

FERDINAND HÉROLD

by Nick Fuller

I. Introduction

On the stage curtain at La Scala, a mid-19th century opera-goer would have read in golden letters the names of the greatest composers of Germany, Italy, and France: Mozart, Rossini and Hérold.

Mozart has held his place in the musical pantheon for more than two centuries. Rossini's standing has been secure since the post-war *bel canto* renaissance but today's educated music-goer will know Hérold, if at all, only for the brilliant overture to *Zampa* and the ballet *La fille mal gardée*.

Only three of his operatic works have been recorded: *Le Muletier* in 1968; a radio broadcast of *Zampa* nearly a decade ago, not commercially available; and several recordings of *Le Pré aux Clercs*.

The most recent release of the *Pré* (Palazzetto Bru Zane, November 2016 - [review](#)) makes an overview of Hérold's work timely.



Hérold was a master of the *opéra-comique*, the quintessentially French genre that in this period mixed spoken dialogue with singing and sentiment with wit.ⁱ Many of his works had long, sustained runs in Paris, and he was performed throughout Europe. He and fellow *opéra-comique* composers Adolphe Adamⁱⁱ and D.F.E. Auberⁱⁱⁱ were particularly popular in Germany, and he was the first Frenchman to write an Italian opera in fifty years. Rossini himself refused to accept the cross of the Légion d'Honneur until it had been awarded to the Frenchman whose reputation as a great musician had crossed the Rhine and the Alps.

Nineteenth century French critics were unanimous about Hérold's greatness. Xavier Aubryet called him the poet of French music. From the vantage point of 1906, Arthur Pougin considered him unquestionably the greatest French composer of the first half of the nineteenth century. Pierre Scudo wrote in 1856 that Hérold was the greatest musician France ever had, and the only French composer other than Grétry who could be called a genius. He united in a rare combination French wit and taste, Weber and the Germans' religious emotion, and Rossini's grace, brilliance and unquenchable *brio*.

The claim for Hérold's genius is exaggerated. Berlioz, unpopular in his own lifetime and misunderstood for so long after, is a better candidate for genius and greatest French composer of the nineteenth century; Hérold's music seems comparatively light.

Nevertheless, listening to *Zampa* or the *Pré aux clerics* reveals a charming, elegant and consistently tuneful musician. A composer whose two best works held the stage until the end of the nineteenth century may well be able to please modern audiences.

Since, however, many of his works have long since vanished, it is difficult properly to assess their quality; we must rely on the judgement of his contemporaries.

II. Hérold's operas

Year	Title	Acts	Librettist	Performed	Notes
1815	<i>La Gioventù di Enrico Quinto</i>	2	Landriani	Fondo, Naples, 5 January	
1816	<i>Charles de France ou Amour et Gloire</i>	2	De Rancé, Théaulon & Dartois	Opéra-Comique, 18 June	With Boïeldieu
1817	<i>Les Rosières</i>	3	Théaulon	Opéra-Comique, 27 Jan	
	<i>La Clochette ou le Diable page</i>	3	Théaulon	Opéra-Comique, 18 Oct	
1818	<i>Le Premier venu</i>	3	Vial & Planard	Opéra-Comique, 28 Sept	
1819	<i>Les Troqueurs</i>	1	Achille & Armand	Opéra-Comique, 18 Feb	
	<i>L'Amour platonique</i>	1	Auguste Rousseau		Unperformed; retired by Hérold after the general rehearsal at the O-C
1820	<i>L'Auteur mort et vivant</i>	1	Planard	Opéra-Comique, 18 Dec	
1823	<i>Le Muletier</i>	1	Paul de Kock	Opéra-Comique, 12 May	
	<i>Lasthénie</i>	1	De Chaillou	Opéra, 8 Sept	
	<i>Vendôme en Espagne</i>	3	Mennechet & Empis	Opéra, 5 Dec	With Auber
1824	<i>Le Roi René ou la Provence au XV^e siècle</i>	2	Belle & Sewrin	Opéra-Comique, 24 Aug	
1825	<i>Le Lapin blanc</i>	1	Mélesrille & Carmouche	Opéra-Comique, 21 May	
1826	<i>Marie</i>	3	Planard	Opéra-Comique, 12 Aug	
	<i>L'Illusion</i>	1	Saint-Georges & Ménissier	Opéra-Comique, 18 July	
	<i>Emmeline</i>	3	Planard	Opéra-Comique, 28 Nov	
	<i>L'Auberge d'Auray</i>	1	Moreau et d'Épagny	Opéra-Comique, 11 May	With Carafa

1831	<i>Zampa ou la Fiancée de Marbre</i>	3	Mélesrille	Opéra-Comique, 3 May	
	<i>La Marquise de Brinvilliers</i>	3	Scribe & Castil-Blaze	Opéra-Comique, 31 Oct	With Auber, Batton, Berton, Blangini, Boïeldieu, Carafa, Cherubini & Paër
1832	<i>La Médecine sans médecin</i>	1	Scribe & Bayard	Opéra-Comique, 15 Oct	
	<i>Le Pré aux Clercs</i>	3	Planard	Opéra-Comique, 15 Dec	
1833	<i>Ludovic</i>	2	Saint-Georges	Opéra-Comique, 16 May	Finished by Halévy

III. Life and works

Louis Joseph Ferdinand Hérold^{iv} was born in Paris on 28 January 1791.

Like many composers, he grew up in a musical household. His father, François-Joseph Hérold, taught piano and had studied with C.P.E. Bach in Hamburg. His godfather was Louis Adam, the father of the composer Adolphe Adam and a pianist in his own right.

The little boy himself was a prodigy. At the age of six, he was both a skillful pianist and already writing small pieces for the instrument; by the age of eleven, he had set his hopes on composing for the stage.

In 1802, however, Hérold senior died of phthisis (pulmonary tuberculosis) – the same disease that would kill Ferdinand himself. The boy and his mother, Jeanne-Gabrielle Pascal, faced an uncertain future. A family friend, Chaptal, then minister of the interior, offered to provide an office job for the lad. Knowing her son's musical gifts and ambitions, his mother sought the advice of Grétry, composer of *Richard Cœur-de-lion* (1784). 'His work is full of faults, but that is why he must continue. Don't worry about his future, your son will become a musician.'

In 1806, Hérold entered the Conservatoire. Charles-Simon Catel taught him harmony, François-Joseph Fétis solfège, Rodolphe Kreutzer the violin, and his godfather Adam the piano. On these two instruments, he was a first-rate virtuoso, and received prizes for his piano-playing. His greatest influence was Étienne Méhul^v, the most important opera composer of the period, whose composition class he entered in 1811. He quickly became Méhul's pet student; the old man considered him his successor, while Hérold loved him like a father. Around this time, Hérold wrote (among others) a Fantaisie for piano; sonatas; caprices; and an orchestral concerto which he performed at the Théâtre-Italien in a benefit concert for the great singer Nicola Tacchinardi.

In 1812, Hérold won the Prix de Rome for his cantata *Mademoiselle de La Vallière*. The text by the poetaster L'Éillard d'Avrigny was, Pougin writes, simply wretched and hardly likely to spark a young musician's imagination – but Hérold wrote his music with confidence and elegance.

Hérold left Paris in November, and spent the next year in Rome – a time which he later called 'the happiest epoch of his life'. There, he wrote a symphony in C major (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DA11IDx0Aa4>); and a *Hymne sur la Transfiguration*, for four voices with orchestra. At the end of September, he went to Naples, where he gave piano lessons to the king's daughters, one of whom, he discovered six years later, fell in love with him. He wrote a second symphony (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7oFSZcvmXnU>); three string quartets; and an Italian scene with choruses. 'Altogether these *envois de Rome*', Choquet writes, 'show that Hérold would have shone in symphony if he had adhered to that branch of composition'.

Hérold's first opera was performed in Naples at the start of January 1815 – the first opera composed by a Frenchman in Italy in fifty years.

1. *La gioventù di Enrico Quinto*. Opera buffa in 2 acts. First performed Real Teatro del Fondo, Naples, 5 January 1815. Libretto by Landriani, after Alexandre Duval's *La Jeunesse de Henri V*.

The opera is based on Duval's play about the young Henry V, a big success at the Théâtre-Français a few years before. Hérold himself arranged the libretto from Duval's play, reduced its three acts to two, had an Italian poet set it to verse and then composed the work – all without knowing if it would even be accepted. The opera, performed in the presence of the Neapolitan royal family, was a complete success, and conquered the Italian prejudice against French musicians. 'It's worth all the effort', Hérold wrote to his mother. 'What other art causes such joy?' Despite the work's warm reception, Hérold himself was unhappy with it and with the conventions of Italian opera, which he thought lacked depth.

Hérold's opera is not to be confused with Mercadante's 1834 opera, with a libretto by Romani.

Hérold then went to Vienna, where he became good friends with Salieri and met the pianist Hummel. He had a letter of introduction to Beethoven, but did not dare present himself.

Hérold returned to Paris in August 1815, where he earned a modest living as piano accompanist (*maestro al cembalo*) at the Théâtre-Italien.

2. *Charles de France, ou Amour et gloire*. Opéra-comique in 2 acts. Collaboration with François-Adrien Boïeldieu. Libretto by Armand Dartois, E. de Rancé and Emmanuel Théaulon de Lambert. First performed Opéra-Comique (salle Feydeau), 18 June 1816.

François-Adrien Boïeldieu^{vi}, then the most popular musician in France, proposed that the two collaborate on an opera commissioned for the marriage of the Duc de Berry to Princess Marie-Caroline

of Naples. Boïeldieu wrote the first act, and Hérold the second. The work was a success, and, Pougin^{vii} noted, had a much warmer welcome than most works of this type. Hérold wrote: ‘MM. Méhul, Boïeldieu and Nicolo all assure me that I am on the right path; all the papers praise the work, which makes this day one of the happiest of my life. I owe nearly everything to Boïeldieu; by myself, I would have made mistakes, and if ever I am ungrateful towards him, I will be really guilty ... Now I must write a successful work, and all will go well.’

In the event, Hérold wrote two successful works the next year.

3. *Les Rosières*. Opéra-comique in 3 acts. Libretto by Emmanuel Théaulon de Lambert. First performed Opéra-Comique (salle Feydeau), 27 January 1817.



Hérold’s first French opera by himself is a rural comedy, set in a village of Bas-Languedoc. The *rosières* are maidens who are awarded a crown of roses for their irreproachable conduct, virtue, piety and modesty. The Count has just returned from ten years abroad, and wants to marry. His father wanted him to marry his widowed cousin; meanwhile, his Seneschal plots with the innkeeper that the Count will marry her daughter, with whom the young villager Bastien is in love. At the end, after plotting and disguises, the Comte marries his cousin and Bastien marries his Brigitte.

The work received 44 consecutive performances. The public, Pougin writes, was both charmed and astonished to find in a young musician’s first work [sic] not only undeniable technical skillfulness but also an abundant imagination, generous inspiration and a complete sense of theatre. Looking at the score, he writes, one would never guess that it was the work of a 25-year-old at the beginning of his career, because it is written with confidence, shows precocious experience and is rich in brilliant new ideas, highlighted with skill. Clément concurs; the qualities that would raise Hérold to the front rank of French composers are already there.

Other critics, however, were less impressed. Jouvin notes that Hérold was not yet himself, but still influenced by Mozart and Méhul. Fétis wrote that while Hérold made the most of the opportunity and some *morceaux* showed he was no ordinary musician, the work was inexperienced and betrayed signs of writing down to audience taste.

Critics admired the overture; Florette's couplets "De ce village tous ces garçons"; the final chorus of Act I; Eugénie's romance "Je suis sage, j'obtins la rose" in Act II; the game wardens' march; and in Act III, Bastien and Florette's duo "Laissez-moi Bastien" which develops into a trio with another *rosière*, Cateau.

4. *La Clochette, ou le Diable page*. Opéra-féerie in 3 acts. Libretto by Emmanuel Théaulon de Lambert. First performed Opéra-Comique (salle Feydeau), 18 October 1817.



The opera was based on the Arabian Nights story of Aladdin, but the details were changed to avoid competing with Nicolò's^{viii} forthcoming opera of *Aladdin* at the Opéra. Aladdin becomes Azolin; the magic lamp becomes a magic bell; and the genie becomes the 'devil page' Lucifer, played charmingly, contemporary reviews said, by Mme Boulanger.

In the event, the work's success was so great that Nicolò's opera wasn't performed until 1822, five years later. *La Clochette* ran for 100 performances at its creation. The Opéra-Comique, close to ruin (as it often was in this period), found its situation reversed. 'The opera's failure,' wrote a newspaper, 'would have caused the theatre's; its success saves it.'

Méhul, Hérold's mentor, was on his death-bed, but held on until he heard how the opera was received. 'I can die; I leave a musician to France!' And with those words, he turned over and died.

The opera is set in India and on the Chinese border. Like his model, Azolin, a street urchin, uses his magic talisman to marry a beautiful princess (Palmire) and become the stepson of an Oriental monarch (the Sultan of Burma). With its Chinese princes, Brahmins, sultans' guards and magic, it sounds like an ancestor of *The Thief of Bagdad*.

Clément praised the gracious tune of Lucifer's aria "Me voilà! me voilà"; the Act I finale; a duet in Act II; and everywhere a novel, rich and elegant instrumentation. Pougin wrote that few operas contained so many excellent numbers. In fact, he said, the opera was excellent from any angle: craftsmanship, inspiration, drama, harmony and orchestral elegance. The familiar story, fairytale character and luxurious staging all contributed to its success. Hérold's friend the pianist Chaulieu felt, however, that the music – particularly Azolin's aria "Je crois la voir encore" in Act I and the trio des Calenders in Act III – wasn't appreciated as much as the spectacle, which hurt the composer. Nevertheless, he added,

from this time Hérold took his place among the composers of the period, with many admirers and many enemies.

5. *Le Premier venu, ou 6 lieues de chemin*. Comédie mêlée d'ariettes in 3 acts. Libretto by Jean-Baptiste-Charles Vial et Eugène de Planard. First performed Opéra-Comique (salle Feydeau), 28 September 1818.

Hérold's next opera was an adaptation of Vial's comedy, a stock piece since its successful première at the Théâtre Louvois in 1801. The "six leagues" of the title refer to the setting: Act I is set in an officer's apartment in Lyon; Act II in a businessman's house 3 miles from there; and Act III in a château another 3 miles further on, 6 miles from Lyon.

Although the work was critically praised, and (according to the *Almanach des spectacles*) a complete success, Vial's play was too well known, and for too long, for the lyric adaptation to hold the public's attention. Pougin considered it a really enjoyable work, worthy of Hérold's elegant pen, which did honour to his abundant and distinguished imagination. Jouvin, however, thought the work cold. The audience, he said, yawned at the dialogue, but applauded two delicious rondes, the lovers' duet, the jockey's couplets and a trio between three men who pretend to be sleeping. He and Scudo thought this trio showed Hérold's gift for instrumental color and understanding of dramatic effects.

6. *Les Troqueurs*. Opéra-comique in 1 act. Libretto by Armand et Achille Dartois, after Jean-Joseph Vadé's work based on *La Fontaine*. First performed Opéra-Comique (salle Feydeau), 18 February 1819.

Hérold's next effort was an adaptation of Vadé's 1753 libretto, an ancestor of the opéra-comique and the first example of the "pièce à ariettes" (play with little songs). Two vaudevillians, the brothers Achille and Armand d'Artois, touched up Vadé's libretto and gave it to the famous harpist and composer Nicolas-Charles Bochsa. Unfortunately for them, Bochsa, a thief, forger and bigamist, thought it better to flee from justice; the law condemned him in absentia to twelve years in chains and to the branding iron. From him, it passed to Hérold.

The work was only a *succès d'estime*. The public thought the libretto hollow, lacked action and too long (for a one-act piece). They whistled and hissed the librettists, and applauded the composer's name. Pougin thought the piece light and hardly included, musically, more importance than a thin operetta. Hérold, he wrote, treated the piece as it deserved – in the manner of Nicolas Dalayrac^{ix}. With a fine, light hand, he wrote a score which, if not original, showed his natural elegance and grace. The best numbers in the score include the couplets "Mon coeur s'agite à chaque instant"; the tenors' duo "Troquons, troquons!"; the trio in canon "Allons, soyez sincère"; the rondo "Ah! monseigneur"; and the duo "Jarni, son minois est charmant".

Discouraged, Hérold withdrew his next project, *L'Amour platonique*, the day before its first performance. Although the music was well received, Hérold considered the piece defective. Pougin writes that the libretto, by the completely unknown Auguste Rousseau, was misshapen, and wonders how Hérold only noticed this so late.

7. *L'Auteur mort et vivant*. Opéra-comique in 1 act. Libretto by Eugène de Planard. First performed Opéra-Comique (salle Feydeau), 18 December 1820.

The dead and alive author of the title is a young poet who gets himself killed by a friend in the papers to enjoy his glory after his funeral. At the end, the poet resurrects himself and becomes immortal by entering the Académie.

On the first night, the librettists were applauded, and the clapping redoubled when Hérold appeared. However, this satiric comedy had only a short career. Jouvin notes that the epigrams went over the public's head, but irritated jealous authors and aggressive journalists, while Clément writes that the agreeable libretto didn't give Hérold a chance to display his abilities. Nevertheless, the opera apparently contains several charming pieces: Denise's aria "La savantise est un sottise"; the affianced villagers' duet "Tu n'es pas qu'une coquette"; and a quartet which Jouvin considered the most beautiful piece in the work, written with a master's hand. However, Pougin notes, these were not enough to bring life to a boring piece.

The work's failure affected Hérold so badly that his health and confidence suffered, and he produced no works for the stage for three years. During this time, the Théâtre-Italien sent him to Italy to recruit singers; he brought back Pasta^x and Galli^{xi}. It was in Italy, too, that he first heard the works of Rossini, which greatly impressed him.

When he returned to Paris, he was poor (his income only 2,000 francs) and ill. He was often forced to keep his bed, and was unable to attend the first performance of Rossini's *Moïse*, whose score he adapted for the piano.

8. *Le Muletier*. Opéra-comique in 1 act. Libretto by Paul de Kock, after La Fontaine's poem and Boccaccio's tale. First performed Opéra-Comique (salle Feydeau), 12 May 1823.



The original story is about a muleteer who falls in love with a queen; he disguises himself as the king, and makes love to the queen. 'In bed a muleteer is worth three kings, / And value oft is found in humble things.' Depicting a cuckolded king would have been lèse-majesté under the Bourbons, so the action of the opera takes place in an inn on the outskirts of Madrid, with nary a king in sight.

Henriquez the muleteer wants to marry Zerbine, but she worries that her guardian, the innkeeper Rodrigue, will refuse the marriage because Henriquez is handsome and attractive to women. Worse, he wants Zerline to marry his simple-minded nephew Flandrinos. Rodrigue himself has just married Inesia, a convent-bred girl; the jealous old man plans to send her to live on a lonely farm surrounded by 15-foot-high walls, with barred windows, three mastiffs in each courtyard, and two elderly servants to keep her company. What fun for a young girl!

Henriquez makes a tryst with Zerbine, but Inesia is waiting there for Rodrigue; in the dark, he makes love to her, thinking she's Zerbine, which she gladly accepts from the man she thinks is her husband. This scene titillates the audience without offending public morality.

The risqué plot raised a few eyebrows; the public protested about the scabrous incidents and saucy dialogue, but the charming score overcame any doubts. Critics of the time praised the work's grace, verve, variety and local colour. *Le Miroir* wrote: 'The music is lively, original, piquant, melodious, and almost always dramatic. The score gives the greatest honour to M. Hérold's talent, who at this moment became one of our first composers.'

Pougin considered the work first-rate in its genre and an astonishing advance over its predecessors. 'The musician, now in full possession of himself, had attained the full maturity of a talent whose development was complete and had nothing to learn from experience. A firm and sure style; an incontestable feel for the stage; a harmony at once solid, piquant and chastened; ingenious counterpoint; rich orchestration, varied, full of grace and naturalness; excellent arrangement of voices; irreproachable cut of the pieces; a sustained and abundant inspiration – all combine to make the *Muletier*'s score one of those finished works, successful in every way, marvellously balanced, which bear the mark of a great artist and denote the temperament of a man of genius.'

Happily for the modern listener, *Le Muletier* has been recorded – and the work is a delight. With its amusing situation and dialogue, it could entertain an audience again today. Highlights of the score include Henriquez' bolero rondo "Sur les pas de jeunes fillettes", a really attractive aria full of Spanish élan; Henriquez' and Inesia's duet "Sommeil, par ta douce puissance"; and "Du pouls le fréquent battement", the scene where the jealous Rodrigue tries to work out which muleteer made love to his wife by feeling the sleeping men's pulses; the horns imitate the beating of their hearts, quickening when Rodrigue comes to Henriquez. The influence of Rossini is clear in some numbers; the overture, for instance, rises in a crescendo. However, there is no chorus, so one ensemble number has been cut, and two numbers with chorus backing only present the soloists.

Recording:

1. André Mallabrera (Henriquez), Joseph Peyron (Rodrigue), Gérard Friedman (Flandrinos), Lina Dachary (Inesia) and Claudine Collart (Zerbine), with the Orchestre Lyrique de l'O.R.T.F. conducted by Jean-Pierre Marty. Paris, 1968. Musidisc «Gaieté Lyrique» 20201-2, in a double set with *Le Pré aux Clercs*.

Pougin writes that from that moment Hérold's artistic youth was over. 'The period of trial was closed, the period of maturity began, bringing with it a legitimate and undisputed fame. We shall soon find the master in full possession of his genius, astonishing the world by the rapid blossoming of these three exquisite works which form his immortal crown: *Marie*, and especially *Zampa* and the *Pré-aux-Clercs*.'

9. *Lasthénie*. Opéra in 1 act. Libretto by M. de Chaillou. First performed Théâtre de l'Opéra (salle Le Peletier), 8 September 1823.

Hérold achieved his dream of writing for the Paris Opéra with this opera, set in classical Athens, but the work was deemed cold and left the stage after 26 performances. It had, Fétis wrote, ‘only one fault: viz. that the story was taken from the Greek at a time when Greek stories happened to be entirely out of fashion’.

Alcibiade (Alcibiades, the prominent fifth century B.C. statesman) abandons Hyarpète (Hyarpetus), his wife, for the courtesan Lasthénie (Lasthenia); Cléomède (Cleomedes), another libertine with a neglected wife, is Alcibiade’s friend and rival. Lasthénie likes neither, and does nothing but amuse herself at their expense. She decides to restore peace to Alcibiade’s household. To this end, she persuades each of her lovers to employ her aid in bringing the other to conjugal fidelity. She conjures up a veiled beauty which Alcibiade takes for Cléomède’s wife, and which he presents to him before the marriage altar, dictating the oath: ‘I swear by the gods not to be fickle, and to adore only she to whom I am married; if I ever burn for another beauty, may I suffer a terrible and deserved punishment, and may all evils become my share’. The veil falls, and Alcibiade recognizes his own wife.

The audience whistled the piece; the libretto, based on Lantier’s *Voyage d’Anténor*, was considered cold and without any of the dramatic situations or passion necessary to inspire Hérold. Nevertheless, his music was praised and only added to his growing reputation. The admired pieces include the duo between Lasthénie and Hyarpète “Ah! que ce jour pour Hyarpète”; the trio “Se peut-il qu’ainsi l’on outrage?”; and the final chorus.

The work was revised after the first performance, and seems to have made a better impression. In his diary, Hérold wrote: ‘The public did not welcome *Lasthénie*. Trivial expressions made the spectators laugh. The second performance went well; happy changes in the poem have won us the favour of the same public. Here we are at the sixth representation; always packed houses.’

Two royal commissions followed. Pougin dryly describes them as ‘commissions designed to stimulate the people’s love for the régime and the sovereign under which they had the happiness to live’.

10. *Vendôme en Espagne*. Opéra in 3 acts. Collaboration with Auber. Libretto by Empis et Mennechet. First performed Théâtre de l'Opéra (salle Le Peletier), 5 December 1823.

A collaboration with Daniel-François-Esprit Auber, to mark the Duc d’Angoulême’s return from campaigning in Spain, and performed before the royal family. Although Hérold and Auber *fleur-de-lysed* the music, it was only the pretext, Jouvin writes, for official enthusiasm. The public went to another spectacle; tickets for the parterre were sold at the exorbitant price of 200 francs. ‘The opera was much applauded, and little listened to; the claque was heard loudly in the papers.’ In his diary, Hérold recorded that Marshal Marquis de Lauriston, the Minister of the King’s House, assured them that the work pleased the royal family. The King awarded the two musicians and the two librettists each a diamond pin.

11. *Le Roi René, ou la Provence au XV^e siècle*. Opéra-comique in 2 acts. Libretto by Gabriel-Alexandre Belle et Sewrin. First performed Opéra-Comique (salle Feydeau), 24 August 1824.

A command performance for Louis XVIII's birthday. It was played again for Charles X's birthday. Pougín notes some Provençal melodies arranged with rare taste.

12. *Le Lapin blanc*. Opéra-comique in 1 act. Libretto by Mélesville et Pierre Carmouche. First performed Opéra-Comique (salle Feydeau), 21 May 1825.

A complete failure, which closed after only one performance.

The plot is set in Scotland. The *Almanach des spectacles* gives this synopsis: Toby, a credulous young man, sells a white rabbit to a traveller for 60 guineas. The traveller believes he is a thief; he gives the sum, and then informs the police. Toby is the object of suspicion, but all is cleared up.

The play, thought *La Pandore*, might have worked as a vaudeville at the *Variétés* – if it were seasoned with all the amenities of the genre. ‘A burlesque subject treated with a certain seriousness is worthless; it remains ridiculous without being gay. That is what happened to the new opera.’

For once, Hérold's music was condemned. The *Courrier des Théâtres* called it ‘a complete error by a man of talent, who has been much too praised, and whose next work will be good, if no one conceals from him the weakness of this one’. The *Journal de Paris* thought the music much too weak to excuse the words; the overture and the first chorus, the only striking pieces, reminded them too much of *Robin des Bois* (the French adaptation of Weber's *Freischütz*).

The piece was whistled throughout. ‘Good taste,’ wrote *La Pandore*, ‘found this time avengers who perhaps carried their severity a little too far. Whistles of the highest calibre pursued the poor *White Rabbit* for almost all the performance and wounded him to death.’ At the end, the singer Leclerc braved the tumultuous anger of the parterre and ‘threw these words into the midst of the storm, which had become a hurricane at the fall of the curtain: “Messieurs, the authors of the piece want to remain anonymous.”’

Hérold marked the day in his diary with a black cross. ‘Fatal day! *Le Lapin blanc*, whistled from the first scene until the announcement, made to the public, that the authors want to keep their anonymity. A subject that I find charming! Treated with wit by a man of talent, M. Mélesville! Perhaps the least heavy and the least bad of the scores I have done so far! ... When a well-made, witty scene is badly received at the beginning of a work, what will happen to the rest?’

The failure brought on another of Hérold's crises of artistic despair. Fortunately, Hérold's next opera brought him the success of which he dreamt.

In Act II, Pougin praises Marie and Adolphe's impassioned duet "Rassurez-vous ... Mon sang se glace"; Marie's dramatic, almost heart-rending aria "Je suis donc parvenue au comble du malheur"; and the moving and stunning finale of the storm. Jouvin agreed; that finale, he wrote, was signed: a master!

Act III boasts the moving quartet of Marie's awakening, and a sextet which leads to the dénouement. This sextet is based on two orchestral themes established in the overture, and which, Pougin writes, the ear recognizes with real joy. 'This masterly piece could only have been written by a master.' Jouvin, too, admired the piece; the musician, having emptied a jewel-box, had scattered diamonds on the voices of the sextet.

Schubert, too, admired the work; he composed 8 Variations on a Theme from Hérold's *Marie*:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WtDtluLnASQ>

The opera remained in the repertory of the Opéra-Comique until 1868. Riding on its success, Hérold became *premier chef de chant* at the Opéra, a position he occupied until his death. The next year, 1827, he married and bought a home in Ternes. In 1828, he was awarded the Légion d'Honneur.

Over the next three years, he composed six ballets: in 1827, *Astolphe et Joconde* and [*Le Sonnambule*](#) (the basis for Bellini's operas); in 1828, *Lydie, La Fille mal gardée* (still popular today); in 1829, *La Belle au Bois dormant*; and in 1830, *La Noce de village*. Hérold, Choquet writes, gave French ballets their 'peculiarly graceful, poetical, expressive and passionate character'.

Adolphe Adam, composer of the ballets *Giselle* (1841) and *Corsaire* (1856), wrote: 'In this kind of music, Hérold had no rival. Anyone who writes dance music will try to do it as well as he does. None can do it better.'

Hérold also wrote the overture and choruses for Georges Ozaneaux's three act verse drama *Le Dernier jour de Missolonghi* (1828) – a success, above all because of the music.

Hérold returned to the operatic stage in 1829.

14. *L'Illusion*. Drame lyrique in 1 act. Libretto by Henri Vernoy de Saint-Georges et Constant Méhissier. First performed Opéra-Comique (salle Ventadour), 18 July 1829.

The illusion refers to a young man's mistaken love for his beloved's double. Gustave, a young embassy secretary, falls in love with Laurence, who marries another man; to cure himself of his romantic passion, he travels to the Tyrol, where he meets another Laurence, with the voice, the face and the name of his first love. He begins to adore in this second Laurence the original – but she takes this illusion seriously. The secretary is compromised and forced to resign from his post; he stays and decides to marry Laurence. Unfortunately for him, the original Laurence arrives, now a widow. The second Laurence sacrifices herself to her fiancé's love. While the first Laurence takes her successor's place at the altar, the Tyrolean woman throws herself into an abyss.

Jouvin notes that, although the libretto was unlikely, the score was remarkable; all eight numbers of the score show the sure and skilful hand of a great musician. Highlights of the score include the pot-pourri overture, based on Mozart's "Voi che sapete"; the picturesque opening Tyrolean chorus "Le ciel se colore"; the trio "Que faire, hélas! ô douleur!"; and an excellent finale, broadly developed. This finale contained a charming waltz "Filles de la montagne"; which was still popular as 'la valse de l'*Illusion*' long after the opera itself left the stage.

The opera was performed 79 times – an impressive number for a one-act piece.

15. *Emmeline*. Opéra-comique in 3 acts. Libretto by Eugène de Planard. First performed Opéra-Comique (salle Ventadour), 28 November 1829.

Hérold's next opera only scored a succès d'estime, and lasted 11 performances. The heroine, Jouvin wrote, struggles for three acts to soften the heart of the Count of Arundel, an inflexible father whose love she has unjustly lost; she succeeds at the end – but she failed in the difficult attempt to touch the public's heart.

Why the piece failed is unclear. Pougin believed the libretto was unworthy of Hérold, who shouldn't have set it to music. Although charming, all Hérold's qualities of grace, elegance and novelty were as naught.

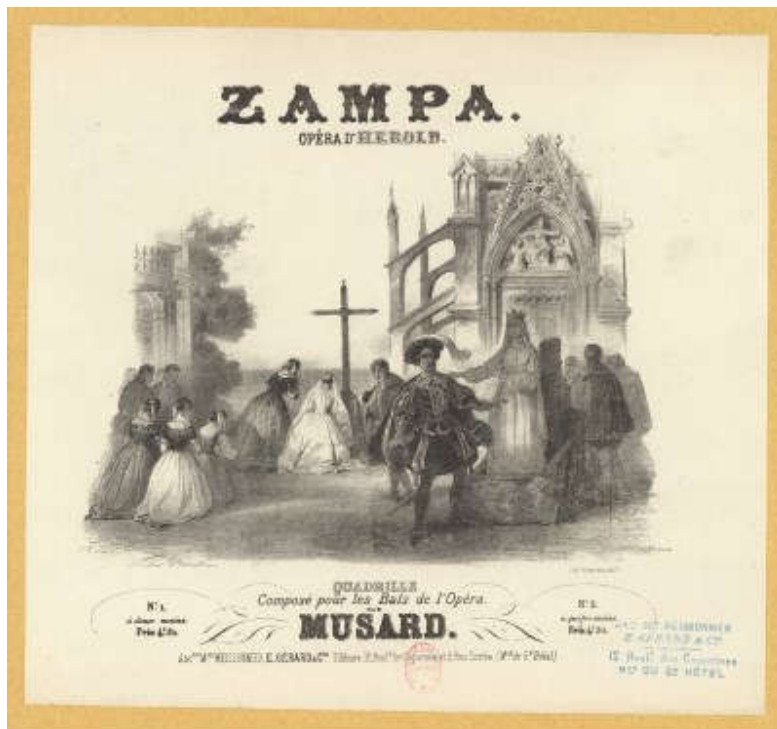
Chaulieu, reviewing the work at its première, admired it, but thought it was too advanced for the public of the time. Jouvin agreed, and believed that a well-mounted reprise would be favourable to the work; the public would make reparative homage to this beautiful composition. Why, he asked, let sleep, in the theatre library, this masterpiece of grace and sentiment?

The failure of the work again affected Hérold's health.

16. *L'Auberge d'Auray*. Opéra-comique in 1 act. Collaboration with Carafa. Libretto by Charles Moreau de Commagny et Jean-Baptiste Violet d'Epagny. First performed Opéra-Comique (salle Ventadour), 11 May 1830.

This one act collaboration with Michele Carafa to present Harriet Smithson (the future Mrs. Berlioz) to the Parisian public, was a fiasco – although Hérold's music was applauded.

17. *Zampa, ou la Fiancée de marbre*. Opéra-comique in 3 acts. Libretto by Mélesville. First performed Opéra-Comique (salle Ventadour), 3 May 1831.



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

With *Zampa*, Hérold scored what seemed a lasting success. The opera had everything to attract an audience: evil corsairs, beautiful maidens, and statues coming to life in sunny Sicily, floating on a sea of lively tunes and melancholy beauty.

Zampa is a corsair who prowls the Mediterranean, seducing and abandoning women and ransacking ships and towns. He forces Camille, daughter of the rich merchant Lugano, to marry him; he holds Lugano prisoner and will kill him unless she yields. During an orgy, he mockingly places his engagement ring on the finger of the statue of Alice Manfredi – a virtuous maiden whom he ruined and who died of grief. On the wedding night, everything seems lost for Camille, but Alice's statue appears and drags *Zampa* down to hell.

The work obviously raised comparisons to Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, a work which Hérold had long admired. Some critics accused the librettist Mélesville of plagiarism, and lamented that Hérold had such a colleague. According to Jouvin, Hérold himself had suggested the story to Mélesville. He had long searched for a good libretto, and convinced Mélesville to write a story based on the Don.

To *Don Giovanni*, Hérold and Mélesville added the trappings of early Romanticism. *Zampa* is a Byronic hero: an aristocrat (Count of Monza) turned pirate, while Act II is set in a romantically wild countryside, with a Gothic chapel and a derelict tomb.

Contemporaries admired Hérold's eclectic score, which, Pougin wrote, combined Rossini's witty, brilliant instrumentation with Weber's poetic reverie and French grace and sentiment to create his own

style. Meyerbeer's operas would also be admired for their integration of Italianate vocal writing, German orchestration and French drama.



Pougin wrote: ‘Sometimes melancholy and full of poetry, sometimes ardent and passionate, sometimes full of verve and comical feeling, the score of *Zampa* presents in its unity a variety of accents, tones and colours of which very few artists are capable and which reveals a creator of the first order.’

The exhilarating overture is still famous today. With its irresistible dancing rhythm, it is life-enhancing and exciting. It is a pot-pourri, based on five themes from the opera; the explosive opening comes from the pirates’ chorus in the Act I finale. The contrasting slow passage that follows comes from “D’une haute naissance”, Camille’s haunting Ballade in Act I. Camille and Alphonse’s Act II duet “Pourquoi vous trembler à ma vue?” (which Choquet called ‘one of the finest inspirations in modern opera’) and the Act III barcarolle “Où vas-tu, pauvre gondolier?” are also exquisite, showing Hérold’s talent for melancholy. Act I also boasts a fine quartet “Le voilà! que mon âme est émue”; Clément considered this one of the best pieces in the work, and Choquet calls it ‘a model of dignity and refinement’.

The dramatic power and impassioned expression of the Act III duet “Pourquoi trembler”, Clément wrote, made some people think the work was better fitted to the Opéra – wrongly, in his view, because the score would be too big for such a small theatre.

Zampa often seems like a smaller *grand opéra*, and may well have been influenced by [Auber’s *Muette de Portici*](#) (1828), also set in Italy. The Act I introduction lasts 15 minutes, and includes two arias (a florid, Rossinian aria for Camille and a suave aria for her lover Alphonse) framed by choruses. Act II ends with a big multi-section finale, complete with choruses, a frozen ensemble and a procession of wedding guests, bishops and priests, and soldiers bearing arms. The opera’s ending is spectacular. The statue seizes Zampa’s hand and drags him down through the stage in a circle of flames. Outside, thunder and lightning; an earthquake; and the panicked chorus worry that Etna is about to erupt (as Vesuvius does in Auber’s *Muette de Portici*).

At that time, the Opéra-Comique was in dire financial straits. The director of the salle Ventadour, Émile Lubbert, wanted another hit from the composer of *Marie*. He staked the fortune of his theatre on *Zampa* – and won.

The opera was tremendously popular with both the public and the critics (Castil Blaze devoted three adulatory feuilletons to the opera in the *Journal des débats*). It was performed for 26 consecutive days; by the end of the century, it would be performed 685 times in Paris alone. From Paris, it quickly spread to the other European capitals; it reached Brussels and Vienna in 1832; London, Naples, Turin

and Moscow in 1834; and then Germany. Judging by the enthusiastic applause on the 2008 live recording, it could be as popular today.

Recording:

1. Patricia Petibon (Camille), Doris Lamprecht (Ritta), Bernard Richter (Alphonse), Vincent Ordonneau (Dandolo), Richard Troxell (Zampa) and Léonard Pezzino (Daniel), with Les Arts Florissants conducted by William Christie. Paris, 2008. No commercial recording. Online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dlb5PVtL460&t=105s>.

Two minor works followed.

18. *La Marquise de Brinvilliers*. Drame lyrique in 3 acts. Music by Auber, Batton, Berton, Blangini, Boïeldieu, Carafa, Luigi Cherubini, Hérold et Paer. Libretto by Eugène Scribe et Castil-Blaze. First performed Opéra-Comique (salle Ventadour), 31 October 1831.

A round robin to which many of Paris's leading composers contributed. Hérold wrote the Act III finale. Clément writes that the work itself, about the famous poisoner, was considered odious, while the execution was feeble.

19. *La Médecine sans médecin*. Opéra-comique in 1 act. Libretto by Eugène Scribe et Alfred Bayard. First performed Opéra-Comique (salle de la Bourse), 18 October 1832.

The doctor without medicine is a physician who uses more philanthropy than pharmacy to cure his patients, all of whom suffer from spleen. One patient is a merchant made sick by worry about bankruptcy; another is a very wealthy young Englishman who wants to kill himself; a third is a romantic spinster, worried about her nephew; and a fourth is a young girl going to be married. The doctor has the merchant's daughter marry the Englishman, and reunites old Mrs. Birlington with her nephew.

Hérold's music was considered as charming as Scribe's libretto was feeble.

20. *Le Pré aux clercs*. Opéra-comique in 3 acts. Libretto by Eugène de Planard. First performed Opéra-Comique (salle de la Bourse), 15 December 1832.

'For my part,' wrote Pougin, 'I know nothing superior or even equal to the score of the *Pré-aux-Clercs* in the style of the French opéra-comique.'

Hérold's final opera is a comic counterpart to Meyerbeer's *Huguenots*, ending happily rather than in black tragedy. The same novel, Prosper Mérimée's *Chronique du temps de Charles IX* (1829), inspired both operas. Both stories take place at the turn of the sixteenth century, during the French wars of religion: Meyerbeer's opera in 1572, during the Barthélemy massacre; Hérold's opera a decade later, during the calmer year 1582. Both operas feature Marguerite de Valois as a benevolent godmother figure and concern love between a Huguenot (Protestant) and a Catholic.



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

The story takes place on the banks of the Seine, near the Louvre. Marguerite de Valois is held as a prisoner at the court of Charles IX, her brother. Her presence is a guarantee of the conduct of Henri de Navarre, her husband, one of the leaders of the Huguenot party. She keeps about her Isabelle, a noble Béarnaise, whom the king intends to marry to the Comte de Comminge, a noble and quarrelsome gentleman. The young Baron de Mergy, sent by Henri de Navarre to demand his wife and Isabelle, with whom he himself is in love, discovers that he has a formidable rival. Marguerite takes an interest in the young couple's love and with the help of her god-daughter Nisette plans to marry Isabelle and Mergy secretly. Comminge discovers their love and challenges his rival to a duel. In Act III, the couple secretly marry, and plot how to escape. Meanwhile Mergy has a debt of honour to pay. He kills Comminge in a swordfight, and we see boatmen taking his body to Chaillot. The lovers are reunited and swear eternal love.

The opera is a delight. While less dramatic than *Zampa*, it is a more refined work, with a courtly and charming tone.

Among the opera's best numbers are Isabelle's virtuoso aria "Jours de mon enfance", on which Strauss modelled Zerbinetta's "Großmächtige Prinzessin" in *Ariadne auf Naxos* (1912); "Vous me disiez sans cesse: Pourquoi fuir les amours?", a trio which Clément considered the equal in ingenuity and grace to the most perfect works of the Italian school; and the syllabic trio "C'en est fait, le ciel même a reçu nos serments", a definite earworm.

The score is of a high level of inspiration; Clément wrote that it would be too long to analyse the score, and besides each number is a masterpiece. Apart from the numbers listed above, he admired the then-famous duo "Les rendez-vous de noble compagnie"; the light horsemen's syllabic chorus "Allons, allons, dressons la table!"; Mergy's aria "O ma tendre amie"; the Act I finale, which contains Isabelle's



moving romance “Souvenirs du jeune âge”; the masquerade and Act II finale; and Ninette’s ronde “A la fleur du bel âge” at the start of Act III.

One of the highlights of the opera is the Act III finale, which contains the archers’ gambling chorus “Nargue de la folie”, the quartet “L’heure nous appelle” for three sopranos and bass, and the scene where the boat carrying the corpse sails down the river. ‘In the mysterious singing of the cello’, wrote Jouvin, ‘we hear the rhythmic sound of the oars, and in the B pedal that quivers on the bass, the monotonous voice of the river which carries the barque shrouded in black. This musical picture is of a finished beauty.’

Recordings:

1. Denise Boursin (Isabelle), Berthe Monmart (Marguerite de Navarre), Claudine Collart (Nicette), Joseph Peyron (Mergy), Camille Maurane (Comminge), Lucien Lovano (Girod) and Gaston Rey (Cantarelli), conducted by Robert Benedetti. Paris, 1959. | Renée Doria (Isabelle), Michèle Le Bris (Marguerite de Navarre), Françoise Louvay (Nicette), Michel Sénéchal (Mergy), Adrien Legros (Girod) and Pierre Giannotti (Cantarelli), conducted by Jésus Etcheverry. Paris, 1962. Malibran-Music CDRG213.
2. Marie Lenormand (Marguerite de Valois), Marie-Ève Munger (Isabelle), Simard-Galdès (Nicette), Nico Darmanin (Mergy), Dominique Coté (Comminge), Éric Huchet (Cantarelli) and Tomislav Lavoie (Girod), with the Chorus of Wexford Festival Opera and Orchestra conducted by Jean-Luc Tingaud. Wexford, 2015. No commercial release. Online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6o9Wl0yigZA>
3. Marie Lenormand (Marguerite de Valois), Marie-Ève Munger (Isabelle), Jeanne Crousaud (Nicette), Michael Spyres (Mergy), Emiliano González Toro (Comminge), Éric Huchet (Cantarelli) and Christian Helmer (Girod), with the Coro e Orquestra Gulbenkian conducted by Paul McCreech. Paris, 2015. “Opéra français” Palazzetto Bru Zane series (Ediciones Singulares) | 2016 | Volume 13.

Le Pré aux clères was rapturously received at its première in 1832. It was, Pougin writes, performed in the middle of hurrahs and frenzied applause. When the performance finished, the audience gave a spontaneous standing ovation, and two thousand voices called for Hérold to appear. Alas, he could not; the emotion of the evening’s success had brought on a violent attack, and he had collapsed, coughing blood. Friends hurried him home, and laid him on the bed where he would die of tuberculosis a little over a month later.

Arsène Houssaye (*Souvenirs de jeunesse*, 1896) describes his death:

How many scenes in turn tragic and gallant could one write without leaving the Opera! What could be more beautiful and more touching than this unexpected apparition of the great Hérold, who had left his dying bed to tell all those who came to circle around this ghost: “My friends, I know that I am lost, but save my work at the Opera-Comique. My work is my second life: do not let either *Pré-aux-Clercs* or *Zampa* perish, for I would die twice.”

And, after embracing Mademoiselle Dorus^{xii},

“Save the *Pré-aux-Clercs*, since Madame Casimir, who is also very ill, abandons the part of Isabelle. Take back all your strength and play the role the day after tomorrow.”

Mademoiselle Dorus began to weep.

“How do you expect me to play the part to-morrow, which I do not know?”

“Mademoiselle,” resumed Hérold, “remember that the *Pré-aux-Clercs* is the song of the swan.”

Forty-eight hours later, Mademoiselle Dorus played the role of Isabella with more dramatic genius than she ever had. And her adorable voice carried all the spectators. Hérold died contentedly.

Halévy, his deputy at the Opéra, completed his last opera.

21. Ludovic. Drame lyrique in 2 acts. Finished by Fromental Halévy. Libretto by Henri Vernoy de Saint-Georges. First performed Opéra-Comique (salle de la Bourse), 16 May 1833.

Hérold had only written the introduction, couplets for a soprano, a trio, a drinking chorus and the start of the Act I finale; Halévy, his deputy at the Opéra, completed the work, which pleased the audience. The opera is set on a farm outside Rome; Ludovic, the farm manager, is in love with Francesca, the farmer, and shoots her when she is about to marry another man. She recovers and realizes that she loves Ludovic, who has been sentenced to death. All ends happily. Clément considered that the work could be successfully reprised. The first chorus “Déjà l’aurore qui se colore” is fresh and simple; and the couplets “Je vends des scapulaires” recall Hérold’s first manner. Chopin composed *Variations brillantes* on this aria.

Hérold died on 19 January 1833, at the age of 42 less nine days. Like Bellini and Weber, his great Italian and German contemporaries, one wonders what he would have written had he lived longer.



Celebration of Hérold's centenary at the Opéra-Comique

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 - c) <http://operacritiques.free.fr/css/index.php?2008/06/23/977-ferdinand-Hérold-zampa-2-et-le-marbre-don-juan-et-la-pierre-la-clarinette-la-distribution>
 - d) <http://operacritiques.free.fr/css/index.php?2008/11/11/1076-zampa-ou-la-fiancee-de-marbre-pastiche-don-giovanni-ferdinand-Hérold-opera-comique-mozart-statue>
 - e) <http://operacritiques.free.fr/css/index.php?2009/01/22/1117-l-humour-en-musique-iii-zampa-et-don-giovanni-deux-pirates->
 - f) <http://operacritiques.free.fr/css/index.php?2010/04/30/1530-ferdinand-Hérold-zampa-ou-la-fiancee-de-marbre-comique-mais-ambitieux-partition-score-opera-comique>

- g) <http://operacritiques.free.fr/css/index.php?2014/04/08/2449--favart-saison-2014-2015-de-l-opera-comique-les-festes-venitiennes-de-campra-le-pre-aux-clerics-d-Héroid>
- h) <http://operacritiques.free.fr/css/index.php?2015/03/23/2655-ferdinand-Héroid-le-pre-aux-clerics-retrouvailles-a-l-opera-comique>
- i) <http://operacritiques.free.fr/css/index.php?2015/03/29/2658-ferdinand-Héroid-le-pre-aux-clerics-la-face-lumineuse-d-Héroid>

6. *Zampa ou la fiancée de Marbre* | *Opéra-comique*. Page about the Opéra-comique's 2008 production of *Zampa*. <<http://www.opera-comique.com/fr/saisons/saison-2008-2009/zampa-fiancee-marbre/zampa-fiancee-marbre>>

ⁱ The opéra-comique contains both singing and spoken dialogue, and was performed at the Opéra-comique theatre. It is a relative of the German Singspiel, which was also part opera, part spoken play. Unsurprisingly, French opéras-comiques were popular in the country of Lortzing, Nicolai and Flotow. Although most opéra-comiques were light-hearted and ended happily, those of Méhul, Cherubini and Le Sueur in the early nineteenth century dealt with serious themes. By the end of the nineteenth century, the opéra-comique had developed into something more serious; Bizet's *Carmen* and Delibes' *Lakmé*, in both of which the heroine dies, were opéra-comiques.

ⁱⁱ Adolphe Adam (1803–56): composer of opéras-comiques and ballets; best known for the *Le Postillon de Lonjumeau* (1836) and the ballet *Giselle* (1841). He also composed the Christmas carol “Minuit, chrétiens!”, known in English-speaking countries as “O Holy Night”.

ⁱⁱⁱ Daniel François Esprit Auber (1782–1871), prolific and popular Parisian opera composer. He composed both grand operas, such as *La muette de Portici* (1828) and *Gustave III* (1833), and opéras-comiques, notably *Fra Diavolo* (1830), *Le cheval de bronze* (1835), *Le domino noir* (1837) and *Les diamants de la couronne* (1841).

^{iv} Herold's name is usually spelt “Héroid”, with an aigu on the e. Scudo states, however, that, despite custom, Herold's name should be spelt without an accent. Herold himself did not sign his name with an accent; see, for instance, the manuscript in Jouvin.

^v Nicolas-Étienne Méhul (1763–1817): the leading French composer of the Revolution and First Empire. Operas include *Uthal* (1806) and *Joseph* (1807); composed the *Chant du départ*, the most popular revolutionary song after the *Marseillaise*. Greatly admired by Sir Thomas Beecham.

^{vi} François-Adrien Boïeldieu (1775–1834): best known today for the delightful *Dame blanche* (1825).

^{vii} Arthur Pougin (1834–1921), musical and dramatic critic. Edited and wrote supplements for the new edition of Clément and Larousse's *Dictionnaire des opéras*.

^{viii} Nicolò: pseudonym of Nicolas Isouard (1773–1818), Maltese composer of opéra-comiques.

^{ix} Nicolas Dalayrac (1753-1809): a prolific opéra-comique composer, probably best known for *Nina*, 1786.

^x Giuditta Pasta (1797–1865): celebrated Italian soprano who created the roles of Donizetti's Anna Bolena (1830), Bellini's Amina (*La Sonnambula*, 1831) and Norma (1831).

^{xi} Filippo Galli (1783–1853): Italian bass who created several roles for Rossini, including *Maometto II* (1820) and *Assur* (*Semiramide*, 1823).

^{xii} Julie Dorus-Gras (1805–96); a Belgian soprano, and star singer at the Opéra. She agreed to sing the role of Isabelle after the role's creatrix, Mme Casimir, withdrew after the first performance. Dorus-Gras created the roles of the Countess in Rossini's *Comte Ory* (1830), Meyerbeer's Alice (*Robert le Diable*, 1831) and Marguerite de Valois (*Les Huguenots*, 1836), Oscar in Auber's *Gustave III* (1833), Pauline in Donizetti's *Les Martyrs* (1840), Halévy's Eudoxie (*La Juive*, 1835) and Ginevra (*Guido et Ginevra*, 1838), and Teresa in Berlioz's *Benvenuto Cellini* (1838).