



ACADÉMIE IMPERIALE DE MUSIQUE.

# HAMLET

OPÉRA EN CINQ ACTES

PAROLES DE M.M.

MICHEL CARRÉ & JULES BARBIER

MUSIQUE DE

# AMBROISE THOMAS

E. DELAY

Partition Piano et Chant

PRIX NET : 20<sup>f</sup>

Paris, AU MÉNESTREL, 2<sup>bis</sup> rue Vivienne.  
HEUGEL & C<sup>ie</sup> Editeurs des Solfèges et Méthodes du CONSERVATOIRE  
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DE L'INSTITUT

PARTITION PIANO ET CHANT

(Reduction par M. VAUTHROT)

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Transcrite par G. BIZET

Paris, AU MÉNESTREL, 2 bis, rue Vivienne.

HEUGEL et C<sup>ie</sup>, Éditeurs des Solfèges et Méthodes du CONSERVATOIRE

— PROPRIÉTÉ POUR TOUS PAYS. —

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HAMLET

Grand opéra en cinq actes

PAROLES DE  
MICHEL CARRÉ ET JULES BARBIER

MUSIQUE DE  
**AMBROISE THOMAS**

(RÉDUCTION AU PIANO PAR M. VAUTHROT)

Représenté pour la 1<sup>re</sup> 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.....	PONSARD.
1 <sup>er</sup> et 2 <sup>e</sup> FOSSOYEURS.....	Deuxième Baryton et deuxième Ténor.	GASPARD et MERMANT.
LA REINE GERTRUDE.....	Mezzo-Soprano.....	M <sup>me</sup> GUEYMARD.
OPHÉLIE.....	Soprano.....	M <sup>lle</sup> NILSSON.

SEIGNEURS, DAMES, SOLDATS, COMÉDIENS, SERVITEURS, PAYSANS DANOIS.

La scène se passe à Elsenour, en Danemark.

N. B. — La mise en scène complète est rédigée par M. COLEUILLE, régisseur de la scène du Théâtre Impérial de l'Opéra, qui transmettra à MM. les directeurs les indications les plus exactes, les plus détaillées et tous les renseignements désirables sur la plantation des décors, les costumes et accessoires de l'ouvrage.

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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 19<sup>th</sup>-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

Tenor Trombone

Piano

*pp*

*poco cresc.*

32

32

Detailed description: This system shows the first 32 measures of the piece. The Tenor Trombone part is a single line with a whole rest. The Piano part consists of two staves. The right hand plays a continuous eighth-note accompaniment starting on a C4 octave, moving up stepwise. The left hand has a whole rest. Dynamics include *pp* and *poco cresc.*. Measure numbers 32 are indicated at the end of both staves.

2

*p*

*poco cresc.*

*f*

*ff*

Detailed description: This system covers measures 33 to 48. The Tenor Trombone part remains silent. The Piano part continues with the eighth-note accompaniment. The right hand has a melodic line with some slurs and accents. Dynamics include *p*, *poco cresc.*, *f*, and *ff*.

4

*dim.*

Detailed description: This system covers measures 49 to 64. The Tenor Trombone part remains silent. The Piano part continues with the eighth-note accompaniment. The right hand has a melodic line with some slurs and accents. Dynamics include *dim.*

5

Musical score for measures 5 and 6. The score is in bass clef with a key signature of three flats. Measure 5 features a complex piano accompaniment with sixteenth-note patterns and sixteenth-note chords, marked with a forte (>) dynamic. Measure 6 continues this texture with sixteenth-note chords and a triplet of eighth notes. The piano part concludes with a *dim.* (diminuendo) marking and a *p* (piano) dynamic. The vocal line is a whole note chord in measure 5 and a half note chord in measure 6.

7

**Andantino**

*cantabile*

*cue*

*mp*

Musical score for measures 7, 8, and 9. The tempo is *Andantino* and the mood is *cantabile*. Measure 7 begins with a *cue* marking. The piano accompaniment consists of rhythmic patterns of eighth and sixteenth notes. The vocal line features a melodic phrase starting in measure 7, marked with a mezzo-forte (*mp*) dynamic.

10

Musical score for measures 10, 11, and 12. The piano accompaniment continues with rhythmic patterns. The vocal line features a melodic phrase starting in measure 10, marked with a mezzo-forte (*mp*) dynamic.

13

Musical score for measures 13, 14, and 15. The piano accompaniment continues with rhythmic patterns. The vocal line features a melodic phrase starting in measure 13, marked with a mezzo-forte (*mp*) dynamic.



# Hamlet Act I Scene 2, Prélude

Tenor Trombone Solo

*solo from the Opera for Trombone and Piano*

**Ambroise Thomas**  
arranged by Gordon Cherry

**Andante sostenuto assai** **Andantino** *cantabile*

**6** *piano* *mp*

12

19 *p* *p*

26 *cresc. poco a poco*