

Devil").

The opera was first performed by the Opéra-Comique at the Salle Ventadour in Paris on 28 January 1830 and an Italian version was prepared by Auber and Scribe for performance in London in 1857. This contained new recitatives and arias, as well as expanding the roles of Fra Diavolo's accomplices.

The opera was Auber's greatest success, one of the most popular works of the 19th century and was in the standard repertory in its original French as well as German and Italian versions. An English translation was also prepared. Hugh Macdonald has characterised this comic opera as "the most successful work of its kind before Offenbach"

Orpheus in the Underworld and Orpheus in Hell are English names for *Orphée aux enfers* a comic opera with music by Jacques Offenbach and words by Hector Crémieux and Ludovic Halévy. It was first performed as a two-act "opéra bouffon" at the Théâtre des Bouffes-Parisiens, Paris, on 21 October 1858, and was extensively revised and expanded in a four-act "opéra féerie" version, presented at the Théâtre de la Gaîté, Paris, on 7 February 1874.

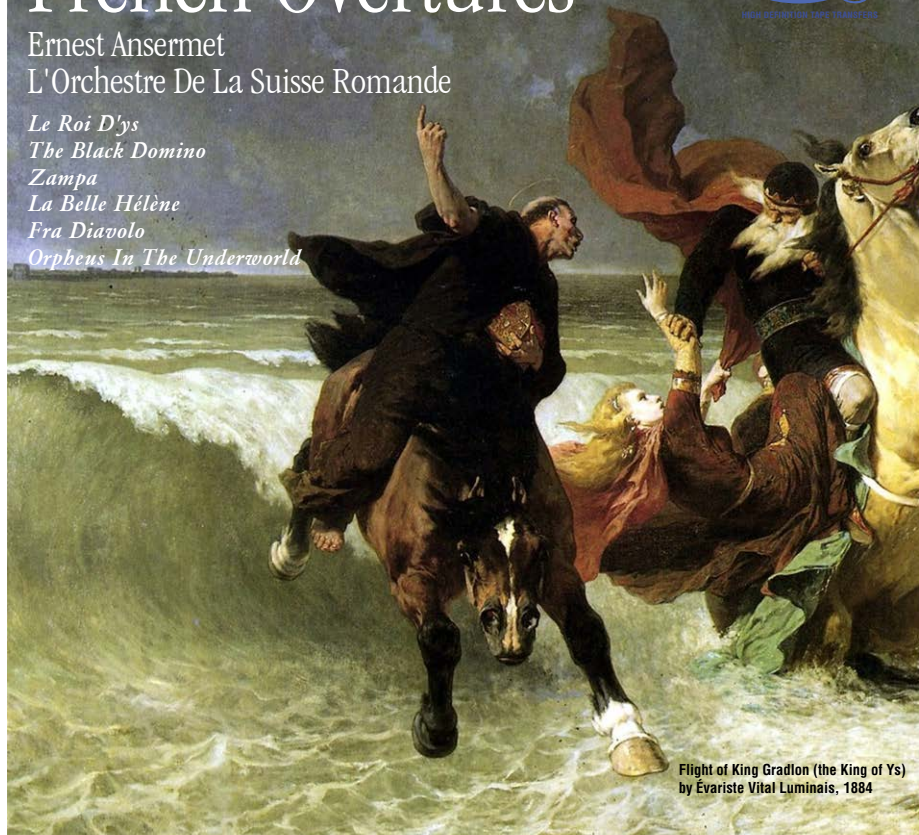
The opera is a lampoon of the ancient legend of Orpheus and Eurydice. In this version Orpheus is not the son of Apollo but a rustic violin teacher. He is glad to be rid of his wife, Eurydice, when she is abducted by the god of the underworld, Pluto. Orpheus has to be bullied by Public Opinion into trying to rescue Eurydice. The reprehensible conduct of the gods of Olympus in the opera was widely seen as a veiled satire of the court and government of Napoleon III, Emperor of the French. Some critics expressed outrage at the librettists' disrespect for classic mythology and the composer's parody of Gluck's opera *Orfeo ed Euridice*; others praised the piece highly.

# French Overtures



Ernest Ansermet  
L'Orchestre De La Suisse Romande

*Le Roi D'ys*  
*The Black Domino*  
*Zampa*  
*La Belle Hélène*  
*Fra Diavolo*  
*Orpheus In The Underworld*



Flight of King Gradlon (the King of Ys)  
by Evariste Vital Luminais, 1884

Le roi d'Ys (The King of Ys) is an opera in three acts and five tableaux by the French composer Édouard Lalo, to a libretto by Édouard Blau, based on the old Breton legend of the drowned city of Ys. That city was, according to the legend, the capital of the kingdom of Cornouaille.

The opera was premiered on 7 May 1888 by the Opéra Comique at the Théâtre Lyrique on the Place du Châtelet in Paris. Apart from the overture, the most famous piece in the opera is the tenor's aubade in act 3, "Vainement, ma bien-aimée" ("In vain, my beloved").

Lalo was known outside France primarily for other work, but within France he was recognized almost solely for this opera. His first version of the opera was widely rejected during the 1870s, but the revised work met with great success the following decade, becoming his most successful work for the stage.

Le domino noir (The Black Domino) is an opéra comique by the French composer Daniel Auber, first performed on 2 December 1837 by the Opéra-Comique at the Salle de la Bourse in Paris. The libretto to the three-act piece is by Auber's usual collaborator, Eugène Scribe. It was one of Auber's most successful works, clocking up 1,207 performances by 1909. It received its UK premiere in 1838 and appeared in the USA the following year. Some of Auber's music has a Spanish flavour to reflect its setting.

In 1869, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky provided recitatives to replace the spoken dialogue for a proposed production of Le domino noir by an Italian opera company visiting Russia. No performances are believed to have taken place, but four of Tchaikovsky's recitatives were included in Richard Bonyngé's recording of the opera.

Zampa, ou La fiancée de marbre (Zampa, or the Marble Bride) is an opéra

comique in three acts by French composer Ferdinand Hérold, with a libretto by Mélesville.

The overture to the opera is one of Hérold's most famous works and is a staple of orchestral repertoire.

Zampa was first performed in Paris on 3 May 1831 at the Opéra-Comique (Salle Ventadour), where it became popular, achieving 500 performances by 1877. In the 20th century however, it faded from the repertoire. It was also popular in Germany and Italy; in the latter the spoken dialogue was replaced by recitatives. It was first performed in the United States on 16 February 1833 at the Théâtre d'Orléans in New Orleans, and in the United Kingdom on 19 April 1833 at the King's Theatre in London. The opera was revived at the Opéra-Comique in March 2008 under William Christie in a production by Macha Makeïeff and Jérôme Deschamps.

La belle Hélène, (The Beautiful Helen), is an opéra bouffe in three acts, with music by Jacques Offenbach and words by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy. The piece parodies the story of Helen's elopement with Paris, which set off the Trojan War.

The premiere was at the Théâtre des Variétés, Paris, on 17 December 1864. The work ran well, and productions followed in three continents. La belle Hélène continued to be revived throughout the 20th century, and has remained a repertoire piece in the 21st.

Fra Diavolo, ou L'hôtellerie de Terracine (Fra Diavolo, or The Inn of Terracina) is an opéra comique in three acts by the French composer Daniel Auber, from a libretto by Auber's regular collaborator Eugène Scribe. It is loosely based on the life of the Itrani guerrilla leader Michele Pezza, active in southern Italy in the period 1800-1806, who went under the name of Fra Diavolo ("Brother

# French Overtures

Ernest Ansermet

L'Orchestre De La Suisse Romande

**1 Lalo - Le Roi D'ys 11:30**

**2 Auber - The Black Domino (Le Domino Noir) 6:55**

**3 Herold - Zampa 7:55**

**4 Offenbach - La Belle Hélène 8:15**

**5 Auber - Fra Diavolo 7:45**

**6 Offenbach - Orpheus In The Underworld 8:50**

Recorded May 1960 in the Victoria Hall, Geneva by Decca

Engineer Roy Wallace

Producer James Walker



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