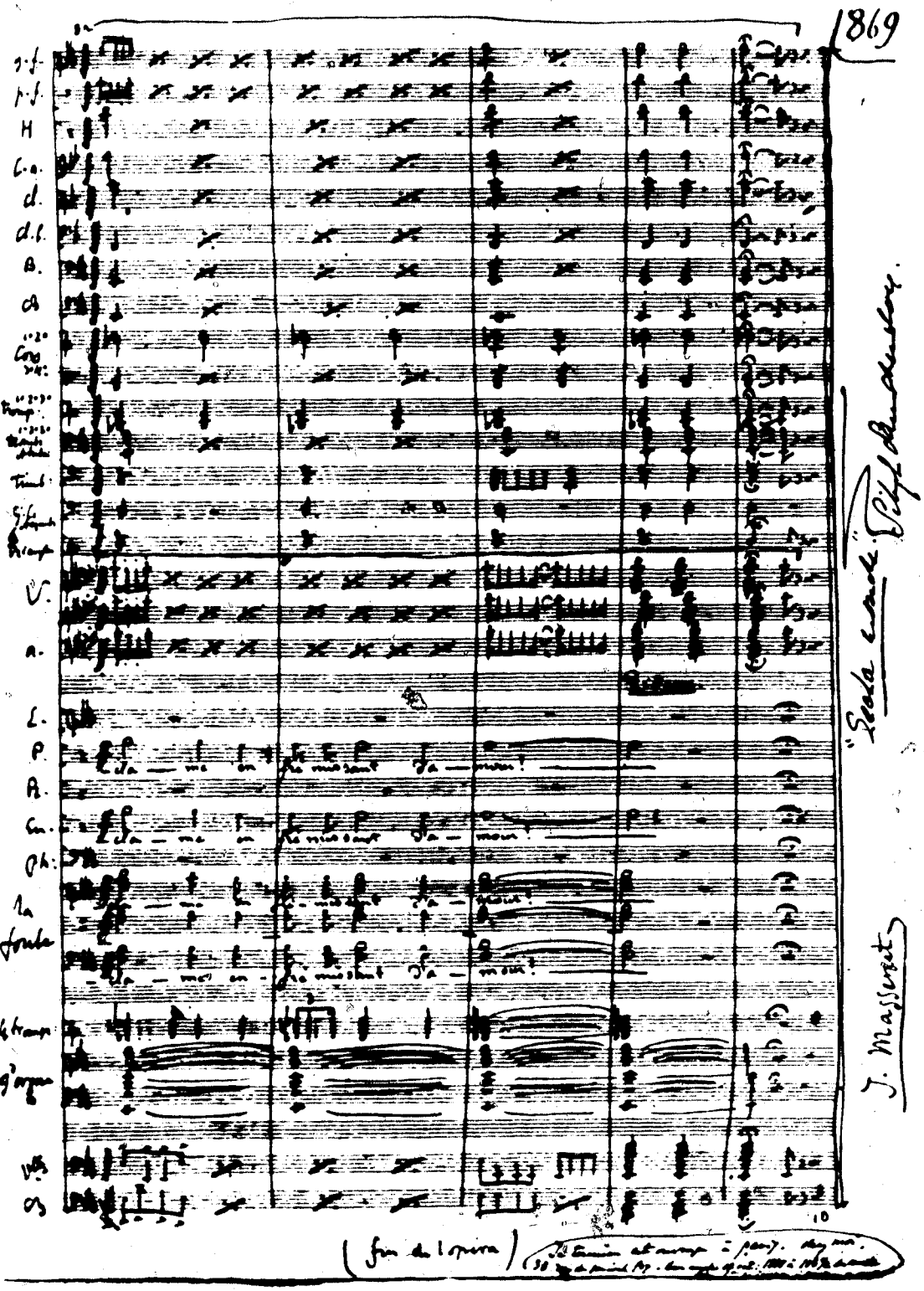
1 See Plate II, p. 58, for a reproduction of this page.

2 For a more complete biography, See Kenneth Stern, "Belle of the Epoque," Opera News, December 11, 1976, pp. 13-16.

PLATE II: Final page of the manuscript of Esclarmonde. Note Sibyl Sanderson's signature in the right margin.

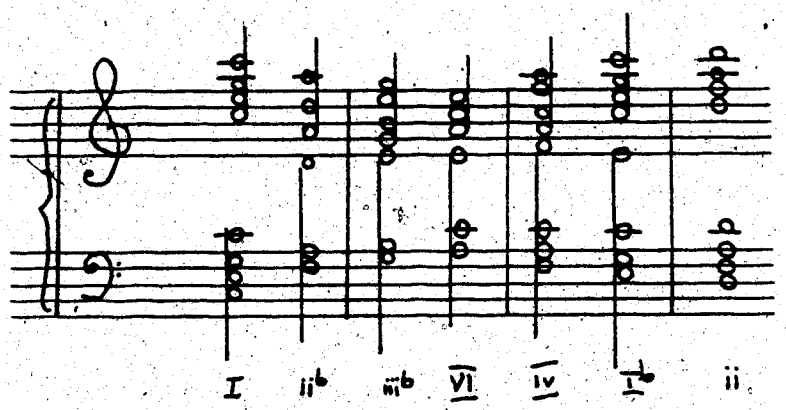


APPENDIX II: ESCLARMONDE: SYNOPSIS AND IDENTIFICATION OF LEITMOTIVE

Prologue

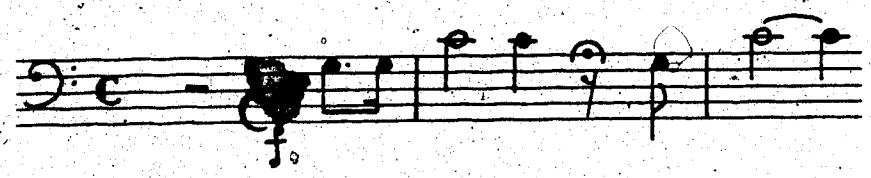
There is no overture or prelude. Immediately following three grandiose measures scored for brass, winds, and timpani, the curtain rises abruptly to chords for organ; this harmonic progression represents the kingdom of Byzantium.

Example 1. Measures 4-7 of the organ part.



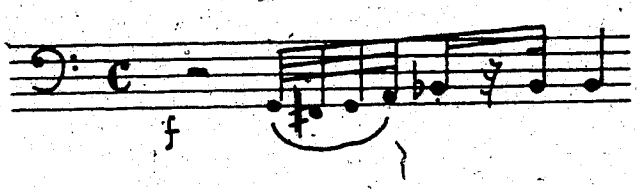
Before the closed doors of the Basilican sanctuary, the emperor Phorcas announces his contemplated decision to abdicate the throne so that he may devote more time to magic; this vocal line becomes associated with announcement.

Example 2. Measures 14-16 of Phorcas' part.

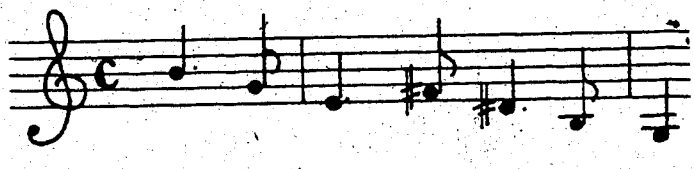


The two motives associated with magic are simultaneously presented in the orchestra: the "magic" motive and the "casting of a spell" motive.

Example 3. Measure 33 of the violoncello part.

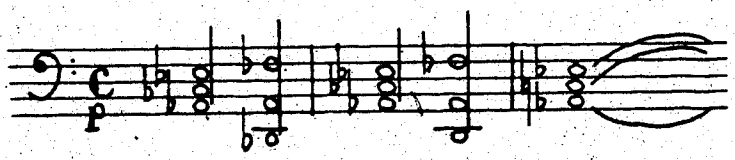


Example 4. Measures 36-38 of the clarinet part.[1]



Phorcas explains that he has no choice but to follow inflexible laws which are forcing his retirement, as the motive "Phorcas' retirement" is introduced.

Example 5. Measures 43-45 of the clarinet and bassoon parts.



As he proclaims that his daughter, Esclarmonde, will replace him as ruler, her motive is presented.

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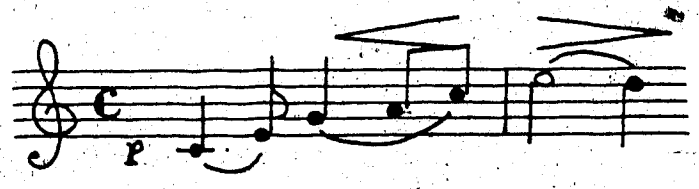
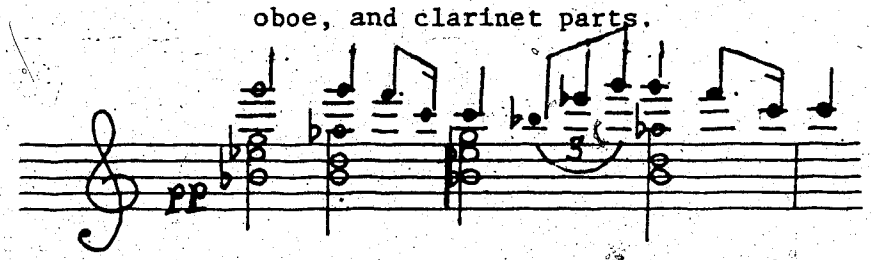
1 Again, for the purpose of convenience, all transposing instruments have been here transcribed at concert, not written, pitch.

Example 6. Measures 47-48 of the violin part.



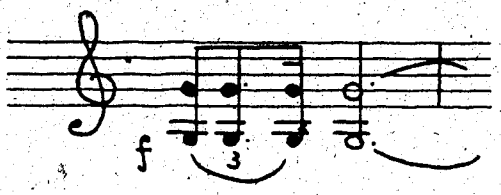
Phorcas reveals his disappointment that his daughter is still unwed; he has, however, instructed her in the cabalistic art of conjuring spirits. In order to safeguard this double inheritance--ruler and magician--he imposes the condition that she must conceal her face with veils from the eyes of men until she reaches the age of twenty. The motive of "Esclarmonde's veiled face" is introduced by the woodwind instruments.

Example 7. Measures 67-69 of the flute, oboe, and clarinet parts.



The emperor then decrees that on the day of Esclarmonde's ordination, a tournament will be held, the victor to be awarded her hand and supreme power. The "tournament" motive is played by winds and brass.

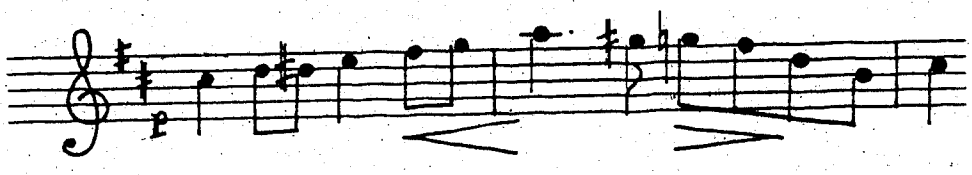
Example 8. Measure 71 of the bassoon, horn, trumpet, and trombone parts.



The golden doors of the sanctuary are opened, and the veiled and bejewelled Esclarmonde appears, accompanied by guards, incense-bearers,

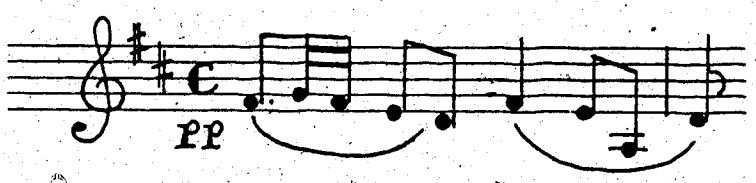
and her sister, Parséis. As she appears, the "Esclarmonde" theme is sung by the chorus. Parséis, followed by the incense-bearers and guards, approaches Phorcas; a new motive, associated with Esclarmonde the ruler, is played by the clarinet.

Example 9. Measures 99-100 of the clarinet part.



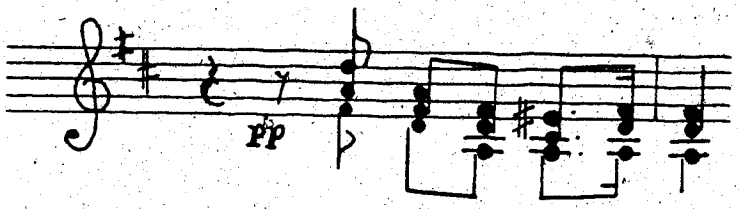
Phorcas gives the crown and the sceptre to Parséis; she places them on cushions carried by the guards, who carry them to Esclarmonde. The motive associated with the royal insignia is introduced, also by the clarinet.

Example 10. Measures 105-106 of the clarinet part.



The emperor tells Parséis the place of his retreat and charges her to act as the guardian of her sister, as the motive of "Phorcas' secret location" is introduced.

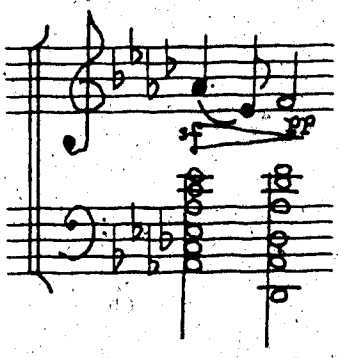
Example 11. Measures 106-107 of the flute and English horn parts.



As the crowd prostrates itself in homage, Esclarmonde advances

slowly to her father, gently raises her veils, and looks into his face; he bows before her, as if in ecstasy. The motive associated with her beauty is presented by the stringed instruments.

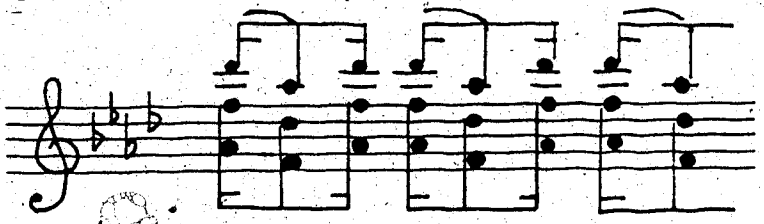
Example 12. Measure 125 of the violin, viola, violoncello, and double-bass parts.



She then allows the veils to slowly cover her face. Surrounded by clouds of incense, she returns alone to the sanctuary, having remained silent during all of her first appearance on stage.

Little by little, the crowd begins to rise; the motive of the "common people" is heard.

Example 13. Measure 140 of the violin and viola parts.



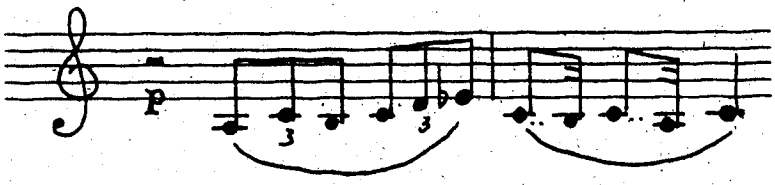
The "Esclarmonde" motive is again heard as the prologue comes to a close.

Act I

On a terrace in the palace, Esclarmonde dreams of Roland, a French knight whom she saw only once but fell instantly in love with, unbeknown to him. The "Roland" motive in major or minor versions is later

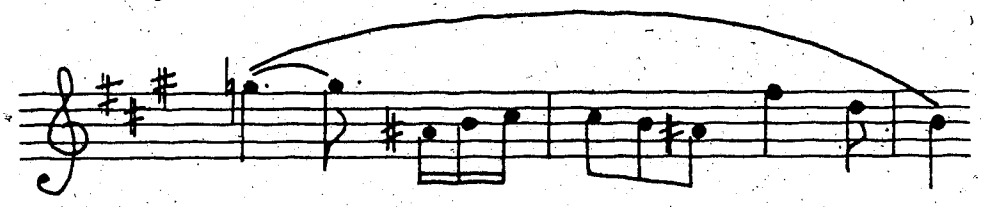
used, but it is first heard as follows, played by the horn.[2]

Example 14. Measures 183-184 of the horn part.



As she expresses anguish that she is destined not to confess her feeling to the world, Esclarmonde's "grief" motive is introduced.

Example 15. Measures 209-210 of Esclarmonde's part.



Parséis enters, notices her tears, and asks about Esclarmonde's secret sorrows. She confesses that their father's implacable conditions have shut her away from others and will condemn her to a life of loneliness, since only the chance result of a tournament shall decide her future. Parséis reminds her that their father also made her a sorceress, and suggests that she use these powers to choose a husband for herself; learning that Esclarmonde already is in love, Parséis proposes that the lonely empress should guide her lover's steps to Byzantium by a magic spell. Trumpet calls ("Enéas' trumpet call") are heard from outside, and the pair is soon joined by Enéas, Parséis' fiancé, who has just returned from a year's travel.

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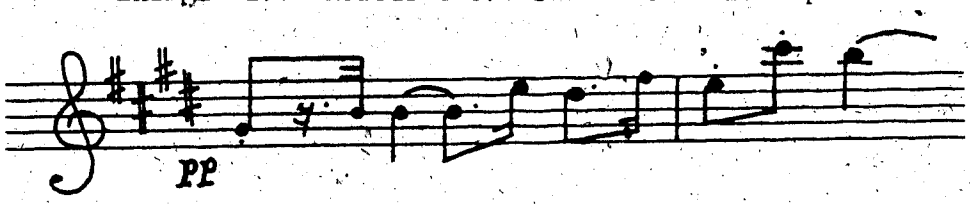
2 Thus this fanfare-like motive maintains a double temperament: now blissful, now despondent.

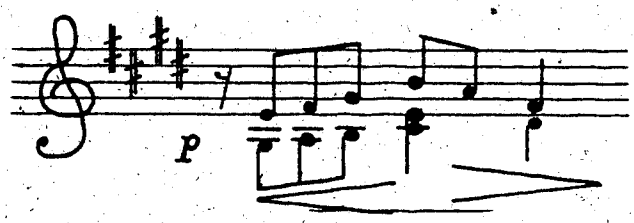
As Enéas appears, his motive is played by the flutes.

Example 17. Measures 374-375 of the flute part.



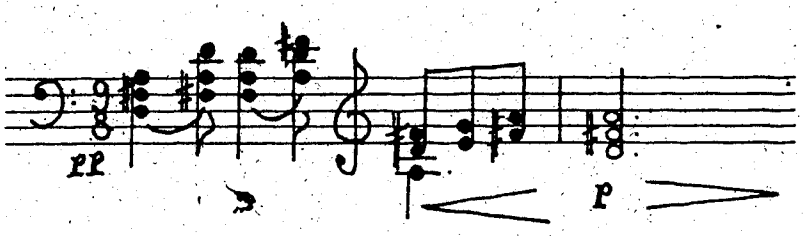
In recounting his adventures, the knightly Enéas reveals that the gallant warrior Roland, the only knight to overcome the young hero in combat, is soon to marry the daughter of Cléomer, the king of France. The news of Roland's proposed marriage greatly disturbs Esclarmonde, and Parséis dismisses Enéas. Before leaving, he sings a duet with Parséis, introducing a motive which becomes associated with their love.

Example 18. Measure 440 of the flute, clarinet, and bassoon parts.



As Enéas leaves, Esclarmonde tells her sister that she has decided to lead Roland to a remote, romantic place--a magic isle--where they shall be united; the horns introduce the "magic isle" motive.

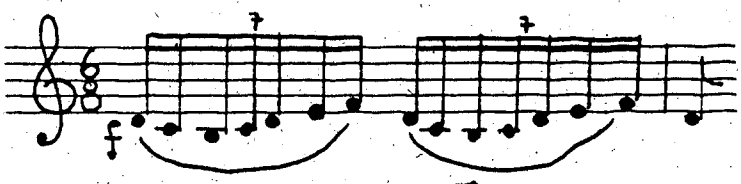
Example 19. Measures 473-474 of the horn parts.



She explains that she intends to remain veiled, but will nevertheless

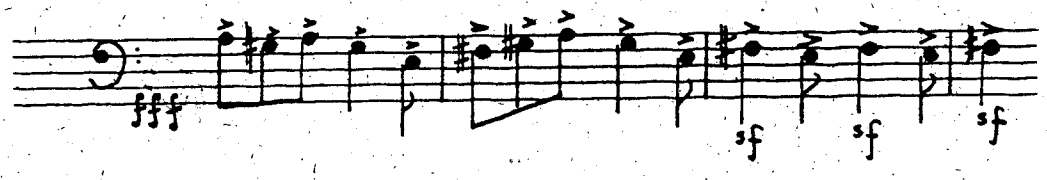
bring to him such sweet ecstacy that he will desire no other love. She invokes the spirits of air, water, and fire to conjure before her the image of Roland, as the "phantasmagorical spell" motive is heard.

Example 20. Measures 546-547 of the violin and viola parts.



The image of her lover hunting in the forest of the Ardennes with King Cléomer appears; the "hunting" motive is presented.

Example 21. Measures 588-591 of the bassoon, horn, and trumpet parts.



The two women envisage Roland pursuing a white stag.[3] Suddenly, everything changes. The astonished Roland finds himself before the sea, a boat appears, and he is drawn into this vessel which will deliver him to the enchanted island. The images disappear, night falls, and a chariot drawn by two griffins appears. Bidding her sister farewell, Esclarmonde mounts the chariot, promises to reappear when the day returns, and departs to join her lover. The act closes with Esclarmonde reiterating her command to the spirits.

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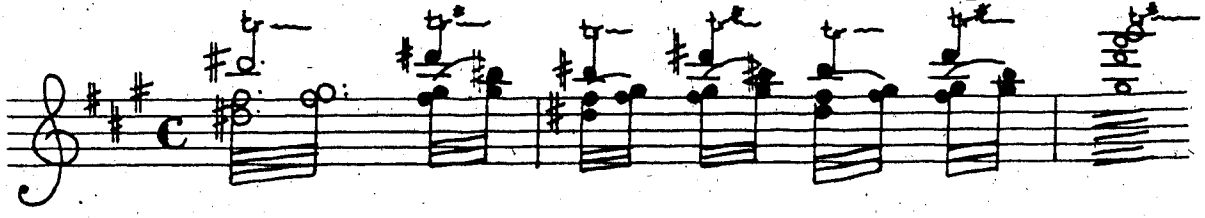
3 According to Lawrence, "the level of achievement [is here] among the highest in Massenet's oeuvre." See Lawrence, Opera News, p. 33.

Act II, Scene I

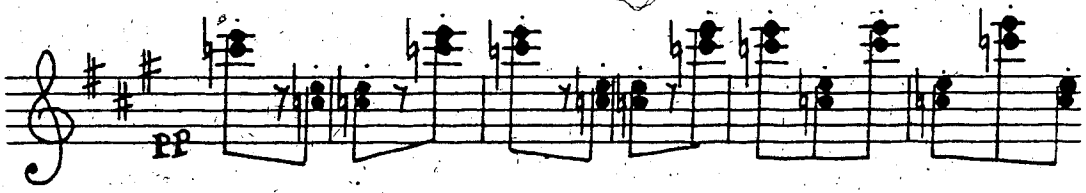
The scene opens in a lush moonlit garden on the enchanted isle; the motive of "night" is introduced.

Example 22. Measures 721-723 of the violin and viola parts.

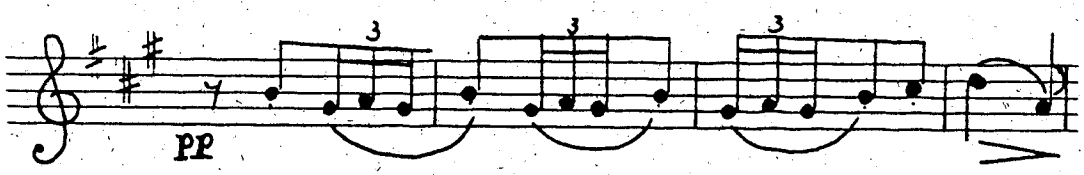


Spirits dance on the seashore, to the right of the scene; the motives of "spirits" and of "spirits dancing" are presented.

Example 23. Measures 746-751 of the violin part.

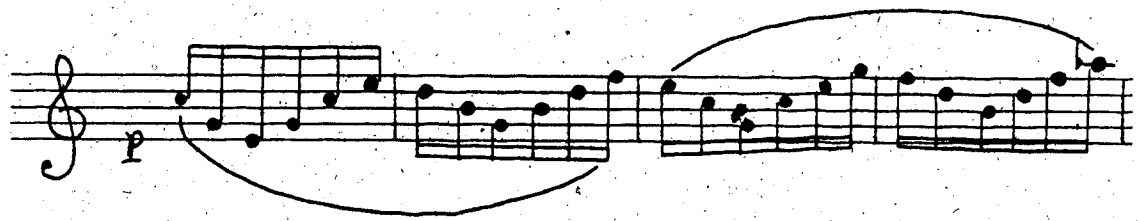


Example 24. Measures 800-803 of the violin part.



These spirits draw Roland near, then move away as he slowly comes forward; the motive of "spirits teasing" is heard.

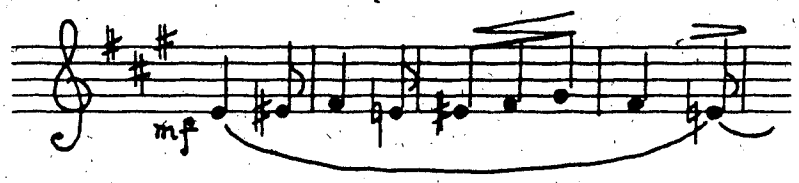
Example 25. Measures 818-821 of the flute part.



Roland is obviously puzzled by his whereabouts and how he got here;

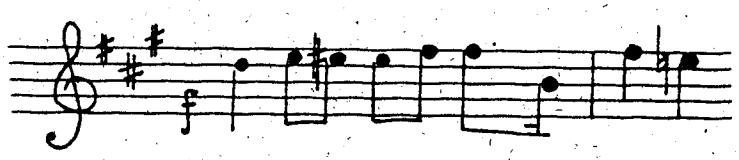
the motive of "Roland confused" is introduced.

Example 26. Measures 832-835 of the flute, English horn, and clarinet parts.



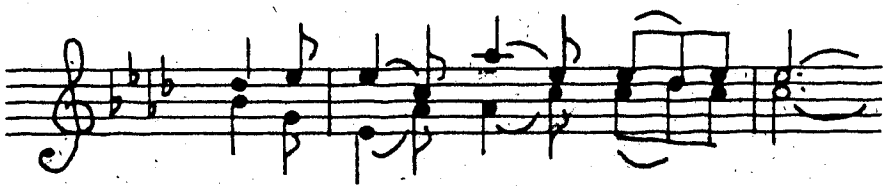
The spirits reappear, approach Roland, lead him to a flowery bank, and dance around him while he gradually falls asleep. Esclarmonde appears, dismisses the spirits, and relishes in her powers that have made this meeting possible. She lovingly contemplates the sleeping hero, then leans over him and kisses his forehead. When he awakens, she confesses that she has used magic to bring him to this place and declares her love. She promises him glory and happiness if he accepts her as his wife and pledges his faith to her; the motive of "Esclarmonde's nuptial promise" is presented.

Example 27. Measures 1241-1242 of Esclarmonde's part.

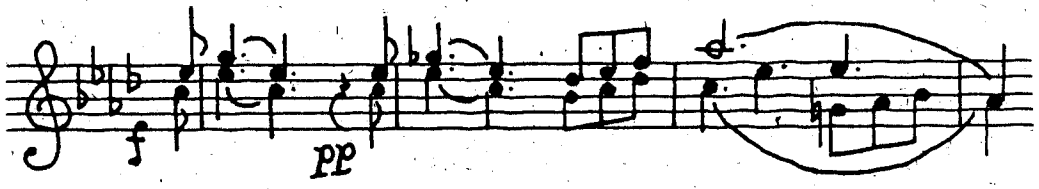


She adds, however, that he must never question her identity, nor seek to raise her veil. Roland rapidly accedes to her proposals, and they introduce a number of love-associated motives in a passionate duet.

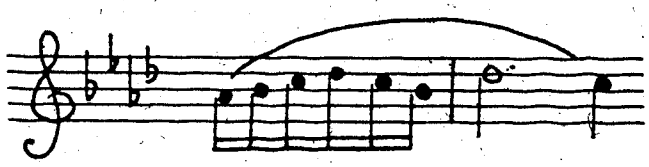
Example 28. Measures 1281-1283 of the Esclarmonde's and Roland's parts.



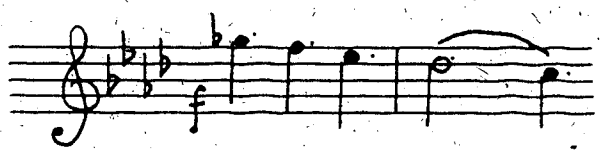
Example 29. Measures 1283-1287 of Esclarmonde's and Roland's parts.



Example 30. Measures 1293-1294 of Esclarmonde's part.



Example 31. Measures 1295-1296 of Roland's part.

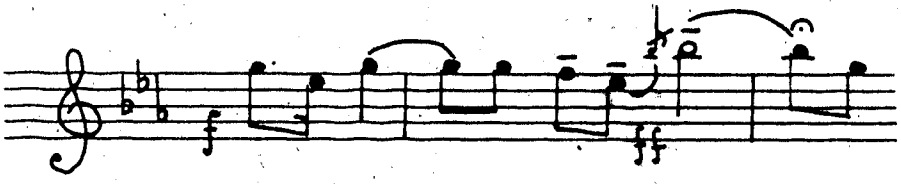


Their duet is punctuated by a chorus of invisible spirits. Thus erotically ends this first scene.

Act II, Scene II

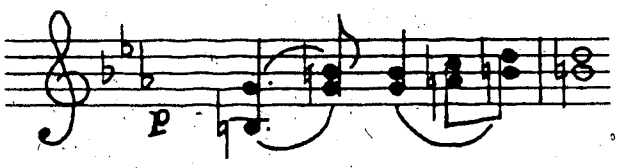
Scene II is set in a room in a magic palace. Roland sings of his regret that their passion-filled night is over and declares his love to Esclarmonde; their "rapture" motive is presented.

Example 32. Measures 1415-1417 of Esclarmonde's and Roland's parts.



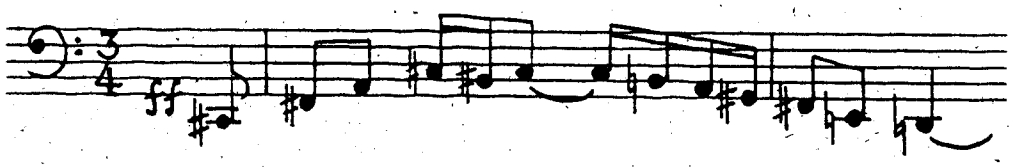
At Esclarmonde's insistence, he repeats his vow not to reveal their secret union; the motive of "Roland's vow" is heard.

Example 33. Measures 1447-1448 of the violin part.



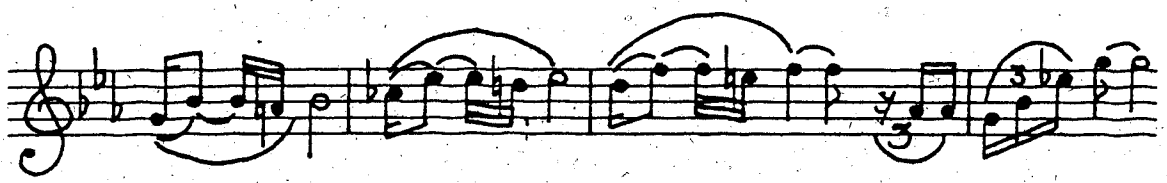
She then spurs him on to save his people from Sarwégur, the chief of the Saracens, who has laid siege on King Cléomer; the motive of "Sarwégur" is presented.

Example 34. Measures 1467-1469 of the bassoon, violoncello, and double-bass parts.



Esclarmonde vows that wherever Roland may be, she will join him each night; the "Esclarmonde's vow" motive is heard.

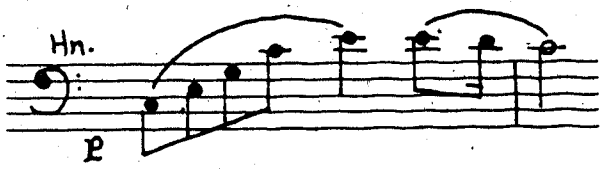
Example 35. Measures 1492-1495 of Esclarmonde's part.



To a new motive, a procession of young virgins dressed in white

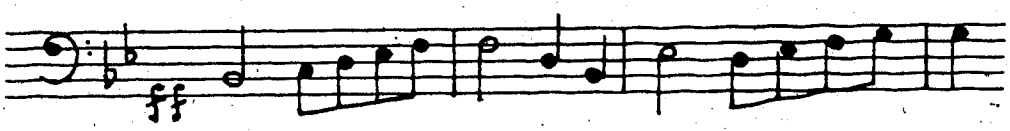
approaches. Esclarmonde presents Roland with the sword of St. George, warning him that it will render him invincible so long as he keeps true to his vow, but that it will break in his hands if he is unfaithful; the new motive is recognizable as the "sword" motive.

Example 36. Measures 1511-1512 of the horn part.



The chiastic hilt of the sword blazes brilliantly as the motive designating "Roland, Christian" is introduced.

Example 37. Measures 1579-1582 of the trumpet and trombone parts.

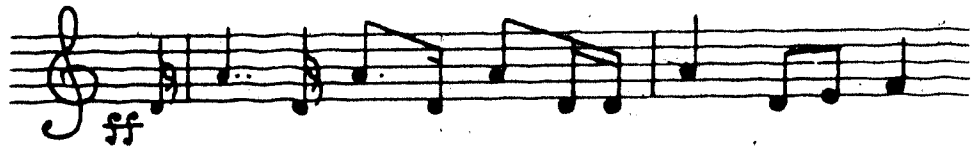


Roland kneels reverently before this heavenly symbol of faith and declares his respect for the token. As the sword ceases to glow, Roland seizes it and prepares to leave. Esclarmonde repeats her oath to him and admonishes him to keep true to his.

Act III, Scene I

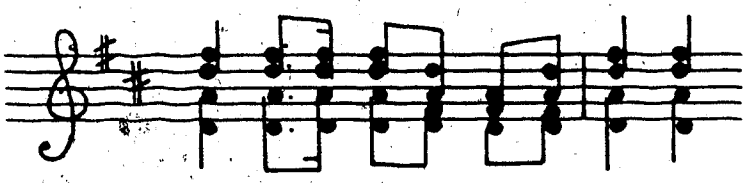
A new motive representing the scene of desolation and misery near Blois opens the third act.

Example 38. Measures 1641-1643 of the trumpet part.



The desperate populace surround their despairing king; little comfort can be given, for Sarwégur demands a tribute of one hundred captive virgins in return for the people's safety. The Bishop of Blois arrives, accompanied by a procession of monks and choirboys carrying a cross and lit candles, followed by penitents. As the Bishop bids the people to keep their trust in God, he is interrupted by a Saracen messenger who comes to hear the answer of the king. Just as all seems lost, Roland emerges from the crowd. He tells the messenger that he will fight Sarwégur in single combat, and calls to the people to have courage and to take up their arms and join him in battle; his "calling to arms" motive is heard.

Example 39. Measures 1832-1833 of the chorus part.



While the soldiers rally and follow the hero off-stage, the Bishop assembles the women and boys and exhorts them in prayer. Roland returns victorious with the soldiers who accompanied him to the battle. To reward him for the noble deed, King Cléomer offers the hand of his daughter Bathilde to Roland; the motive of "Bathilde" is introduced.

Example 40. Measures 2006-2007 of the English horn, bass clarinet, and horn parts.

Roland declines this honor and refuses to give any reason for the apparent insult; the motive of "Roland's refusal" is presented.

Example 41. Measures 2028-2029 of Roland's part.

The dejected king pardons him for his audacity and moves away. The Bishop, however, vows to discover Roland's secret, while the crowd acclaims Roland once again. The Saracen captives are led past the hero, and Sarwégur's treasures are laid at his feet.

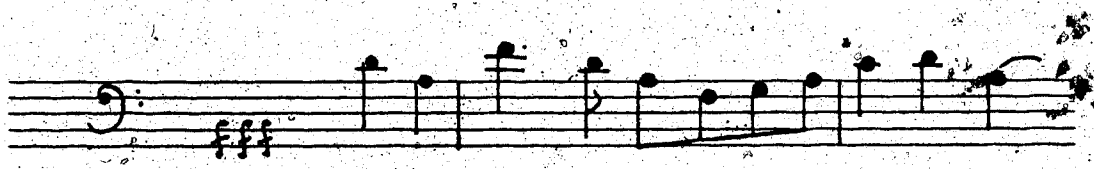
Act III, Scene II

Without a break the orchestra surges into an interlude which represents Roland's memory of his meeting with Esclarmonde. As the scene opens in a room in King Cléomer's palace, people can still be heard rejoicing from outside. Roland, at the window and half-listening to the cheers of the crowd, is absorbed with thoughts of the approaching night and its prospect of reunion with Esclarmonde. The Bishop arrives and questions Roland, particularly with reference to the latter's oath to secrecy. While pretending to honor Roland's vow, the Bishop insists that no secret can be kept from God and finally extracts Roland's

confession with the threat that eternal damnation will be inevitable if he persists in keeping silent. When the knight reveals his union with a mysterious woman who comes to him each night, her identity unknown and her face veiled to him, the Bishop is horrified, fearing a sacrilegious possession by a demon or sorceress. Withholding absolution, the Bishop commands Roland to fall to his knees and implore the mercy of God. As the Bishop leaves, Esclarmonde's voice is heard in the distance. As she draws nearer, singing the motive of her vow to Roland,[4] he contemplates feverishly whether his vow to her has been broken.

Esclarmonde appears, but the doors open abruptly and the Bishop enters, surrounded by monks, torturers, and servants bearing torches. Believing that Esclarmonde is a personified demon, the Bishop launches into the rites of exorcism; the chiastic motive of "exorcism" is presented.

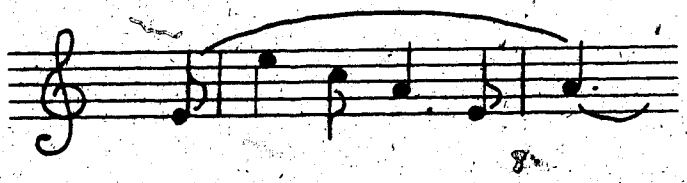
Example 42. Measures 2466-2468 of the trombone and tuba parts.



The Bishop then tears off Esclarmonde's veils, and Roland is captivated by her beauty. She, however, can only reproach him for his betrayal, singing the motive of "Roland, betrayer."

4 The famous "Sol-Eiffel" is found in this cadenza-like passage.

Example 43. Measures 2487-2489 of Esclarmonde's part.

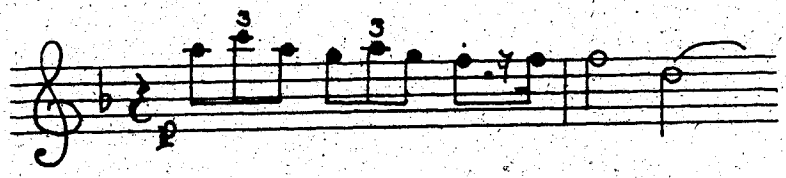


As the Bishop orders the torturers to seize her, Esclarmonde summons the spirits of fire to come to her aid. The spirits arise and surround her, and the priests and torturers recoil in fear. Roland attempts to protect her with the magic sword, but it shatters as Esclarmonde disappears, cursing him for his faithlessness.

Act IV

This act takes place before the entrance of a cave in the forest of the Ardennes. Nymphs and woodsprites are disporting themselves in the lazy afternoon; the pastoral prologue--in the traditionally pastoral key of F major--is based on the "nymph" motive.

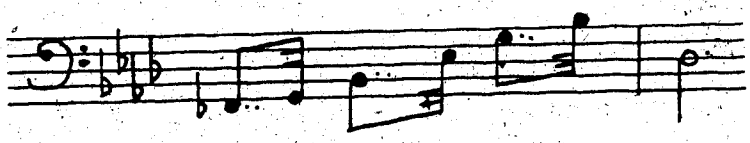
Example 44. Measures 2580-2581 of the oboe part.



Trumpet calls are heard at first in the distance, and then rapidly drawing nearer, causing the nymphs and woodsprites to disperse. Four men appear on horseback; one a standard-bearer, another a herald who announces the impending tournament. As the men depart, the woodland creatures return, followed by Parséis and Enéas. The couple is troubled by Esclarmonde's disappearance, for the tournament is close at hand. They have decided to come to Phorcas, hoping he will know

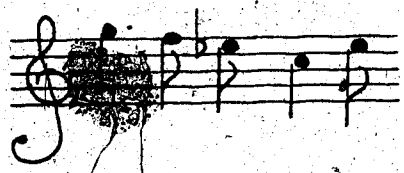
of a solution to the mystery. They ask the woodland creatures for directions to Phorcas and are guided to a cave. Thunder is heard, and Phorcas appears at the cave entrance. The couple confront the venerable old man with their knowledge of Esclarmonde and her lover, and tell him that one dawn, she did not return. Phorcas is infuriated by Parséis' irresponsibility, but decides that Esclarmonde must be chastised; the motive of "Phorcas' wrath" is heard.

Example 45. Measures 2918-2919 of the bass clarinet, bassoon, contra-bassoon, trombone, and tuba parts.



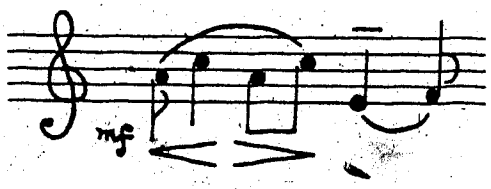
He invokes the spirits of air, water, and fire to bring Esclarmonde before him. She appears as if awaking, without seeing her father. She contemplates her memories and weeps over her lost happiness. Suddenly realizing where she is, she begs her father for forgiveness. He proclaims that unless she renounces her lover, he must die; the motive of "Esclarmonde's dilemma" is introduced.

Example 46. Measure 3071 of the clarinet part.



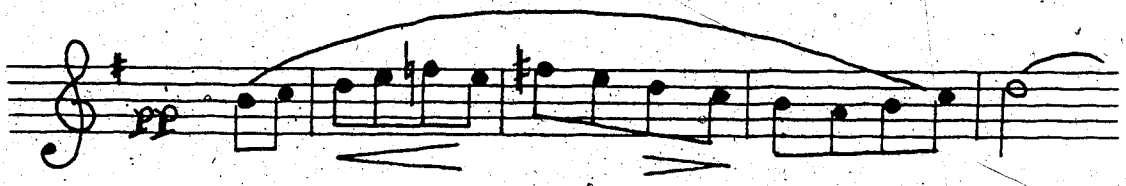
She decides to renounce Roland; her motive of "sacrifice" is presented.

Example 47. Measure 3117 of the clarinet and bassoon parts.



As Phorcas, Parséis, and Enéas leave, Roland arrives, distraught and in despair. While Esclarmonde tries to carry out her lugubrious penitance, Roland only sings of his happiness at finally being rejoined by his beloved. Esclarmonde is seduced by his passion, and they decide to flee together; a duet based on their "rekindled happiness" motive ensues.

Example 48. Measures 3209-3213 of Roland's part.



As the couple is about to flee, there is thunder and lightning. Esclarmonde hesitates and contemplates the consequences of her actions. She tells Roland that she must leave him, and finally, after prompting by her reappeared father, renounces his love. She then disappears with her father in a cloud of smoke, leaving the disconsolate Roland in misery. He decides that he cannot live without her love; the tournament knights appear, and he decides to enter the joust and thereby die a noble death.

Epilogue

No new motives are introduced in the epilogue, which takes place before the doors of the Basilican sanctuary. The antiphonal chords for

orchestra and organ are again heard, forming "an adroit [illegible]ped pendant to the prologue."[5] Phorcas, seated before hi[illegible]cts, announces that the time has come for fate to be fulfilled. The golden doors are opened, and Esclarmonde appears, veiled, bejewelled, and lost in the clouds of incense.

Roland, the victor of the tournament, is led before her; she fails to recognize him for he is wearing a helmet with closed visor. Phorcas offers him the hand of Esclarmonde. He refuses, and Esclarmonde shivers as she recognizes his voice. Esclarmonde lets her veils fall, Roland recognizes her, and the work ends with love triumphant.

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5 Lawrence, Opera News, p. 33.