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HAMLET

OPÉRA EN CINQ ACTES

PAROLES DE MM.

MICHEL CARRÉ ET JULES BARBIER

MUSIQUE DE

AMBROISE THOMAS

DE L'INSTITUT

PARTITION PIANO ET CHANT

(Reduction par M. VAUTHROT)

PRIX NET: 20 FRANCS

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HEUGEL et C12, Éditeurs des Solféges et Méthodes du CONSERVATOIRE

- PROPRIÉTÉ POUR TOUS PAYS. -

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HAMLET

Grand opéra en cinq actes

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Représenté pour la 1re fois, à l'Académie Impériale de Musique, le 9 mars 1868.

PERSONNAGES DISTRIBUTION ARTISTES	
HAMLET Baryton MM. FAURE. CLAUDIUS, ROI DE DANEMARK. Première Basse. BELVAL. LAERTE Ténor COLLIN. L'OMBRE DU FEU ROI Deuxième Basse DAVID. MARCELLUS Ténor GRISY. HORATIO Basse CASTELMARY. POLONIUS Basse GASPEURS. Deuxième Baryton et deuxième Ténor. LA REINE GERTRUDE Mezzo-Soprano Megueymard. LA REINE GERTRUDE Soprano Mile NILSSON. SEIGNEURS, DAMES, SOLDATS, COMÉDIENS, SERVITEURS, PAYSANS DANOIS. La scène se passe à Elseneur, en Danemark. N. B. — La mise en scène complète est rédigée par M. COLEUILLE, régisseur de la scène du Théâtre Impérial l'Opéra, qui transmettra à MM. les directeurs les indications les plus exactes, les plus détaillées et tous renseignements déstrables sur la plantation des décors, les costumes et accessoires de l'ouvrage.	de
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PARIS, AU MÉNESTREL, 2 BIS, RUE VIVIENNE HEUGEL et C''E, Éditeurs des Solféges et Méthodes du CONSERVATOIRE PROPRIÉTÉ POUR LA FRANCE ET L'ÉTRANGER

Forward

Last spring I had just finished performing an Easter service with Brass Quintet & Organ at the Church just down the road from my home. Jon Scott, a friend, amateur Trombonist and retired Canadian diplomat who was at the service, came up to me to chat and asked if I had seen the HD Met broadcast of *Hamlet* by *Thomas*. He said he had attended the live broadcast recently and had enjoyed it very much. I hadn't seen the broadcast, so Jon asked me if I knew about the big Trombone solo at the end of Act I. I had never heard of the solo, never heard of the Opera, so I was amazed to hear his story.

Jon explained that during the broadcast, the camera panned to focus on the Trombone soloist in the pit for most of the scene. He said it was a long and dramatically beautiful solo and suggested that maybe I would be interested in writing a transcription of the solo for Trombone and Piano. I went home and started digging online. Going online to find the solo was an adventure, but coming up with the amazing artwork was an unexpected bonus.

The 2010 Met production of *Hamlet* was the first time in over 100 years, 1897 to be exact, that the company last mounted this opera. At that time, a famous critic denounced it as a "travesty of Shakespeare's tragedy". As Trombonists, we are usually flattered when composers write solos for our instrument in a work, either symphonic or operatic, even if the music or composer are not from the "A" list. Thomas' solo in *Hamlet* is no exception. An entire scene from a large five act Grand Opera featuring the solo Trombonist in the orchestra is a big boost to our collective egos.

The solo from *Hamlet* reminds me of the more well known one from the *Berlioz Grande Symphonie Funebre et Triomphale* of 1840. Very lyrical, dramatic and quite somber. Anything written in the key of E-flat minor must be somber. Just the number of flats is enough to deflate the mood. Did Thomas get his idea for the solo from the Berlioz?... Possibly.

Who knows other solos are out there just waiting to be rediscovered after being "buried" for more than 100 years. Musical archeologists.... get out your shovels and start digging!

Gordon Cherry / October 2010

HAMLET

Introduction to Act I, scene 2 Prelude

Ambroise Thomas (1811 – 1896) composed twenty operas between 1837 and 1882. Of these, only two - *Mignon* (1866, revised 1870) and *Hamlet* (1868) – are even remotely part of today's opera vocabulary. Each had its libretto by Jules Barbier and Michel Carré who were also the librettists for Gounod's *Faust* and *Roméo et Juliette*, Meyerbeer's *Dinorah* and Offenbach's *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*.

It is probably best to describe *Hamlet* as inspired by the Shakespeare original rather than being a true operatic version of it. Some characters and quite a few scenes from the play do not appear in the opera. Most notably, in the original version, Hamlet did not die but was crowned king after the death of Claudius. (A revised ending with Hamlet dying was in effect when the opera was first performed at Covent Garden.) As *The Penguin Opera Guide* says, "Thomas' *Hamlet* obeys the laws not of Elizabethan tragedy but of French 19th-century opera."

Although the story will not inspire devoted Shakespeareans, Thomas' music is not likely to disappoint any listener. Thomas captures Shakespeare's dramatic intensity in the recitatives and Hamlet has some fine solos, including the famous drinking song for the players. The play scene and the confrontation between Hamlet and his mother are genuinely thrilling and Ophelia's mad scene is one of the finest in all opera. Saxophones, cannon, and bass saxhorn are unusual and interesting additions to the orchestration.

Act I, scene 2 of the opera is the famous scene from the play in which Hamlet meets his father's ghost on the ramparts of Elsinore Castle. In the opera, the scene opens with a prelude, the first few bars of which are played by the orchestra with strings and timpani prominent. The remainder of the prelude gives prominence to a trombone whose music, which is both mournful and haunting, reflects the gloomy setting and confrontation with the ghost that is about to occur.

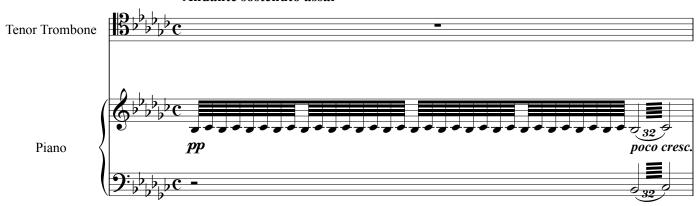
Dr. John Silver / June 2010

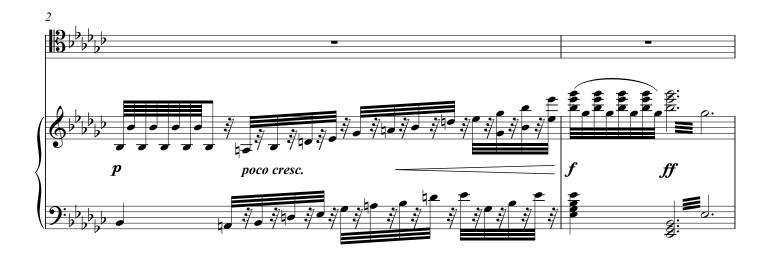
Hamlet Act I Scene 2, Prélude

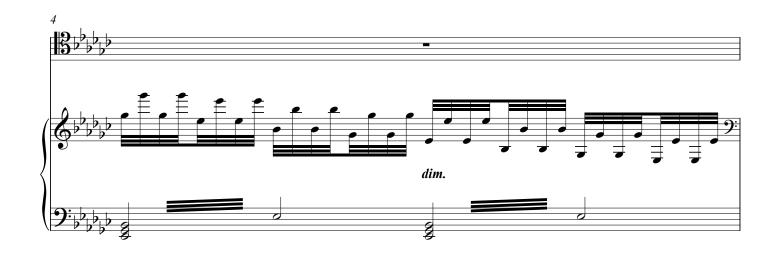
solo from the Opera for Trombone and Piano

Ambroise Thomas arranged by Gordon Cherry

Andante sostenuto assai









Hamlet Act I Scene 2, Prélude

Tenor Trombone Solo

solo from the Opera for Trombone and Piano

Ambroise Thomas arranged by Gordon Cherry

