

CRITICAL REPORT

LA VIE PARISIENNE
COMIC OPERA IN FIVE ACTS
LYRICS BY MESSRS. HENRI MEILHAC AND LUDOVIC HALÉVY

MUSIC BY

JACQUES OFFENBACH

PERFORMED FOR THE FIRST TIME
IN PARIS, AT THE THÉÂTRE DU PALAIS-ROYAL
31 OCTOBER 1866

RERUN IN A VERSION IN FOUR ACTS
IN BRUSSELS, AT THE GALERIES SAINT-HUBERT
30 JANUARY 1867

RERUN IN A VERSION IN FOUR ACTS AND FIVE PICTURES
IN VIENNA, AT THE CARL-THEATER
31 JANUARY 1867

RERUN IN A VERSION IN FOUR ACTS
IN PARIS, AT THE THÉÂTRE DES VARIÉTÉS,
25 SEPTEMBER 1873

LIST OF CHARACTERS

FIRST PERFORMANCE 1866

Le Brésilien, tenor	}	Brasseur
Frick, tenor		
Prosper, tenor		
Le Baron de Gondremarck, baritone		Hyacinthe
Bobinet, tenor		
or "baryton-Martin" (high baritone)		Gil-Pérès
Raoul de Gardefeu, tenor		Priston
Urbain, baritone		Lassouche
Joseph, speaking part		Martal
Alphonse, speaking part		Ferdinand
Gontran, tenor		
or "baryton-Martin" (high baritone)		***
Gabrielle, light soprano		Zulma Bouffar
La Baronne de Gondremarck, soprano		C. Montaland
Métella, mezzo-soprano		Honorine
M ^{me} de Quimper-Karadec,		
"Desclausas" (mezzo-soprano)		Thierret
Pauline, light soprano		Paurelle
M ^{me} de Folle-Verdure, soprano		Massin
Léonie, soprano		Bedard
Louise, soprano		Breton
Clara, soprano		Henry

VIENNA VERSION 1867

Pompa di Matadores, ein Brasilianer, tenor	}	
Jean Frick, Schuhmacher, tenor		
(Major Schnauz von Stachelbart)		
Prosper, Bedienter		Treumann
bei Madame Quimper-Karadec, tenor		
(Prinz Manchabal)		
Baron von Gondremarck,		
ein schwedischer Gutsbesitzer, baritone		Knaack
Bobinet Chicard, Stutzer, tenor		Matras
Raoul von Gardefeu, tenor		Tewele
Josef Partout,		
Lohndiener im "Grand Hôtel", baritone		Gross
Urbain, Diener bei Madame Quimper-Karadec,		
baritone		Röhring
Alphons, Diener bei Gardefeu, speaking part		Eder
Gontran Chaumière, Stutzer, tenor		Friedrich
Gabrielle, Handschuhmacherin, soprano		Gallmeyer
Die Baronin von Gondremarck, soprano		Fontelive
Métella, mezzo-soprano		Müller
Madame de Quimper-Karadec,		
eine reiche Witwe, mezzo-soprano		Braunecker-Schäfer
Madame Folle-Verdure, ihre Nichte, soprano		Rutland
Pauline, Kammermädchen		
bei Madame de Quimper-Karadec, soprano		Grobecker
Leonie, Portierstochter, soprano		Molnar

Louise, Portierstochter, soprano
Klara, Portierstochter, soprano

Schober
Eder

[Peter Stangelmeier, tenor]
(appears only in the libretto submitted to the
Viennese Board of Censors)
[Tirebouchon, speaking part]
(appears only in the libretto submitted to the
Viennese Board of Censors)

RERUN 1873

Le Brésilien, tenor	}	Berthelier
Frick, tenor		
Prosper, tenor		
Le Baron de Gondremarck, tenor		Dupuis
Bobinet, tenor or "baryton-Martin" (high baritone)		Grenier
Raoul de Gardefeu, tenor		Cooper
Alfred, baritone		Léonce
Urbain, baritone		Baron
Joseph, speaking part		Mussay
Alphonse, speaking part		Bordier
Gontran, tenor or "baryton-Martin" (high baritone)		Coste
Un employé, speaking part		Millaux
Gabrielle, light soprano		Zulma Bouffar
La Baronne de Gondremarck, soprano		J. Grandville
Métella, mezzo-soprano		Deveria
Pauline, light soprano		Berthal
Léonie, soprano		A. Schneider
Louise, soprano		E. Lavigne
Clara, soprano		Milia
Caroline, soprano		Julia
Julie, soprano		Magne
Augustine, soprano		Maria
Charlotte, soprano		V. Klein
Albertine, soprano		Pauline

ON THE CHARACTERS AND THEIR VOCAL QUALITIES

~ For most of his lyric works, Offenbach composed music "tailored" to suit his performers. In the case of *La Vie parisienne*, it is useful to recall that if, with the exception of Zulma Bouffar, the Palais-Royal artist performers were above all comic actors and actresses, they knew the art of sung verse perfectly and must have evinced certain vocal qualities. In laying out each role of *La Vie parisienne*, it is obvious that Offenbach already had future reruns in mind (Vienna in particular) for which he would find genuine lyric artists to further his music.

~ Let us recall that the triple incarnation – the Brazilian, Frick (also disguised as Major Edouard), and finally Prosper (also disguised as Prince de Manchabal) is assigned to one and the same performer. In light of the range and the capacity which the vocal qualities of each of these three characters require, these roles must be assigned to a tenor of great aptitude, capable of reaching ringing trebles as well as a generous bass. In France, a "baryton-Martin" (high baritone) with a crisp tone can be enlisted as well.

~ As staged in 1866, the role of Baron de Gondremarck was conceived for a baritone voice. Nonetheless, for the major rerun in 1873 at the Théâtre des Variétés, Offenbach did not hesitate to offer the role to the tenor José Dupuis. One can thus imagine the radical transformation in the nature of this character. Since the Baron's part is centred for the most part around the middle register, one can imagine that Dupuis hardly had any problem adapting vocally to the role previously sung by Hyacinthe. On the other hand, Offenbach most likely transposed his main aria a tone higher, thereby lending it greater ease and crispness. Let us not forget that in the nineteenth century, it was common practice to transpose arias to suit the needs of the performers involved. This is why, in this edition, we suggest an alternative version for the tenor aria of the Baron (in G instead of F), as well as several adaptations within the ensemble of the score – most of them already provided by Offenbach himself since 1866. It goes without saying that in the major ensembles, Gondremarck no longer sings with the basses but with the tenors.

~ Offenbach does not clearly delineate the precise ambitus of Bobinet. However, it is known that Grenier, who revived the role at the Théâtre des Variétés in 1873, was also the creator of Calchas (*La Belle Hélène*) but also of Prince Paul (*La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein*). The former being a baritone-bass and the latter a tenor... As such, it

is difficult to imagine just how these various roles were sung when first performed (the falsetto style being in common use in the nineteenth century, by basses and tenors alike). Perhaps Grenier was blessed with a particularly broad vocal range... All the same, to judge by the role of Bobinet, it seems preferable to have it performed by a tenor or even a very light baritone.

~ The ambitus of Urbain presents certain problems as well. It seems that Lassouche had been endowed with a baritone voice of particularly broad range, demanding solid trebles, but some convincing bass notes. In any case, it appears helpful to us to favour the baritone dimension of this role – in the aria of the fifth act, a good high F is indispensable.

~ The role of Métella can also be performed by a dramatic soprano.

~ The "Desclausas" (Mme de Quimper-Karadec) is a voice of the sort of which use is made in numerous light pieces, namely a voice with character, the comic side of which has replaced the beauty of its timbre, and this at the close of a long and brilliant career. Incidentally, it was Desclausas herself who created the role of Mme Boulinard in *Moucheron* (1881).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTEGRAL VERSION^{1*}

Act I

Ouverture de concert (Vienna version)

Ouverture

- 1 Introduction – Nous sommes employés
- 2 B Chœur et scène (1873 version) – Le ciel est noir, il va pleuvoir
Couplets – Attendez d’abord que je place
- 2 C Reprise du chœur – Le ciel est noir
- 3 Couplets – Elles sont tristes les marquises
- 4 Triolet – Ce que c’est pourtant que la vie
- 5 Trio – Jamais, foi de cicérone
- 6 Final – A Paris, nous arrivons en masse
Rondeau – Je suis Brésilien, j’ai de l’or
Ensemble final – La vapeur nous amène

Act II

Entr’acte

- 7 Duo – Entrez, entrez, jeune fille à l’œil bleu
- 8 Couplets – Dans cette ville toute pleine
- 9 Rondeau (Métella’s letter) – Vous souvient-il, ma belle
- 10 Couplets (by the Major) – Pour découper adroitement
- 11 Final – Nous entrons dans cette demeure
Couplets – Je suis veuve d’un colonel
Air tyrolien – Auf der Berliner Brück

Act III

- 12 Entr’acte & Introduction – Il faut nous dépêcher vite
- 13 Septuor – Donc, je puis me fier à vous
- 14 Duo – L’amour, c’est une échelle immense
- 15 Couplets – On va courir, on va sortir
- 16 Ensemble – Votre habit a craqué dans le dos
- 17 Final – Soupçons, soupçons, c’est le moment
- 17c Ensemble (2nd version) – Tout tourne, tout danse
Air – Ohé ! l’amiral ! Ta fête est charmante
Galop final – Feu partout, lâchez tout

Act IV

Entr’acte

- 18 Rondeau – Je suis encore tout éblouie
- 19 Couplets – Quoi, ces messieurs pourraient, ma chère
- 19 bis
Reprise de l’ensemble – Vengeons-nous, vengeons-nous
- 20 Final – Tout tourne, tourne, tourne

Act V

Entr’acte

- 21a Chœur (1st version) – Bien bichonnés, bien rasés
Couplets – Avant toute chose, il faut être mystérieux
- 22 Rondeau – C’est ici l’endroit redouté des mères
- 22 bis
Mélodrame (Entrance of the Masks)
- 23 Couplets et ensemble – Je te connais
- 24 Chœur – En avant les jeunes femmes
Duo (Gabrielle, the Brazilian) – Hier à midi la gantière
- 24 bis
Mélodrame
- 25a Final (1st version)
Mélodrame
Couplets – Par nos chansons et par nos cris

Supplement

Trio – Ah quelle fête (may be performed as a single small tableau between acts III and IV.)

PARIS VERSION 1866 – 5 ACTS
Act I

Ouverture

- 1 Introduction – Nous sommes employés
- 2a Chœur et scène – Le ciel est noir, il va pleuvoir
- 3 Couplets – Elles sont tristes, les marquises
- 4 Triolet – Ce que c'est pourtant que la vie
- 5 Trio – Jamais, foi de cicérone
- 6 Final – A Paris, nous arrivons en masse
Rondeau – Je suis Brésilien, j'ai de l'or
Ensemble final – La vapeur nous amène

Act II

Entr'acte

- 7 Duo – Entrez, entrez, jeune fille à l'œil bleu
- 8a Couplets – Dans cette ville toute pleine
- 9 Rondeau (Métella's letter) – Vous souvient-il, ma belle
- 10 Couplets (by the Major) – Pour découper adroitement
- 11 Final – Nous entrons dans cette demeure
Couplets – Je suis veuve d'un colonel
Air tyrolien – Auf der Berliner Brück

Act III

Entr'acte

- 12 Introduction – Il faut nous dépêcher vite
- 13 Septuor – Donc je puis me fier à vous
- 14 Duo – L'amour, c'est une échelle immense
- 15 Couplets – On va courir, on va sortir
- 16 Ensemble – Votre habit a craqué dans le dos
- 17 Final – Soupçons, soupçons, c'est le moment
- 17b Ensemble (1st version) – Tout tourne, tout danse
Galop final – Feu partout, lâchez tout

Act IV

Entr'acte

- 18 Rondeau – Je suis encore tout éblouie
- 19 Couplets – Quoi, ces messieurs pourraient, ma chère
- 19 bis
Reprise de l'ensemble – Vengeons-nous, vengeons-nous
- 20 Final – Tout tourne, tourne, tourne

Act V

Entr'acte

- 21a Chœur (1st version) – Bien bichonnés, bien rasés
Couplets – Avant toute chose, il faut être mystérieux
- 22a Rondeau (1st version) – C'est ici l'endroit redouté des mères
- 22 bis
Mélodrame (Entrance of the Masks)
- 23 Couplets et ensemble – Je te connais

- 24 Chœur – En avant, les jeunes femmes
Duo (Gabrielle, the Brazilian) – Hier à midi la gantière
- 24 bis
Mélodrame
- 25a Final (1st version)
Mélodrame
Couplets – Par nos chansons et par nos cris

**VIENNA VERSION 1867 –
4 ACTS AND 5 PICTURES**
Act I

Ouverture de concert

- 1 Introduction (with cuts) – Im Dienste der Bahn sind wir hier engagiert
- 2a Chœur et scène – Geschwind, geschwind, es heult der Wind
- 3 Couplets – Ach Gott, wie sind die Damen so traurig
- 5 Trio (with cuts) – Bitte, nur hierher zu kommen
- 6 Final – In Paris, da finden sich die Leute
Rondeau (with cuts) – Bin Brasilianer und hab' Geld
Ensemble final – Wie das braust, wie das stöhnt

Act II

Entr'acte

- 7 Duo – Nur hier herein, Kindchen, reizend und keck
- 8a Couplets – Die Stadt mit ihren Reizen
- 9 Rondeau (Métella's letter) – Sie denken, liebe Kleine
- 10 Couplets (by the Major) – Ich schneid' bei Tisch den Braten auf
- 11 Final – Endlich hat es sieben geschlagen
Couplets (with cuts) – Mein Mann, der Oberst-Kommandant
Air tyrolien – Auf der Berliner Brück

Act III

Entr'acte

- 12 Introduction – Heut' ist alles auf den Beinen
- 13 Septuor (with cuts) – Kinder, mein Vertrau'n ist gross
- 14 Duo (with cuts) – Die Liebe schwebt gleich Rosendüften
- 15 Couplets – Wem sie gefällt, die Damenwelt
- 16 Ensemble (with cuts) – Herr Admiral hab'n auf'm Rücken ein Loch
- 17 Final (with cuts) – Heran, heran, esset und trinkt
- 17b Ensemble (1st version) – Es tanzet, tanzet das Zimmer
Galop final – Jetzt geht's los, ah, famos

Act IV (First picture)

Entr'acte

- 18 Rondeau – Geblendet war mein Auge ganz
- 20 Final – Es tanzet, tanzet das Zimmer

Act IV (Second picture)

Entr'acte (Vienna version)

- 21a Chœur (1st version) – Fein equipiert und glatt rasiert
Couplets – Verschwiegen und diskret zu sein

22a Rondeau (1st version) (with cuts) – Um Mitternacht beginnt hier das Leben

22 bis

Mélodrame (Entrance of the Masks)

23 Couplets et ensemble (with cuts) – Du reist, um dich zu amüsieren

24 Chœur – Vorwärts, lustige Kumpane
Duo – Jüngst kam ein fescher Brasilianer

25 + 25 A

Final (Wiener Fassung)

Chœur et Mélodrame – Jetzt geht's los, ah, famos

Couplets et Ensemble – Das erste Glas dem Paradies

BRUSSELS VERSION 1867 – 4 ACTS

Act I

Ouverture

- 1 Introduction (with cuts) – Nous sommes employés
- 2a Chœur et scène – Le ciel est noir, il va pleuvoir
- 3 Couplets – Elles sont tristes les marquises
- 5 Trio – Jamais, foi de cicérone
- 6 Final – A Paris, nous arrivons en masse
Rondeau (with cuts) – Je suis Brésilien, j'ai de l'or
Ensemble final – La vapeur nous amène

Act II

Entr'acte

- 7 Duo (with cuts) – Entrez, entrez, jeune fille à l'œil bleu
- 8a Couplets – Dans cette ville toute pleine
- 9 Rondeau (Métella's letter) – Vous souvient-il, ma belle
- 10 Couplets (by the Major) – Pour découper adroitement
- 11 Final – Nous entrons dans cette demeure
Couplets (with cuts) – Je suis veuve d'un colonel
Air tyrolien – Auf der Berliner Brück

Act III

Entr'acte

- 12 Introduction – Il faut nous dépêcher vite
- 13 Septuor – Donc, je puis me fier à vous
- 14 Duo (with cuts) – L'amour, c'est une échelle immense
- 15 Couplets – On va courir, on va sortir
- 16 Ensemble (with cuts) – Votre habit a craqué dans le dos
- 17 Final (with cuts) – Soupçons, soupçons, c'est le moment
- 17c Ensemble (2nd version) (with cuts) – Tout tourne, tout danse
Galop final – Feu partout, lâchez tout

Act IV

Entr'acte

- 21b Chœur (2nd version) – Bien bichonnés, bien rasés
Couplets – Avant toute chose, il faut être mystérieux
- 22a Rondeau (1st version) – C'est ici l'endroit redouté des mères
- 22 bis
Mélodrame (Entrance of the Masks)
- 23 Couplets et ensemble – Je te connais
- 18 Rondeau – Je suis encore tout éblouie
- 19 Couplets – Quoi, ces messieurs pourraient, ma chère

19 bis

Reprise de l'ensemble – Vengeons-nous, vengeons-nous

- 24 Chœur – En avant les jeunes femmes
Duo (Gabrielle, the Brazilian) – Hier à midi la gantière

24 bis

Mélodrame

- 25b Final (2nd version)

Mélodrame

Couplets – Par nos chansons et par nos cris

PARIS VERSION 1873 – 4 ACTS

Act I

Ouverture

- 1 Introduction (with cuts) – Nous sommes employés
- 2b Chœur et scène – Le ciel est noir, il va pleuvoir
Couplets – Attendez d’abord que je place
- 3 Couplets – Elles sont tristes les marquises
- 4 Triolet – Ce que c’est pourtant que la vie
- 5 Trio – Jamais, foi de cicérone
- 6 Final – A Paris, nous arrivons en masse
Rondeau (with cuts) – Je suis Brésilien, j’ai de l’or
Ensemble final – La vapeur nous amène

Act II

Entr’acte

- 7 Duo (with cuts) – Entrez, entrez, jeune fille à l’œil bleu
- 8b Couplets – Dans cette ville toute pleine
- 9 Rondeau (Métella’s letter) – Vous souvient-il, ma belle
- 10 Couplets (by the Major) – Pour découper adroitement
- 11 Final – Nous entrons dans cette demeure
Couplets (with cuts) – Je suis veuve d’un colonel
Air tyrolien – On n’est v’nu m’inviter

Act III

Entr’acte

- 12 Introduction – Il faut nous dépêcher vite
- 13 Septuor – Donc, je puis me fier à vous
- 14 Duo (with cuts) – L’amour, c’est une échelle immense
- 15 Couplets – On va courir, on va sortir
- 16 Ensemble (with cuts) – Votre habit a craqué dans le dos
- 17 Final (with cuts) – Soupçons, soupçons, c’est le moment
- 17c Ensemble (2nd version) – Tout tourne, tout danse
Air – Ohé ! l’amiral ! Ta fête est charmante
Galop final – Feu partout, lâchez tout

Act IV

Entr’acte

- 21b Chœur (2nd version) – Bien bichonnés, bien rasés
Couplets – Avant toute chose, il faut être mystérieux
- 22b/c
Rondeau – C’est ici l’endroit redouté des mères
- 24 Chœur – En avant les jeunes femmes
Duo (Gabrielle, the Brazilian) – Hier à midi la gantière

24 bis

Mélodrame

25b Final (2nd version)

Mélodrame

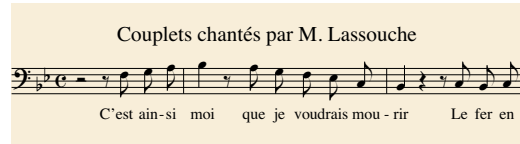
Couplets – Par nos chansons et par nos cris

FOREWORD

Here, published for the first time, is the unabridged version of the comic opera by Jacques Offenbach: *La Vie parisienne*. Let us briefly recall that this work was created in Paris, at the Théâtre du Palais-Royal, on 31 October 1866, in a version consisting of five acts. Despite the extraordinary success the work enjoyed at the time, the creators of this version considered it to be too long and quickly redrafted it down to four acts. This second version was produced as a major rerun in Paris, at the Théâtre des Variétés, 25 September 1873 – and since then, the year has remained associated with the four-act version. Parallel to this, the piece met with enormous success abroad, particularly in Brussels, where an abridged version in four acts was shown from 30 January 1867, and in Vienna, where from 31 January 1867 a (slightly revised) version was staged in four acts and five pictures. The different London versions of *La Vie parisienne*, on the other hand, were very free adaptations of Offenbach's text (*La Vie parisienne in London*, 1872 – *La Vie*^{2*}, 1883 – etc.)

Our task involved achieving a vocal score based on the three existing versions: the version in five acts published by Heu in 1866, the version in five pictures (translated into German by Karl Treumann) published by Bote & Bock in 1867, and the version in four acts published by Gregh in 1873. We have included here the aria which Offenbach added for the tenor José Dupuis in the role of Baron de Gondremarck, for the rerun of 1873. Finally, we wanted to include among the supplements a remarkable trio written for Bobinet, Prosper and Urbain but never orchestrated by the composer^{3*}. This trio is the most nearly complete piece from among a group of eight pieces which were never used in the performance^{4*}.

Our edition would thus be exhaustive if not for the fact that one aria remains lost to this day: the verses sung by Urbain in Act III, "C'est ainsi, moi, que je voudrais mourir". Offenbach added the aria for the actor Lassouche several performances subsequent to the premiere, but then deleted it shortly thereafter. The only trace which we have of this aria is located in the thematic table of stray pieces.



Our most important work was devoted to reconstructing the material and the full score of this unabridged version. We relocated the material printed by the Heu publishing house when the piece was staged (but only the arrangements for the strings), along with material copied the following year, 1867, comprising all the other orchestral parts. Until this day, these documents were considered lost.

The deletions made in Offenbach's own hand are already legion here, but Act IV, which has been deleted since, is still in place at this early stage. On the other hand, here and there one finds pieces added by the composer in the course of the performances; unfortunately, however, the lack of an instrumentation part, and especially the absence of the melody line, make this material unusable to the public.

One can establish the authenticity of this material by comparing the manuscript pages in our possession with one another, but also with the complete score of the German version (Bote & Bock).

Using the vocal scores as back-up material, we have reintroduced the music excised in the French material while drawing on the German material. Indeed, in Paris, Offenbach did not make the same cuts he did in Vienna.

We wanted to point out these cuts throughout the entire score; for although we may find it fascinating to know in unabridged fashion the music written by Offenbach, this leading light of the theatre remains the only one who can pass judgement on what should be omitted to promote the success of his work. Thus, the composer amputated dozens of magnificent pages from any number of manuscripts. But it is perhaps to these very sacrifices that Offenbach owes his immortality.

We were also fortunate enough to rediscover the set of manuscript notebooks used in the rerun in four acts in 1873. That is to say: the entrance aria sung by Métella, written for Hortense Schneider, with whom Offenbach wanted to entrust the role, but alas in vain; a new orchestration of the triolet by Gardefeu (no. 4), a new orchestration (a tone lower) of the waltz by Métella in Acte IV, entitled "A minuit sonnant commence la fête"; and, above all, a new arietta for the Baron de Gondremarck,

now written for the tenor voice of José Dupuis, entitled "Ohé, l'amiral, ta fête est charmante", an aria written for inclusion in the finale of Act III. Although printed in the libretto, it never had the honour of appearing in the score itself, probably just by mistake!

Despite the numerous sources to which we had access, one essential element was lacking that stood in the way of a truly exhaustive restoration of the original orchestration: the composer's hand-written version of the score. It would appear that it has been lost or at least impossible to locate for a number of years now.

As a result, we resigned to orchestrating ourselves the passages which did not appear in any material. Fortunately, they represent only a fraction of the entire work^{5*}: the central part of no. 1, several measures of no. 6 (only as concerns a part of the instrumentation), 4 measures in the finale to Act I, 19 measures in the finale to Act III (string parts only), 4 measures in no. 16, and finally the second part of the intermezzo to Act V. Of course we adhered to the initial instructions for instrumentation as these appear in the vocal score. In our orchestration, our primary concern was to recreate Offenbach's sobriety and homogeneity, guided above all by a respect for his own style. Far be it for us to project upon the master's own work the slightest imprint of our own – in contrast, unfortunately, to the liberties which a number of disrespectful "arrangers" have already taken.

Which leads us to add, once and for all, the following point: it is in fact Offenbach who orchestrated all of his scores himself, with the exception of some posthumous works, *Belle Lurette* and *Moucheron*, completed by his friend Léo Delibes, as well as *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, completed by Auguste Bazille and Ernest Guiraud. If he happens to have entrusted to Maurand (copy director for the Parisian comic operas) several re-orchestration assignments, this involved nothing more than a task of instrumental amplification based on the original orchestration. We are now familiar with the composer's working method: to begin with, Offenbach would write down, in large notebooks which he took with him nearly everywhere he went, the numerous melodies which his new libretto inspired in him – he even jotted down a certain number of the nearly illegible preliminary sketches for *La Haine* in his carriage, where he had a work table installed. He frequently made annotations (musical or literary) directly in his librettists' manuscripts. Then, using a scored sheet-music blank, the very first thing he did was to compose the vocal parts at the centre of the sheet, adding on the last two staves a piano

accompaniment, sometimes in rudimentary form and sometimes very developed. He sometimes jotted down several trial elements of orchestration here as well. Finally, once he thought that the piece would be staged, he set about the task of orchestration. To save time, he also enlisted a codified system which, with a little experience, can be easily understood.

In his first Théâtre des Bouffes-Parisiens, Offenbach never employed any fewer than sixteen musicians^{6*}; this was the case only for his very first works^{7*}. What this involves, then, is a "Mozart" group on a very small scale. Offenbach was quickly in a position to profit from a larger orchestra pit (once he set up operations at the Passage Choiseul in December 1855), which was home to thirty instrumentalists^{8*}. In general, there are two major types of orchestration for dramatic works by Offenbach. The first consists of two flautists (the second of whom also plays piccolo^{9*}), an oboe, two clarinets, a bassoon, two horns, two cornets, a trombone, a timpani part and a percussion part (usually both susceptible to performance by the same instrumentalist) and as many strings as space in the orchestra pit will permit. This is the kind of orchestration for nearly all of Offenbach's works as performed in France prior to 1872, and for some works even later. The instrumentation for *La Vie parisienne* falls under this first category. But the composer liked adapting to the resources which the theatres had to offer and did not hesitate to enrich his orchestration wherever the opportunity of doing so presented itself.

For the more substantial works, such as those composed for the Opéra-Comique, the ballets and above all the extravaganzas and other major shows produced at the Théâtre de la Gaîté beginning in 1872, Offenbach augmented upon this orchestral configuration. In addition to a large string section, he added a second oboe, a second bassoon, two additional horns^{10*}, another two trombones and a new percussion part. Less systematic is the use of a third flute part (*Die Rheinnixen*), an English horn (*Robinson Crusoe*, etc.), one or more harps (*Die Rheinnixen*, *Fantasio*, etc.), an ophicleide (*Le Papillon*, etc.), bells (*Le Carnaval des Revues*), and even the wind machine (*Le Voyage dans la Lune*). The same holds true for the Viennese versions of the majority of his works. For a long time, a persistent legend perpetuated a wrong notion leading one to believe that the Viennese re-runs of Offenbach's works were entirely beyond the composer's influence and that the orchestrations and other adjustments to the scores were the product of anonymous arrangers employed by the theatre involved. We now know that none of this is the case. The numerous differences, additions and cuts which emerge when one compares

the Parisian and Viennese versions were indeed decided by the master himself. As for the work of enhancing orchestration, recently discovered manuscripts prove to us that this, too, generally stems from the composer's own hand. Once again, Offenbach knows how to adapt his quill to suit artistic circumstances. He even goes as far as to proclaim: "I write my music for Paris, but I hear it playing in Vienna."^{11*}

N.B.: In our booklet, which is devoted to the editorial principles of the OEK (Offenbach Edition Keck), of course we raise the different problems relating to instrumental interpretation (transposing instruments, old instruments, etc.). There is such a problem which especially concerns the interpretation of *La Vie parisienne*, more particularly the part for the percussion section. The score requires the bass drum to be struck with a mallet. Using a modern beater for this purpose is aberrant, and the sound which this produces has helped perpetuate this music's image as something deplorable. The same holds true for the cymbals, which must be crashed against each another, and not suspended from a stand and struck with a stick^{12*}. In Offenbach's day, one used a military bass drum, at the top of which one of the cymbals was horizontally attached. This enabled a single instrumentalist to play the bass-drum part with his right hand while playing the cymbals part with his left hand – along with all of the other percussion parts (including the timpani), which most of the time were not played simultaneously. If perfectly mastered, the old system of the military bass drum is better by far, for when played by one musician alone, much better rhythmic synchronisation can be achieved. But if using an instrument such as this turns out to be impossible, then it is indispensable to seek the aid of two percussionists. We wanted to present this detail thoroughly as it is of major consequence – since an error of interpretation such as this can transform the most accomplished orchestration into a rude parody.

The orchestration featured in the 1866 and 1873 manuscripts of *La Vie parisienne* is thus the same as that reserved for the virtual totality of Offenbach's works (i.e. 2121 221 TP Strings). For the performances in Vienna, the composer added in his own hand two trombones (entered on the same line as the first), and two horns were added to the first and entered at the top of the page. Offenbach also entered "3/4 Horn F" – instead of "cor en fa", which was his custom. The score also features a second oboe, a second bassoon, and a supplementary percussion part. Also of note is the German text, written in pencil on paper beneath the original French text. This last orchestration was thus used in the making of the German

material published by Bote & Bock in 1867. As is the case for the various volumes of the OEK, we opted to publish for sale the Parisian orchestration of 1866 and 1873, and to offer, parallel to this, rental of the orchestration of Vienna.

As for no. 23, the waltz of Métella, here we present the four orchestrations written by Offenbach.^{13*}

Appearing at the end of this edition are the complete libretto presenting the first version of 1866 published by Michel Lévy Frères, the German translation by Karl Treumann (Bote & Bock, 1867), and the four-act versions (Brussels, 1867, copyist's manuscript submitted to the Brussels Board of Censors – and Paris, 1873, published by Calmann Lévy).

We also wished to present to our readers the original libretto as submitted on 29 August 1866 to the Parisian Board of Censors, a true witness to the authors' very first intentions (encompassing the new versions of Acts IV and V, rewritten shortly before the first performance), as well as the libretto submitted to the Austrian Board of Censors, featuring different characters and scenes which were removed in the course of the first production in Vienna. Finally, we also publish the libretto submitted to the Parisian Board of Censors in september 1873 for the new version of act IV.

Our unabridged edition thus permits a showing of *La Vie parisienne* either in the original version in five acts (Paris, 1866), or in the German-language version in four acts and five pictures (Vienna, 1867), or in its abridged version in four acts (Brussels, 1867), or else, finally, in the final version of the rerun in four acts (Paris, 1873). It is also possible – but hardly desirable within the framework of a stage performance – to put on this edition of the opera in its unabridged form.

The order in which the numbers appear in the various versions featured appears in the table of pieces located at the beginning of this volume. Each cut is marked by letters followed by the page number at which the omission begins or ends. Where a musical number is found to appear in several different versions, these are indicated immediately following the number in question.

To contemporary musicologists, Offenbach's work is a veritable labyrinth. The discoveries made throughout the course of our research demonstrate that, for this composer, a score is far from destined to remain a dead letter, laid down once and for all. Instead, he is forever making modifications. Moreover, it is he and he alone who is authorised to make these modifications. Thus, one cannot arrive at a reputable edition by consulting the composer's manuscript alone. Scores and authentic



orchestra material also turn out to be just as indispensable to the reconstruction of the composer's final intentions.

Les Contes d'Hoffmann obviously remain an insoluble problem by virtue of their incompleteness^{14*}; the same situation holds true for a good number of other scores as well, scores incessantly revised by their author. What is more, the mercenary dispersal of the manuscripts throughout the world, sometimes even sheet by sheet (!), does not make our task an easy one. Quite aside from orchestra material which has been allowed to fall into decay, if not simply destroyed altogether. But passion begets tenacity, and we hope that you will have as much pleasure using this edition as we have had in bringing it to fruition.

SKETCHES

Here, with individual comments, are the eight numbers which Offenbach wrote in 1866 for *La Vie parisienne* but which were not kept for the performance of the work^{15*}. None of these numbers, moreover, was orchestrated.

NO. 1: FRAGMENTS OF A FIRST VERSION OF THE FINALE OF ACT II

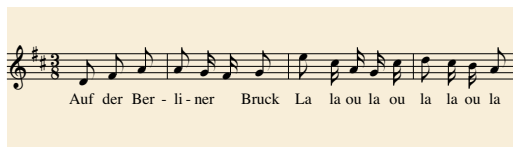
Theme A:



Theme B:



Theme C:



Theme D:



We have only 134 measures of this group; the beginning and the end have disappeared. The characters participating here are: Gabrielle, the Baroness, the Major, Gardefeu, the Baron, and the chorus of guests.

Theme A is sung by the Major.

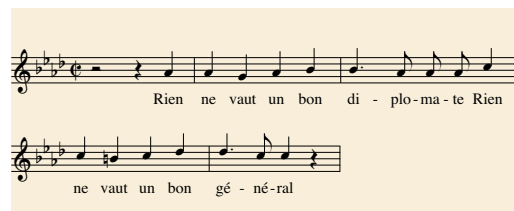
This initial version provides us with a clear indication of the nationality of the glover Gabrielle, since the lyrics which she interprets reserved for themes B (allegretto) and C, are both written in

German. Offenbach has also retained theme C in the definitive version: this is the Tyrolienne.

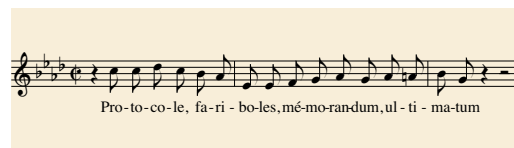
Like theme A, theme D (allegro) is sung by the Major.

NO. 2: TRIO FEATURING PROSPER, URBAIN AND THE BARON (ACT III, NO. 2)

Theme E:



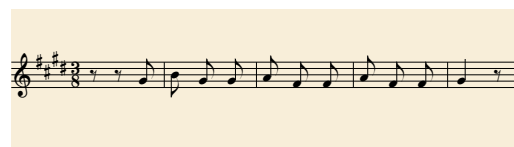
Theme F:



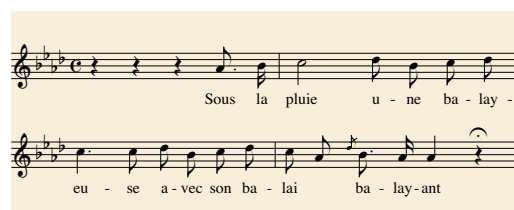
Numbering 180 measures, this piece is complete in terms of the vocal part, but only 56 measures of the accompaniment have been composed. The first three measures of theme E are sung by Prosper, the others by Urbain. Prosper sings theme F. These two themes are marked *allegro* and *allegretto*, respectively.

NO. 3: FINALE OF ACT III

Theme G:



Theme H:



Theme I:



These are the major themes of this first version of the finale of Act III. Numerous secondary themes enter into play here as well. This major piece, 323 measures in length, is complete for both the vocal parts and the piano part. We point out that the text here differs from that of the definitive version.

Theme G (allegretto) is entrusted to a "German" chorus of gloves and boot-makers. Following a nine-measure introduction reserved for the orchestra, the chorus takes the stage singing "La la la ...".

Offenbach entitled theme H (allegretto moderato) "Chanson de la balayeuse", or "Street Cleaner's Song". This song is sung by Gabrielle.

Theme I is called "Pastourelle", or "Pastoral Song". It is first introduced by the orchestra before being taken up by the chorus. This charming melody can also be found in the trio in Act IV (published in its entirety and featured in our edition).

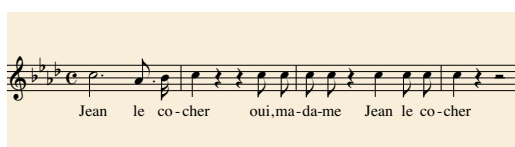
NO. 4: TRIO FEATURING BOBINET, PROSPER AND URBAIN (ACT IV, NO. 1)

This piece is the subject of a complete reproduction appearing in this publication (in an orchestration by Jean-Christophe Keck).

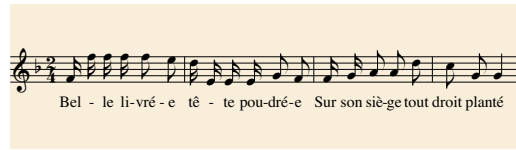
It is composed of three themes. The first is a perfect musical description of the day after a celebration. The second repeats the "Pastourelle" of the first version of the finale to Act III. The third is a variation on the "Feu partout" of the same finale.

NO. 5: QUARTET FEATURING PAULINE, MME DE FOLLE-VERDURE, MME DE QUIMPER-KARADEC AND THE BARON (ACT IV, NO. 2)

Theme J:



Theme K:



Theme L:



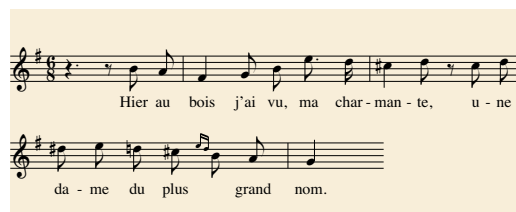
Numbering 248 measures, this piece is complete for the sung parts and nearly complete for the piano.

The first measure of theme J (allegro maestoso) is sung by Mme de Folle-Verdure, the following three by Pauline.

Themes K and L (allegro moderato and allegretto, respectively) are both sung by Pauline.

NO. 6: FABLIAU (ACT IV, NO. 3)

Theme M:



This piece consists of 91 measures, but the accompaniment exists for only 31 measures. This is the first version of the Baroness' rondeau: "Je suis encore tout étourdie".

NO. 7: FINALE OF ACT IV (NO. 4)

Theme N:



Theme O:



Theme P:



This first draft of the finale of Act IV turns out to be much more developed than the definitive version of the same finale: 202 measures as opposed to 78. The vocal material is complete, the piano material nearly so. It was written for the Baroness, Mme de Folle-Verdure, Mme de Quimper-Karadec, Pauline, Léonie, Clara, Bertha, Bobinet, Gardefeu, Prosper, Urbain, the Baron, and a third servant named Louis. We point out that for reasons unknown to us, "Bertha" will be re-christened as "Louise".

Theme N is sung by Pauline, Léonie, Clara and Bertha.

Theme O (allegro) is sung by all.

Theme P is a repeat of Gabrielle's aria: "Wenn ich Brod mit Butter habe" (theme B), and a last theme repeats the "Feu partout" heard in Act III.

NO. 8: DUO BETWEEN GABRIELLE AND THE BRAZILIAN (ACT V)

Theme Q:



This number is a primitive version of the duo heard in Act V: "Hier, à midi, la gantière". This piece consists of 87 measures, 9 of them repetitions. Offenbach's indication for the tempo: allegro-marche. Identical to the definitive version, the number features four staves reserved for the chorus.

SOURCES

COMPOSER'S MANUSCRIPTS

Sketches for the version of 1866 (8 fascicles)
Family archives

Various pages of the composer's manuscript
Family archives

Supplement for the version of 1873 (4 fascicles)
Family archives

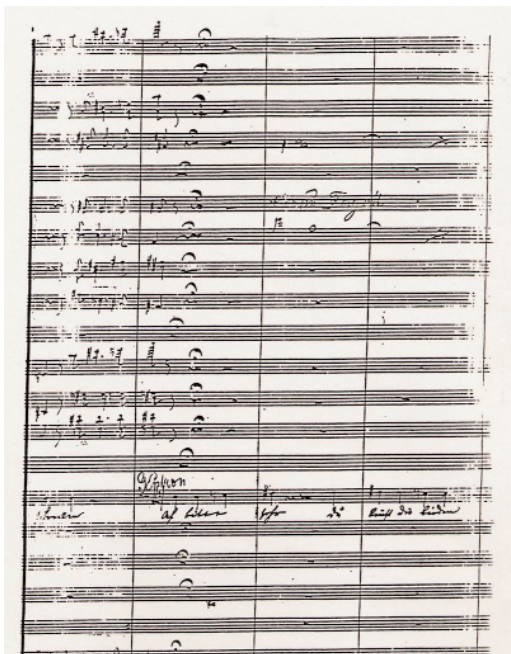
Sketch book (1873)
Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln

Triolet by Gardefeu (1873 orchestration)
Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln

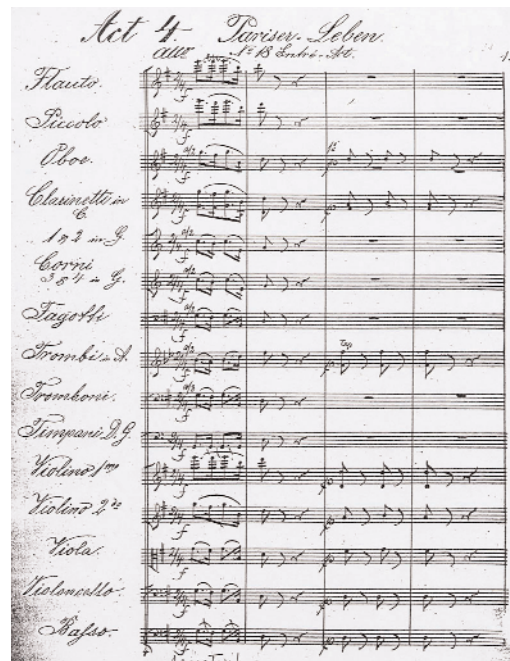
Triolet by Gardefeu (sung solo)
Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln

FULL SCORES

Copyist's score (Vienna version)
Jean-Christophe Keck Collection, Paris



Copyist's score (Vienna version)
Archives of Bote & Bock, Berlin



ORCHESTRAL MATERIAL

Material engraved by the publisher Heu
(1866-1867) String parts
Jean-Christophe Keck Collection, Paris



Copyist's hand-written material (1867)
Harmony parts (Heu publishers)
Jean-Christophe Keck Collection, Paris



Copyist's hand-written material (1873)
Harmony parts (Grehg publishers)
Jean-Christophe Keck Collection, Paris

Copyist's hand-written material (Vienna version)
Archives of Bote & Bock

Nota bene. We also consulted the various apocryphal versions in existence on the market today (published by Salabert, Chappell, Weinberger, Mario Bois, etc.). As these fail to reproduce Offenbach's original orchestration, they proved to be of no use to our work.

VOCAL SCORES

1866 version (1st edition),
arranged by Victor Boullard
(Heu publishers, Paris)
Jean-Christophe Keck Collection, Paris

1873 version (1st edition),
arranged by Victor Boullard
(Grehg publishers, Paris)
Jean-Christophe Keck Collection, Paris

Vienna/Berlin version,
arranged by Bernhard Wolff
(Bote & Bock publishers, Berlin)
Jean-Christophe Keck Collection, Paris

1883 London version (*La Vie*)
(Boosey & Co publishers, London)
Jean-Christophe Keck Collection, Paris

PART FOR PIANO SOLO

1866 version (1st edition),
arranged by Victor Boullard
(Heu publishers, Paris)
Jean-Christophe Keck Collection, Paris

1866 version (published in 1874)
(Sonzogno publishers, Milan)
Dominique Ghesquière Collection,
Boulogne-sur-mer, France

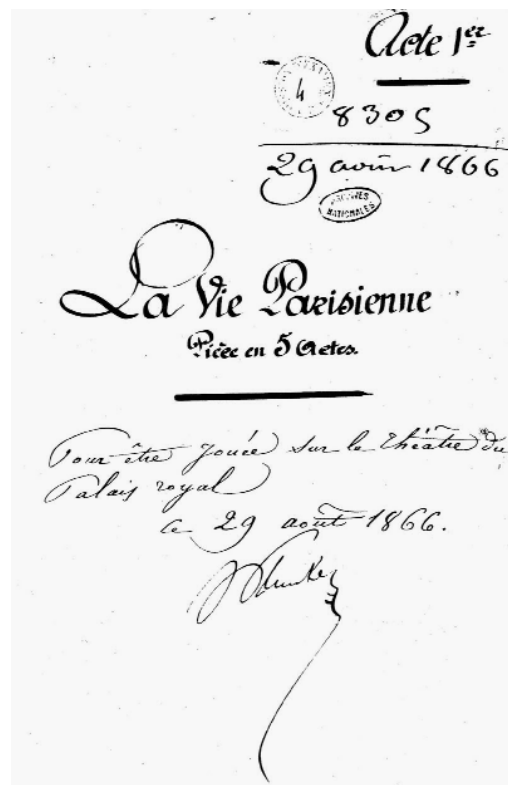
SEPARATE ARIAS

1866 version (different numbers)
Jean-Christophe Keck Collection, Paris

1873 version (different numbers)
Jean-Christophe Keck Collection, Paris

LIBRETTI

Copyist's libretto submitted to the Parisian
Board of Censors
1866 version (encompassing two versions
of Acts IV and V)
Archives Nationales, Paris



Copyist's libretto submitted to the Parisian
Board of Censors
(supplement for the 1873 version),
Archives Nationales, Paris

Copyist's libretto, annotated by Ludovic Halévy,
for the Brussels version of 1867
Laurent Fraison Collection, Paris

Copyist's libretto submitted to the Brussels
Board of Censors
(supplement for the Brussels version of 1867)
Private collection

Copyist's libretto submitted to the Viennese
Board of Censors
Archives of the Viennese Board of Censors

Printed libretto (1866 version)
Michel Lévy Frères publishers, Paris, 1867
Jean-Christophe Keck Collection, Paris

Printed libretto (1866 version), illustrated by
Draner and Hadol
Calmann Lévy publishers, Paris, 1875
Jean-Christophe Keck Collection, Paris

Printed libretto (version de 1873)
Calmann Lévy publishers, Paris, 1873
Jean-Christophe Keck Collection, Paris

Printed libretto (Vienna version)
Bote & Bock publishers, Berlin, 1867
Bote & Bock Archives, Berlin

OTHER SOURCES

Illustrations, various documents (scores,
programmes, articles, biographies...)
Jean-Christophe Keck Collection, Paris

Various documents on the history of the work:
Dominique Ghesquière Archives, Boulogne-sur-mer
Antonio de Almeida Archives, Saint-Rémy de
Provence
Jean-Christophe Keck Collection, Paris

HISTORY OF THE WORK

On 24 December 1864, which is to say about two years prior to the premiere of *La Vie parisienne*, a one-act light comedy had been performed in the same Théâtre du Palais-Royal; it was entitled *Le Photographe*. In the comedy, the authors, Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy, depict one Raoul de Gardefeu, the lover of Métella, who has become a photographer in order to seduce Baroness de Gourdakirsch. Prior to this, in 1862, the name Métella had appeared in a one-act comedy by the same team of Meilhac and Halévy: *La clé de Métella*, which was staged at the Théâtre du Vaudeville. Thus, the dramatic beginnings of *La Vie parisienne* are already in place.

Besides his correspondence with Offenbach, the Ludovic Halévy notebooks contain traces of plans regarding this comic opera, dating from as far back as the end of 1865. On 23 November, Halévy notes enthusiastically:

We presented the first two acts of *La Vie parisienne* to the directors of the Palais-Royal. The following day, we were inundated with congratulations and requests to finish the piece without delay. The third and fourth acts will not take very long (Worth and the *Café Anglais*) but we have no ideas for the fifth.

At the time, Offenbach was considering composing a major extravaganza for the Théâtre du Châtelet: *Le Calife Haroun Al Rachid*, based on a script by Meilhac and Halévy. The notion of an extravaganza then gave way to that of a new comic opera in five acts, commissioned by the Théâtre du Palais-Royal in light of the 1867 World's Fair: *La Vie parisienne*. This new work came in addition to three projects on which Offenbach was already working at the time: *Barbe-Bleue*, which was performed at the Théâtre des Variétés on 5 February 1866; *La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein*, staged at the same theatre the following season; and particularly *Robinson Crusoe*, written for the Opéra-Comique, where it was first performed on 23 November 1867. Composed in his villa in Etretat as well as in several major European cities where Offenbach was following the progress of foreign productions of his work, all of these commissions left him without a moment's respite. And yet, as was his wont, he kept urging his colleagues to send him work:

Dear Ludo,
I am astonished and alarmed not to have received anything from you. What, not a single verse? And it's already the end of February –

that's inexcusable. Are you ill, perhaps? Or has Meilhac fallen in love for the hundredth time? I am very upset at your behaviour. Really, how do you want us to succeed? I was happy to entrust to you all my interests for the coming winter, and I see to my great sorrow that you don't give a damn about it. It's not very nice of either of you. We have the Opéra-Comique, the Variétés, the Palais-Royal, we have a fortune in hand, and you want nothing to do with it. I expect word from you by return of post and from Meilhac which can explain your conduct, which is strange (to avoid resorting to a harsher turn of phrase) ... words, words, Christ almighty!... or I'll be really angry, and you will force me to collaborate with Busnach, that would be too stiff. Quite seriously, I impatiently await several pieces, and an explanation on the part of both of you, still yours:
J. Offenbach.

One is familiar with the importance of finales in Offenbach's work. As much as he finds room, strictly speaking, to pass over certain details, he reveals himself to be uncompromising with regard to the closing of each act. The finale of Act I and especially of Act III of *La Vie parisienne* remain justifiable examples of a success attained.

These few lines written from Vienna establish the extent to which the work of authors and of composers are inseparable:

Dear friends,
I really cannot produce the finale unless you set it up for me. So after the ensemble, and before the first drinking song, I need details among the artists, such as: what kind of wine do you want? or: what kind of wine do you drink? Everyone wants to serve the Baron. By the same token, Pauline can direct a few words of affection, etc., etc., then the song. After the song, I also need some "mumbling" to reach the desired level of exhilaration. They could drink to everyone's health, all the while drinking to the Baron, over and over again without end – in other words, I ask you to set it up for me such that when I reach Paris I can start working on it straight away. My responsibility in this finale is very difficult if I want to bring the piece to a major climax. [...] Unfortunate the youth who are forced to work so much. And as for me, I send you lots of love.

Given the fact that Offenbach himself wrote the libretti to two of his own works: *Le Corsaire Noir* (1872) and *Maître Péronilla* (1878), it is apparent that he never was satisfied merely to put verse



to music. He built acts, suggesting – and at times imposing – entire verses upon his librettists.

Which thus brings us to the eve of the great World's Fair of 1867. These major events remain tied to Offenbach's own successes. Was it not thanks to the Exposition of 1855 that he opened his first theatre: "Les Bouffes-Parisiens", near the Champs-Élysées, where the performance of the farce, *Les Deux Aveugles*, brought him fame and fortune?

In early 1866, the Théâtre des Variétés, where Offenbach first appeared in 1853 with a comic opera entitled *Pépito* (he was to return there only eleven years later, but in triumph, with *La Belle Hélène*), played host to the last satirical comic opera by the trio of Offenbach, Meilhac and Halévy: *Barbe-Bleue*. This piece was such an enormous success that the Théâtre des Variétés commissioned the same trio to create a new work for the 1867 World's Fair. The work, entitled *La Chambre Rouge*, was soon re-christened *La Grande-Duchesse* and finally *La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein*. Plunkett and Dormeuil, directors of the Théâtre du Palais-Royal, also wanted to assure the success of the coming season and purchased the services of the popular composer. Which led in turn to the birth of *La Vie parisienne*.

The relationship between Offenbach and Plunkett is often extremely stormy. As much as Offenbach wanted to provide his show with sumptuous décors, Plunkett kept a miserly watch over his budget. He even ended up subjecting the maestro to impossible working conditions. He went so far as to demand that the performers be chosen exclusively from among his own theatre's troupe of actors and actresses. Although Offenbach finally submitted, it was not without imposing, in turn, at the head of the feminine cast, for the role of Gabrielle, his own favourite actress: Zulma Bouffar.

The piece was first read on 17 August 1866. The following day was spent sight-reading the music. Stage rehearsals began on 20 August. A first run-through of Act I was held on 3 September. On this occasion, *le Ménestrel* informed its readers that "the Palais-Royal orchestra and chorus will be expanded for the production of *La Vie parisienne*". By dint of hard work, the players' talents carried the day, and Offenbach was the conqueror. However, to judge from a letter written on 9 October by Eugène Labiche to one of his colleagues, the task of putting the piece together was not free of difficulty: "They have to transform Lassouche to a tenor, and he maintains that he is only a baritone, Gil Pérès and Madame Thierret are still trying to hit their notes, and they are not sure of how to execute the sung speech they

need to perform. The theatre is in a real fix. The actors keep hitting the wrong notes and ruining their parts. The orchestra of musicians has been enlarged at public expense^{16*}, and especially at the expense of the director".

Ludovic Halévy is also far from content: "I have precious little confidence in *La Vie parisienne*". Or: "The rehearsals of *La Vie parisienne* are nearly driving me mad". The first orchestra rehearsal was held without incident on 5 October. Significant changes were made very late in the process.^{17*} Panic gradually set into the theatre. On the day after the premiere, Halévy wrote in his notebooks: "What a fortnight that was! Such agonies! Such disheartenment! Such despair!". Up until the pre-dress rehearsal on 29 October, where the anxiety was at its peak. No one had faith in the piece any more, except for... Offenbach, the undaunted optimist. The librettists suddenly grew frightened of the scope of the satire which their script contained. Perhaps they had gone too far. They even went so far as to ask the composer to withdraw the piece. Miss Paurelle caused a sensation by calling off a new dress: to what end, since she didn't make her appearance until Act III, by which time the curtain would already have fallen to the booing of the audience? None of that. Offenbach, for his part, remained confident. And, as it turns out, rightly so.

The show was an enormous success. The audience called for encores and second encores, of certain pieces ... The following day, a critic admitted: "I laughed as if someone were tickling the soles of my feet". Hyacinthe was irresistible in the role of the Baron, for "he is excellent in portraying amazement". Brasseur is "mountain-sized" in the triple role of the Brazilian, Frick and Prosper. Lassouche, a master of burlesque distortion, is the embodiment of Urbain. In light of Lassouche's success, Offenbach decided to compose a new comic aria expressly for him, to be added at the beginning of Act III: "C'est ainsi, moi, que je voudrais mourir". But this aria was quickly removed again, to the great regret of its performer. As for Gil-Pérès, he hums the role of Bobinet with his pretty voice. Rounding out the male cast, Priston is a first-rate Gardefeu.

The same success for the ladies. Céline Montaland as the Baroness was "radiant with beauty". Honorine as Métella, who "furnishes verse with incredible detail, is extremely intelligent and witty". But the actress who enjoyed the greatest success was indisputably Zulma Bouffar. It should be added that the role of Gabrielle the glover fits her ... like a glove, for it was truly tailor-made with her in mind. After all, did not Offenbach pen a dedication on her score for the work: "To Zulma Bouffar, the Patti of the operetta"?



All of Paris came to applaud the new piece. Among the spectators was Hortense Schneider, whom Offenbach had invited in the following terms:

My dear friend,
I know that Meilhac has taken charge of your box – you really had to be at our premiere. A premiere of mine, without my darling girls, Hélène and Boulotte, would have been unthinkable. So until tomorrow; I hope you will wear out more than one pair of gloves applauding the adorable things I've done in our *Vie parisienne*.
Until the coming days for our reading [for *La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein*].
Sincerely, your father, Jacques Offenbach.
Tuesday

No less a personage than the Emperor himself, accompanied by the Empress, attended the 58th showing of the piece on 28 December.

Despite his triumph, Offenbach was aware of the length of certain passages. That is why he decided to make cuts here and there, several performances after the premiere; soon, Act IV was abandoned in its entirety, along with the additional aria by Lassouche in Act III and several numbers in the final act. For the performances in Brussels beginning on 30 January 1867 at the Galeries Saint-Hubert, the authors preferred to condense the two last acts into a single act, thereby salvaging various ones of the very first-rate numbers. It was in yet another abridged version (consisting of four acts and five pictures) that *Pariser Leben* was performed on 31 January 1867 at the Carl-Theater in Vienna. This version had been translated by Karl Treumann and directed by the composer Franz von Suppé (due to illness, Offenbach himself was unable to come to conduct the premiere). In Paris, at the Théâtre du Palais-Royal, 262 consecutive performances crowned this *Vie parisienne*, the last performance before a sell-out audience on 24 July 1867^{18*}. The re-runs of 1868 and 1869 would be performed with the faithful Berthelie as the Brazilian, but the Franco-Prussian conflict interrupted the performances for a longer period of time.

On 25 September 1873, it was the Théâtre des Variétés which finally re-staged *La Vie parisienne* with the necessary splendour, in a new version definitively fixed at four acts in length. This version was also the subject of a new edition, published by the Gregh publishing house. Offenbach offered the role with the transformations, the role of the Brazilian, to his loyal tenor José Dupuis. But the singer preferred the role of the Baron de Gondremarck which, having now become a tenor

role, was now given a new aria in the finale of Act III for the occasion: "Ohé, l'amiral, ta fête est charmante". And in the end it was Berthelie who took up the role of the Brazilian again.

The same year, the Variétés were the site of a resounding failure for Hortense Schneider: *La Veuve du Malabar*, music by Hervé. This setback pushed the singer to decline the opportunity to succeed Honorine in the role of Métella, despite the additions and modifications which Offenbach had made to the part expressly with her in mind.^{19*} Halévy, however, pursued the matter persistently:

Dear Catherine^{20*},
Bertrand^{21*} intends to put on a brilliant revival of *La Vie parisienne*. You would play Métella, the two rondos ... You would make, I think, a devilishly good show with the letter, and you would earn your money by having lots of success and little by way of exhaustion.
I send you all my love.
Ludovic Halévy.

Then, in another letter, a little later:

[...] As for *La Vie parisienne*, we can chat about it when you return. You will sing Métella's letter and the demoiselles' rondeau as no one else can. We intend to redo the final act entirely with you and with Dupuis in the role of Brasseur. The piece would be played very well; you would have an excellent role, and not a tiresome one at that. Two things to consider: Meilhac is doing well, is rehearsing at the Théâtre Français, is always surrounded by loads of women and sends you his love. As for me, I am doing well, I am not rehearsing at the Théâtre Français, I am not surrounded by loads of women. Which does not, however, keep me from sending my love.
Ludovic Halévy.

In fact, it is Miss Devéria who wound up accepting the role, despite "her notorious inadequacy" owing to illness^{22*}. She was quickly replaced by Miss Van Ghell. Gabrielle, the glover, was taken up again by "the diabolical flute" of its creator, Zulma Bouffar. Finally, the character of Alfred^{23*}, created by Léonce, came to replace the role of Urbain in the final act.

From this day on, it was this new, four-act version of *La Vie parisienne* which has been performed in French-speaking countries, German-speaking countries having retained the Vienna version, and with England preferring to rely on a new (and very questionable) version from the pen of the friend and translator of Offenbach, Sir Henry

Brougham Farnie^{24*}. In France, the work became part of the repertoire of the Opéra-Comique in 1931, 50 years after the composer's death. A memorable revival was put on in 1958 by the Compagnie Renaud-Barrault, in the very same location in which the piece was originally staged, and under comparable conditions, but in the four-act version.

The first revival of the original version in five acts was put on in December 1991 by the Opéra de Lyon, and was based on our preceding work.

COMMENTS

Here, in commented form and presented number by number, is the result of the work which we have carried out with an eye to establishing this new edition of *La Vie parisienne*. We will explain the nature of our research while adding, if necessary, a quick musical analysis.

OVERTURE / CONCERT OVERTURE

The overtures of 1866 and 1873 are identical. Still, it seems worthwhile to add that, in our day, the overture performed most frequently is the concert overture which stems from the Vienna version, published by the Bote & Bock publishers of Berlin. This version was not printed until the second German edition. The first edition still featured the overture as performed in Paris. Thanks to the composer's manuscript, it is known that Offenbach himself increased the orchestration of the small Parisian overture with an eye to having it played in Austria. It is more difficult, on the other hand, to date the creation of this grand concert overture (perhaps the evening of the first performance in the Carl-Theater...), whether this was composed by Offenbach himself or by a colleague with whom the maestro would have entrusted this task. In any event, the piece is a particularly successful one, a piece the celebrity of which endures to this day, 150 years after the fact. It is true that, due to its brevity, the Parisian overture more closely resembles a prelude than a genuine overture. Moreover, since it was designed to lead directly into no. 1, it cannot be played in concert. It is composed of two themes, borrowed from the role of Gabrielle: no. 11, "Je suis veuve d'un colonel", and no. 15, "On va courir, on va sortir".

In measures 4 and 8, the vocal score does not conform harmonically to either the composer's manuscript or to the orchestra material. No doubt this is the result of a careless mistake by Victor Boullard, Offenbach's colleague in charge of the piano reduction.

ACT I – No. 1 – INTRODUCTION

This introductory chorus is typical of Offenbach and is of the form: A-B-A-C-A and coda. The refrain is sung by the entire chorus, while each verse takes the form of a dialogue between the various singers. Another typical characteristic: the manner in which Offenbach deals with the arrangement. Here, the singers' voices have a



Overture
(composer's manuscript)

function more rhythmic than melodic, remaining imperceptibly on the dominant note while the orchestra plays the actual melody.

Since it does not appear in any orchestral material^{25*}, it would appear that the second verse was deleted as early as the first performances, indeed even at the final rehearsal stage. Even though it is very interesting from a musical and dramatic point of view, this passage certainly posed some problems with regard to the positioning of the chorus members of the Théâtre du Palais-Royal. Finally, we point out that the Vienna version is even shorter than the Paris version; in it, the two verses have finally been taken out.

NO. 2 A,B,C – CHORUS AND SCENE [ARIA BY MÉTELLA]

There are two versions of this number in existence. The first, written in 1866, consists of a chorus, followed by short lines among Métella, Gontran, Bobinet and Gardefeu, then by the repetition by the chorus, which ends decrescendo to illustrate, first, Métella's (and the travellers') distance, and then the amazement on the part of Bobinet and Gardefeu.

For the re-run of 1873, Offenbach decided to flesh out the role of Métella for Hortense Schneider. To this end, he wrote a verse and placed it in the middle of this scene. To lead into the verse, he



modified the harmony of the preceding recitative – giving it a much more dramatic connotation in the process. Here we have drawn upon the notebooks in Offenbach's own hand, where the following can be found:

"For insertion in no. 2, Act I page 18". At the end of Métella's aria, Offenbach notes two measures of transition with the initial repetition by the chorus dating to 1866. In the end, he was to find this repetition too long, and he crossed out these two measures. In no. 2 C, we put this repetition forth nonetheless, in light of the musical and dramatic interest which this exit chorus represents, even though it no longer appears in the version of 1873.

No. 3 – VERSES [BY BOBINET]:

The role of Bobinet was performed in 1866 by Gil-Pérès and then revived in 1873 by Eugène Grenier. Although highly likely that the vocal quality of the former was relatively vague, the vocal range of the latter would appear to have enabled him to sing roles written for tenors (Prince Paul in *La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein*) or for basses (Calchas in *La Belle Hélène*). Today, choosing a very precise register for this role appears to be a delicate undertaking. In France, the role goes either to a tenor or to an intermediate "baryton-Martin".

No. 4 A AND B – TRIOLET [BY GARDEFEU]

The character of Gardefeu had already made his appearance in 1864 in the piece by the same

Meilhac and Halévy: *Le Photographe*.^{26*}

Offenbach abandoned this triolet, composed in 1866 for the actor Priston, several performances after the premiere, no doubt having found that it unnecessarily slowed down the flow of action. This would explain why this triolet does not appear in any of the original material. It was not featured in the re-run of Vienna, either and hence did not have the honour of being published by Bote & Bock. As for the version of 1866, the triolet only turns up in loose-leaf form in some of the orchestra material. Given that all of the instrumental markings entered in the vocal score of 1866 correspond to this orchestration, this could be original. But there is nothing which establishes this with complete certainty. On the other hand, in 1873 Offenbach tried to reintroduce this aria in his new score and drew up a new orchestration to accompany the voice of Mr Cooper. This decision does not seem to have been final, since in the new edition of 1873 the publisher Louis Gregh considered it a good idea to include the following note: "This number was omitted for the theatre production".^{27*} This authentic orchestration, published according to the Offenbach's manuscript, appears in our edition as well.

No. 5 – TRIO [THE BARONESS, GARDEFEU, THE BARON]

It is in this trio that the then-topical cultural events of Paris begin to emerge: at issue in the number are two "divas who are all the rage". This juxtaposition gives rise to an undeniable comedy, for in reality there are few things in common between



Triolet
(composer's manuscript)

Adelina Patti, who at the time was singing in Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*, and Thérèse, whose song *Le Sapeur* was the talk of the town ... It ought to be pointed out that Offenbach later permitted Thérèse to participate in his third version of *Geneviève de Brabant* (1875), in the second version of *La Boulangère à des écus* (1876), and in a re-run of *Le Voyage dans la lune* (1878). During the re-run in Vienna, the composer found it useful – no doubt in order to tighten up the dramatic action – to delete some four measures (144 through 147). Finally, measures 18 and 20 reveal slight differences when the vocal score is compared with other sources (as far as the first cornet part is concerned). We have indicated the different possibilities in the form of alternatives. But once more it is extremely probable that this stems from a careless mistake by Victor Boullard, who was responsible for the piano reduction.

NO. 6 – FINALE [AND RONDO BY THE BRAZILIAN]

Following a brief introductory chorus (lengthened in 1873 by a repetition of the first four instrumental measures – obviously for reasons of convenience in staging), the famous Rondo by the Brazilian is nonetheless one of the longest and most perilous arias written by Offenbach. As the vocal score shows us, at first the composer wanted this piece to be sung *Allegro vivo*. But the difficulties encountered by Brasseur, who played the role, forced Offenbach to sprinkle the aria with rests to enable the singer to catch his breath now and then. He then decided to delete the middle part entirely after several performances. After all was said and done, he once again altered the final part once more by deleting ten or so measures. To return this number to its unabridged version, we made use of the material engraved by the Heu publishers (as far as the strings parts are concerned), and the instrumental markings in the vocal score (for the harmony parts). Moreover, where the first part of this piece is concerned, the material copied in 1866 is incomplete, the copyist having overlooked some 30 measures of flute parts. In this regard, we were able to draw upon the Vienna orchestra score and the material published by the Gregh publishers (1873) to fill in these gaps. It should be noted that, when the Vienna version was being developed, Carl Treumann wanted the famous rondo to be sung not by the Brazilian, but rather by a new character called Stangelmeier, a colourful Vienna caricature who spoke in patois. As such, the Brazilian disappeared and was replaced by a Mexican who only appeared in the final act, at the masked ball. Another aspect to be noted, in the fourth scene of the Treumann's original

version, is the presence of a new character, amusing and impertinent in equal measures: Tire-bouchon. However, at the premiere at Carl Theater, these new roles were out of the question, and it was Pompa di Matadores, the Brazilian, who was portrayed brilliantly by the actor and librettist Carl Treumann. It is very probable that this decision was inspired by the censors. For your information, enclosed in our edition is also the original version of Treumann's libretto.

Finally, we note that it seems very important to us to heed the composer's annotation, "Vivace (as quickly as possible)", in the interest of the effectiveness of the closing portion of this finale.

ACT II – INTERMEZZO

The connection between the first two acts is provided by juxtaposing a theme heard in the finale in Act I ("Nous venons, arrivons de tous les pays du monde") with a foreshadowing of the rondeau by Métella in Act II. As for this latter passage, certain differences emerge as between the different sources (measures 38 to 45 – the cello and double-bass parts). We thus publish both versions in the form of possible alternatives for these few measures.

NO. 7 – DUET [GABRIELLE, FRICK]

After several performances, the entire second part of this number was determined to be too long and deleted by Offenbach. Still, this duo was performed in Vienna in its entirety and published by the Bote & Bock publishers. We thus referred to the German material to compensate for the cuts made to the French material published by the Heu publishers.

NO. 8 (A AND B) – VERSES [THE BARON]

Following the example of most of his composer contemporaries, Offenbach introduced a bolero in his satirical comic opera. In *La Vie parisienne*, what makes this composition even spicier is the fact that its "Hispanic" colour is provided by a Swede ... It is highly likely that when José Dupuis revived the role of the Baron, he asked the composer to make several melodic adjustments to accommodate his tenor range, including the transposition of his principal aria. Since this was common practice in the nineteenth century, our edition features an alternative version of these verses, transposed a pitch higher, making the 1873 version easy for a tenor to sing, as was Offenbach's wish.



NO. 9 – RONDEAU [MÉTELLA'S LETTER]

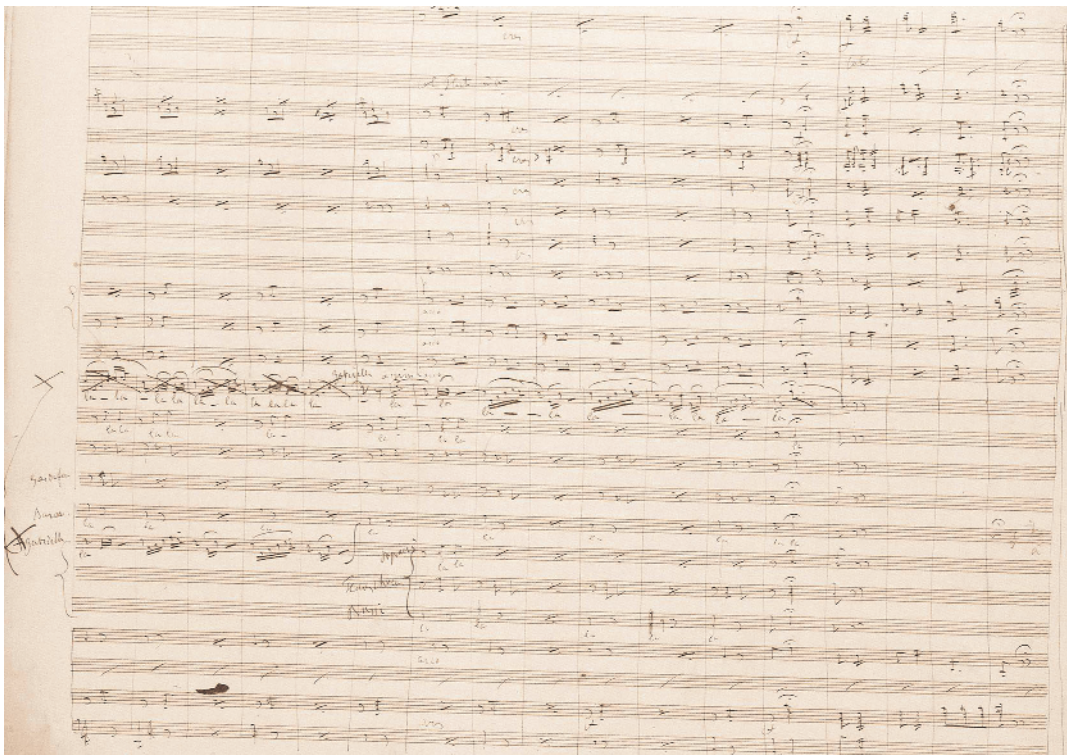
A piece representative of the typical detailed verse. The performer's art consisted in alternating singing with parlando. Rigid rhythm alternates with an utter absence of measure in order to leave an open field for the performer's own rendition. It is precisely this form of detailed verse which contributed to Hortense Schneider's fame. All of the major roles in which she appeared contain at least one detailed verse, notably in *La Belle Hélène* (1864), *Barbe-Bleue* (1866), *La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein* (1867), and *La Périhole* (1868). Many consider this rondeau to be a masterpiece of the French musical mind. When the vocal score of the 1873 version was published, Gregh publishers added some new musical directions (certainly at Offenbach's request). Our edition clearly identifies these as such.

NO. 10 – COUPLETS [BY THE MAJOR]

These verses mark a peak among the numerous twists encountered in *La Vie parisienne*. Not only are they entrusted to the "morphing" character of the Brazilian-Frick-Prosper, but they are also sung by the second incarnation of this character, himself disguised as an "major of the table d'hôte".

NO. 11 – FINALE [AND VERSES BY THE COLONEL'S WIDOW]

This finale contains one of the most famous arias of *La Vie parisienne*: "Je suis veuve d'un colonel". We observe that this piece is itself a parody of a light comedy in fashion at the time: *Michel et Christine*, by Scribe and Dupin. In 1866, the lyrics of the Tyrolienne had been written in German since Gabrielle the glover, along with Frick the boot-maker and, by extension, all of the other guests at the table d'hôte are all Prussians. But Offenbach was to bear the brunt of the Franco-Prussian tensions in the wake of the war of 1870. Even though he had become a naturalised citizen of France in 1860, he was nevertheless German by birth. In reality, any grudges against Offenbach owed far more to the magnitude of his success than to his origins. Thus, for the re-run of 1873, he decided to minimise the Germanic accents to be found in the libretto, and Frick alone retained his Teutonic accent, although in the process he was actually transformed into an Alsatian... Likewise, the lines sung in German ("Auf der Berliner Brück", "Wir wollen essen") were translated into French. For the performance, Offenbach cut several measures from this finale (100 to 104), only to augment upon the same passage several months later in Vienna (100 to 106) – a satirical take on German manners being at the time much too overdone and utterly out of place in this new context.



Finale Act II –
Tyrolienne
(composer's manuscript)

ACT III – INTERMEZZO

The intermezzo seizes upon the motif of the verses by the Baron (no. 8).

NO. 12 – INTRODUCTION

In the first edition, the Intermezzo is included in this number 12

NO. 13 – SEPTET

This number was originally written as a sextet, with Léonie and Louise a single character and even the "concierger's niece" named Bertha. In the 1866 version, whereas the tempo for the introduction is given as "allegro", the entire remainder of the septet is written for "moderato", implying that, in spite of a slower tempo, a certain lightness is to continue throughout this number. This antagonism is resolved in the version of 1873, where Offenbach introduced two tempo changes: to begin with, an "allegro moderato" at the beginning of the waltz (measure 13), and then the direction "lively" ("animez") over the lyrics: "Ah qu'ils sont bien!" (measure 183).

NO. 14 – DUET [PAULINE, THE BARON]

This piece, the orchestration of which evidences great finesse, is at once both a genuine romantic duet and a parody of the romantic duet. This particularity also happens to be one of the staples of the genius of Jacques Offenbach. It is by interpreting this piece without caricatures or jokes that it is actually given its entire comic dimension. Several performances into the Parisian run, Offenbach cut the "lively" part (measures 41 to 44), along with measures 49 to 52. Still, they appear in the Vienna version – which, on the other hand, does not take into account the central part, "Elle est là-bas, cette contrée adorée", nor the repetition of the refrain "O beau nuage qui voyage" (measures 21 to 41). It also merits mention that in the thematic table of separate pieces, the text of this duet is different and starts with the words: "L'amour, c'est le cœur qui s'entrouvre et découvre ...". These are in fact the original lyrics found in the libretto submitted to the Parisian Board of Censors.

NO. 15 – VERSES [BY GABRIELLE]

Let us recall that the overture to *La Vie parisienne* (Paris version) closes on the same motif involved in these verses. It should also be pointed out that these verses are sung by Pauline in the Vienna version, and not by Gabrielle.

NO. 16 – ENSEMBLE ["VOTRE HABIT A CRAQUÉ DANS LE DOS"]

In the composer's manuscript, it is Gabrielle rather than the Baron who intones, "Votre habit a craqué dans le dos". Offenbach quickly deleted the first verse and the repetition of the refrain (measures 12 to 30) for the performances held at the Théâtre du Palais-Royal. The Vienna version, on the other hand, retains only a single verse, skilfully associating the opening of the first verse with the end of the second.

NO. 17 – FINALE OF ACT III

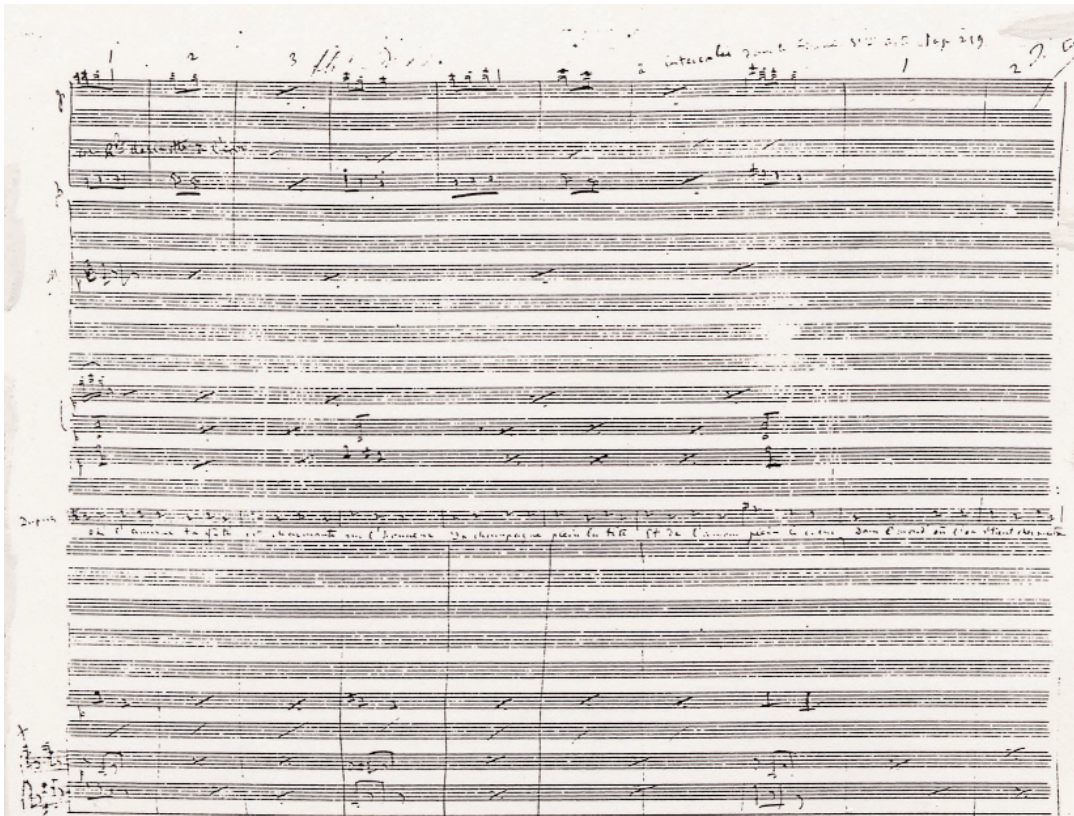
In 1873, Offenbach added 12 measures of introduction, no doubt for reasons relating to musical and stage action – the time involved in going to fetch the supper table.

Broken down into several distinct movements, this finale is a crescendo to drunkenness. Noteworthy in this regard is the dramatic colour of the allegro "Traçons notre plan de campagne". Following the first performances, Offenbach deleted a speech by Prosper in the slow waltz "Il est gris" (measures 249 to 266). Oddly enough, these few measures are still to be found in the orchestra material published by Gregh in 1873, although they no longer appear in the corresponding vocal score.

Two different versions, both dating to 1866, are in existence for the allegro finale, "Tout tourne, tout danse". The first is richer in terms of harmony, but less flowing in terms of its arrangement. Both versions meet up at the closing allegro vivo. It is at the centre of this final movement that Offenbach inserted a small new aria in 1873 for his favourite tenor, José Dupuis: "Ohé, l'amiral, ta fête est charmante", a veritable roaring whirlwind of music. Although these few measures did not have the honour of being engraved in the vocal score of 1873 (owing no doubt to technical layout difficulties), they are to be found in the printed libretto as well as in the orchestral material published by Gregh. But our principal source here remains the composer's manuscript formerly in the hands of Offenbach's heirs.

The act concludes with a grand finale in the form of the famous "Feu partout, lâchez tout".





Finale Act III –
Aria for Dupuis
(composer's manuscript)

ACT IV – INTERMEZZO

This intermezzo of noble dimension is built around one of the themes in the preceding finale, seizing on the motif of Gabrielle's "rondeau du gant".

NO. 18 – RONDEAU [BY THE BARONESS]

Despite its indisputable musical qualities, this aria was removed several performances after the first performance in Paris, thereby reducing the sung part of the role of the Baroness to short speeches in trio no. 5 and the finale of Act I. On the other hand, the aria appears in the Brussels and Vienna versions.

The material copied in 1867 (harmony parts only) features a number supplementary to the suite of the preceding rondeau. These 47 measures, it would appear, are those of a verse which Offenbach could have added in the course of the performances. But as we managed to locate neither the melodic line nor the strings part, it was impossible for us to publish it.

NO. 19 – VERSES [OF REVENGE] NO. 19 BIS – REPETITION BY THE ENSEMBLE

Like in the ensemble in Act IV, this number was removed several performances after the premiere. It was reintroduced in Brussels and then in Vienna, and it was published by Bote & Bock. The orchestra material differs from the vocal score with regard to the melody in the second measure of these verses. The second quaver is not a C sharp but an E. This would appear to be nothing more than a copyist's error.

NO. 20 – FINALE

This number was removed several performances after the Parisian premiere. It no longer appears in the Brussels version, but it was reintroduced in Vienna and published by Bote & Bock.

As developed as the finales for Acts I, II and III are, this one is condensed into a few pages' space. It is a charming piece nonetheless, a piece full of nuance in which the dramatic action is presented in very compact form. The theme "Tout tourne, tout danse" is the thread which runs throughout the piece. Offenbach's musical mischievousness runs the entire length of this number. Several parodist measures were removed quite quickly in Paris (before this number disappeared altogether):

"Allez, heureux époux" (measures 49 to 55) but enjoyed the honour of presentation at the Carl-Theater.

ACT V – INTERMEZZO

This intermezzo consists of two parts and is built up around three themes: the repetition of "Feu partout" as heard in Act III, then the waltz by Métella in Act V (particularly well-developed) and the "Il est gris" as heard in the finale to Act III. Offenbach very quickly deleted the second part, and it was never resurrected for performance abroad. The Viennese version is simply a repeat of the final part of the concert overture.

NO. 21 A AND B – CHORUS AND VERSES [BY URBAIN (1866) OR ALFRED (1873)]

Offenbach was quick to delete the central, "tempo primo" portion, replacing it with spoken text. While it is true that the words "Fourrons-nous dans la boule" are not the most refined, but the composer, who knew how to play on contrasts, wrote a delicate and distinguished musical passage to accompany it.

At the same time, the aria which followed this underwent several adaptations. Offenbach added an introduction, and considerably shortened the final ritornello, thereby modifying the harmony of the accompaniment: I–V–V becoming I–V–I. As some of the material does not take this modification into account, we referred back to the vocal score published in 1873 by Gregh. As is true for the introduction, all of the orchestra materials differ from the vocal score with regard to the first measure. We propose this variation by way of an alternative.

Finally, it should be added that for the re-run of 1873, the character of Urbain was done away with and replaced by Alfred, a role specially re-cast for Léonce, and brought back out of storage from the authors' workshops^{28*}.

NO. 22 (A, B AND C) – RONDEAU [MÉTELLA'S WALTZ]

This piece represents a haven of clear-headedness in the midst of the happy-go-lucky ocean which is the plot of *La Vie parisienne*. The text here is deliberately cruel; the laughter has dissipated. In the recitative, Offenbach distils a dramatic, indeed at times a mournful piece of music. The clock strikes midnight, and the harmony responds to this with its fatal accents of a clock's tolling. The composer wrote three different versions for the

waltz which ensues (two of them orchestrated differently).

The first orchestration (1866) is not customary for Offenbach's work. To accentuate the dramatic dimension of this passage, the composer doubled the vocal line by adding the cellos, clarinets and bassoon. The effect is assured.

For the re-run of 1873, he wrote a new orchestration destined for Miss Devéria, and found himself obliged to re-write her rondo a pitch lower, i. e. in F major. This new orchestration lends this rondeau a new character, making it lighter despite the lower range. The work of doubling the vocal line is now entrusted to the violins. Beyond the total replacement of the instrumentation, Offenbach modified the harmony of the accompaniment. Despite the composer's efforts, the results were not very conclusive, with Miss Devéria unable to measure up to the actress sought for the role, Hortense Schneider. In the end, the authors decided to remove this waltz, which nonetheless remains one of the best elements of *La Vie parisienne*.

This number, however, appears as part of the orchestra material published in 1873 by the Gregh publishing house, but in its original key of G major. It is therefore possible that it was reintroduced for the new interpreter, Miss Van Ghell. Here, we wanted to print the three different versions. We add that in Vienna, Offenbach cut out all of the recitative (measures 8 to 27) and retained only the orchestral introduction.

NO. 22 BIS – MELODRAMA [ENTRANCE OF THE MASKS]

This number, which quotes literally the entrance of the masks in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, was quickly deleted by Offenbach (at least for the Parisian stage). We recall that Offenbach was a devotee of a veritable Mozart cult and that he would later quote a passage from *Don Giovanni* in Act I of his *Contes d'Hoffmann*.

His bedside reading was a biography of the master of Salzburg, and in his Théâtre des Bouffes-Parisiens he even staged a French version of *Der Schauspiel-direktor*, entitled *L'Impresario*, adapted by Léon Batu, Ludovic Halévy, and Offenbach himself. His direct filiation with Mozart, his productivity (more than 600 works by Offenbach have already been identified), the lightness of his writing, all earned him the nickname bestowed upon him by Rossini: the "little Mozart on the Champs-Élysées".

NO. 23 – VERSES AND ENSEMBLE

This number was deleted at the same time as Act IV, several productions subsequent to the Parisian premiere. On the other hand, it was performed at the Galeries Saint-Hubert in Brussels, as well as in Vienna's Carl-Theater, and it was published, with some modifications, by the Bote & Bock publishing house in Berlin.

NO. 24 – CHORUS AND DUET [GABRIELLE, THE BRAZILIAN]

The 14 measures which comprise the transition between the chorus and the Gabrielle – Brazilian duet (measures 37 to 50) were entirely re-written by Offenbach shortly after the Parisian production. Here it is very important to observe the tempo directions which the composer wrote down on his score. The introductory chorus is a true allegro, a festive tempo, and especially the duet should be sung as indicated: "very quickly (*très vite*)". This amplifies the vivacious crescendo effect.

NO. 24 BIS – MELODRAMA

No. 24 bis is a repetition of the theme of the duet which precedes it and is played *pianissimo* by the string section.

NO. 25 – FINALE

There are two completely different existing versions of the little melodrama preceding the

allegro vivo of this finale. Both date back to 1866. The first version, which appears in the vocal score of 1866, was taken up again in the performances in Vienna. We also point out several discrepancies between the versions of Paris and of Vienna as concerns the very first pages of this finale (more developed in Vienna and accompanied by choruses).

The second version was engraved in the orchestra material published by the Heu publishing house (1866), and then in the vocal score published by the Gregh publishers in 1873.

SUPPLEMENT: TRIO [BOBINET – PROSPER – URBAIN]

This is an ensemble piece which Offenbach had composed for the original version of Act IV. We have only a hand-written draft vocal score of this piece. Given the definite comic dramatic and musical quality of this number, we wished to present a version of it orchestrated by ourselves, written in the greatest respect for Offenbach's own style. This page can easily be integrated into the final direction of the piece, for presentation between Act IV and Act V.

N.B. There exists, in the cello part of the material engraved in 1866 by the Heu publishing house alone, a previously unpublished number, situated in Act III and indicated "tempo di mazurka". Unfortunately, this number does not correspond to the aria sung by Lassouche, in the absence of the vocal score as well as the orchestral materials.



Trio
(composer's manuscript)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For their assistance, I would particularly like to thank Mr Pierre Comte Offenbach, the "Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln", Mr Antonio de Almeida, Mr Laurent Fraison, Mr Christoph Dohr, Mr Dominique Ghesquière, and Mr Pascal Bied-Charreton.

This critical edition is dedicated to my grandfather, Mr Lucien Versini (1896–1980), who led me, at a very early age, to discover my passion for Offenbach and his work.

Jean-Christophe KECK

Le Freyssinet, 27 August 1991.
(Revised in Montpellier, 30 July 2002.)
(Translation: Wort für Wort)

NOTES

1* This "integral version" – although not meant to be performed on stage – may be of a certain musicological (and discographical) interest, allowing the opportunity to experience the most complete version of this opéra-bouffe as a compilation of the different versions.

2* Published by Boosey & Co. in 1883.

3* In our edition we propose an orchestration which we ourselves have composed.

4* These eight pieces which remain in draft form are the subject of a brief description below.

5* See the chapter entitled: "Comments".

6* We know that this was his troupe size thanks to the article by Mr Lovy (in *Le Ménestrel*, 4 November 1855). The composer's manuscript for *Une nuit blanche*, which premiered on 5 July 1855 for the inauguration of the Théâtre des Bouffes-Parisiens, also provides information about the composition of the orchestra: it entails a flute, an oboe, a clarinet, a bassoon, two horns, a cornet, a trombone, a part for timpani and percussion and a small, seven-member string ensemble.

7* These works are as follows: *Entrez, Messieurs, Mesdames; Une nuit blanche; Les Deux Aveugles; Arlequin barbier; Le Rêve d'une nuit d'été; Pierrot clown; Le Violoneux; Polichinelle dans le monde; Madame Papillon; Paimpol et Périnette*. If one consults the composer's manuscripts for each of these, it turns out that for two of these works, which were particularly well-received, Offenbach himself quickly augmented the orchestration. These two works were *Deux Aveugles* and *Le Violoneux*.

8* We know this was the orchestra size thanks to the article by Mr Lovy (in *Le Ménestrel*, 4 November 1855), a figure confirmed by an usher's inventory carried out around 1860, clearly listing the number of music stands in the orchestra pit in Offenbach's theatre.

9* At times, both flautists are called upon to play piccolo parts.

10* Offenbach sometimes used only two horns in his large-scale orchestrations (more particularly at the Théâtre de la Gaîté). For his ballet *Le Papillon*, Offenbach used the four bassoons, the two cornets and the two trumpets being at his

disposal in the orchestra of the Parisian Opéra Impérial.

11* Arnold Mortier, *Les Soirées de l'orchestre* (1876), (Paris: E. Dentu, 1877), p. 310.

12* Except where Offenbach expressly calls for this.

13* See the chapter entitled: "Comments".

14* Although he had practically finished the vocal score, Offenbach was no longer present to put the essential final changes to the balance of musical and dramatic elements in his work.

15* See also the libretto submitted to the Parisian Board of Censors (in the appendix) featuring the text of these numbers.

16* The normal size of the Palais-Royal orchestra appears to have been 16 musicians. No fewer than 24 musicians were thought necessary to play *La Vie parisienne*.

17* Thanks to both the libretto submitted to the Parisian Board of Censors and the composer's manuscript, it is known that Meilhac, Halévy and Offenbach had to resign themselves to completely re-writing Act IV of their piece and to making significant changes to Act V. By that time, however, the entire musical score had already been written. According to a note found in the Ludovic Halévy notebooks, this decision was made on 12 October, in the midst of rehearsals. The latter wrote: "Our rehearsals for the Palais-Royal are causing us considerable worry. The first three acts are amusing, but the final two do not offer what we expected of it. They need to be redone and we shall redo them."

18* The performances could have continued long after this if not for the express request by Eugène Labiche, who found himself driven out of his favourite theatre. It was at this juncture (16 July 1867, to be precise) that Offenbach wrote from Ems to Halévy: "I received a letter from Zulma announcing that *La Vie* would be staged again throughout this week. I can't understand this at all any more. These fine directors of the Palais-Royal are stupid. Either they should bring the show firmly to a halt, or else let it continue firmly until the end of August or September".

19* However, that would have been the only opportunity to witness a reunion of the names of Offenbach's two favourite female performers on the same bill: Bouffar and Schneider.

20* The diva's second given name.



21* The director of the Variétés.

22* Offenbach even dreamed of writing her a new aria.

23* Actually, this role was already in existence in 1866, in the very first version of the libretto (cf. the libretto submitted to the Parisian Board of Censors).

24* The score and libretto were published in 1883 by the Boosey & Co. publishers under the title *La Vie*. Already in 1872, the Holborn Theatre had presented a particularly loosely adapted version of the work by: *La Vie parisienne in London*, based on a libretto by F. C. Burnand.

25* On the other hand, the instrumentation is set forth rather clearly in the vocal score.

26* See the chapter entitled: "History of the Work".

27* By way of anecdote, we add that one of the most beautiful pages of the score met with a similar fate: the rondeau by Métella in the final act, which was presented with the annotation: "This number may be omitted for the theatre production" (!).

28* Actually, the role of Alfred appears in the very first version of the libretto of *La Vie parisienne*, as is shown by the copyist's libretto as submitted to the Parisian Board of Censors in 1866.