

NEGOTIATING THE TROUSER ROLE IN JULES MASSENET'S AND HENRI CAIN'S  
*CENDRILLON* (1899)

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A thesis submitted to the faculty at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of Music (Musicology) in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

Chapel Hill  
2015

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## **ABSTRACT**

Catherine A. Crone: Negotiating the Trouser Role in Jules Massenet's and Henri Cain's  
*Cendrillon* (1899)  
(Under the direction of Annegret Fauser)

The 1899 French opera *Cendrillon*, with libretto by Henri Cain and score by Jules Massenet, revolves around the relationship of Cendrillon (Cinderella) and Prince Charmant (Prince Charming), who are both played and sung by women. Since Prince Charmant is a trouser role, the audience sees a character in male costume but hears a female voice. Though Cendrillon and the prince end the opera united, the many obstacles and imbalances of their relationship throughout the plot work to undo the finality of this ending. I argue that the strange nature of this relationship results from attempts on the part of its creators to balance the tension between, on one hand, the requirement of the plot for a romantic ending between Cendrillon and Prince Charmant, and, on the other, the unusual and gender-subversive presence of the trouser role in the central romantic relationship, which allows two sopranos to live “happily ever after.”

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to thank my advisor, Annegret Fauser, for her encouragement, patience, mentoring, and guidance throughout this project. I am also grateful for intriguing comments and insightful suggestions from Mark Evan Bonds and Lauren McGuire Jennings. My thanks go to Lydia Hamessley and Julie-Françoise Tolliver for introducing me to the concept of “trouser role” in the first place; further thanks must go to Lydia Hamessley, Peter Rabinowitz, and the students of Hamilton College’s Spring 2015 Opera course for allowing me to develop my ideas in their seminar. My parents have never ceased to nurture my interest in music, stray as it might from their scientific paths, and I deeply appreciate their dedication. Finally, I would like to thank Taylor Allison, without whose unwavering love and support I could never have completed this endeavor.

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## INTRODUCTION: THE TROUSER ROLE

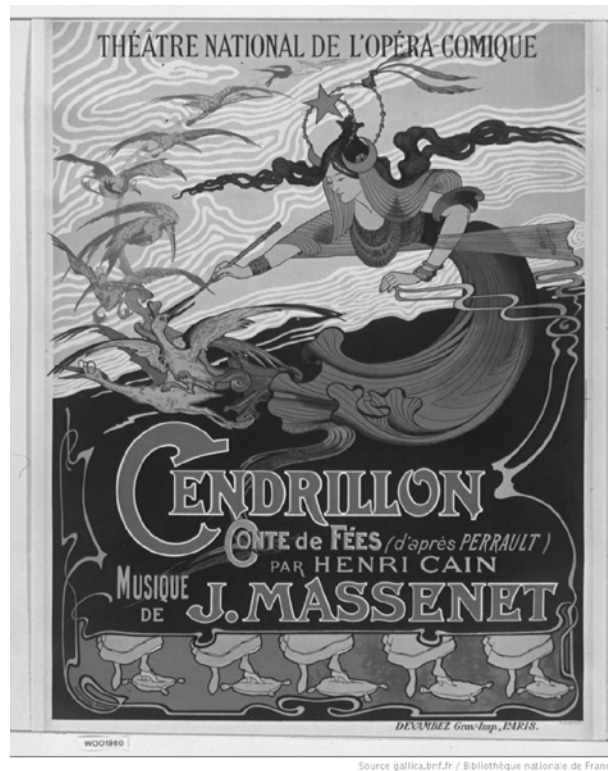
### Happily Ever After?

The *fin-de-siècle* opera *Cendrillon*, based on Charles Perrault's famous fairy tale of the same name, revolves around an unusual love story, not least because the two romantic leads are both played—and sung—by women. When Jules Massenet set Henri Cain's libretto in 1895, he specified that both Cendrillon and Prince Charmant would be female mezzo-sopranos; thus, when the work premiered at the Opéra-Comique on May 24, 1899, Parisians saw a character in breeches court a character in a dress (Figure 1, right), but heard two women singing together. Despite the fact that the plot revolves around this courtship and ends when the prince and Cendrillon unite for the final time, the two characters spend little time together and there are multiple prominent storylines. This is reflected by Figures 1 and 2, which were both created around the time of the opera's premiere. In Figure 1, the image of Julie Guiraudon as Cendrillon and Lucien Fugère as her father, Pandolfe, is much larger than that of Guiraudon with her prince, Mademoiselle Emelen. In Figure 2, neither Cendrillon nor the prince appear on the advertising poster, only La Fée, as well as the feet of those women who unsuccessfully tried on Cendrillon's famous slipper. These artworks both shift emphasis away from the gender-bent relationship between Cendrillon and the prince to other elements of the opera.

The choice of a trouser role for the prince was somewhat unusual for the time. Though trouser roles have more of a presence in operatic genres than the literature suggests, in the



**Figure 1** Woodcut of characters from *Cendrillon*, carved by Parys (1899), left, with corner detail, right. Courtesy of Gallica, accessible at <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb41318573v>.



**Figure 2** Theatrical poster for *Cendrillon*, illustrated by Emile Bertrand (1900). Courtesy of Gallica, accessible at <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb398353208>.

nineteenth century they tended to be secondary characters rather than romantic heroes. The reasons for creating a soprano Prince Charmant are not clear. Massenet may, for example, have intended to emphasize the prince's young age, as many trouser roles evoke the youth and immaturity of teenage boys.<sup>1</sup> He may have wished to cultivate the sense of fantasy—that is, distance from reality—in a work that is not labeled an opera but a fairy tale (*Conte de fées en 4 actes et 6 tableaux*). Or he may have been making a reference to the traditions of the eighteenth century; trouser roles were most frequently employed in the second half of the eighteenth century, and saw a decline in usage throughout the nineteenth century. Massenet alludes to the music of the eighteenth century throughout the work, and the presence of a trouser role may be yet another of these elements.

Whatever the explanations for this choice, the opera evinces a tension stemming from the pairing of the two sopranos. Indeed, though this relationship ends with a seemingly successful union, the nature of the many obstacles they face as well as the imbalance between the characters both detract from this ending. For example, when the two characters first meet, the prince knows he has found the woman he loves, although he does not know her name; Cendrillon is aware of the prince's identity but takes quite some time to admit that she returns his affections, making for an unbalanced love duet. Later, the very existence of a relationship between the two characters is threatened when Pandolfe, out of misguided fatherly concern, convinces Cendrillon that her entire relationship with the prince was just a dream. This example is particularly interesting

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<sup>1</sup> Examples include Jean in Massenet's *Le Portrait de Manon* and Cherubino/Chérubin in Mozart's *Le Nozze Figaro* and Massenet's *Chérubin*. This is a commonly noted feature of theatrical cross-dressing. Heather Hadlock writes of the page as an archetype of trouser roles in "The Career of Cherubino, or the Trouser Role Grows Up," in *Siren Songs: Representations of Gender and Sexuality in Opera*, ed. Mary Ann Smart (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 67–92. Margaret Reynolds notes that such casting is "the result of a straightforward reading of woman as 'undeveloped man,' which means that it is perfectly proper for a woman to play a boy's part in the interests of verisimilitude," in idem, "Ruggiero's Deceptions, Cherubino's Distractions," in *En travesti: Women, Gender Subversion, Opera*, ed. Corrine E. Blackmer and Patricia Juliana Smith (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 142.

since, while Pandolfe is a baritone role performed by a male actor, Prince Charmant is a trouser role written for a female soprano. Hence, the audience hears and sees a man denying the existence of what is in some sense a same-sex relationship between the two soprano leads.

In this thesis, I will situate the operatic trouser role within the context of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century France, then analyze the interactions between the title character and the prince in Henri Cain's libretto and Jules Massenet's score for *Cendrillon*. In the first chapter, I examine how the two characters do—or do not—connect at key points in their relationship. The second chapter analyzes sight and sound, and the ways that the creators manipulate these senses in presenting both characters. The third and final chapter surveys the frequent use of magic, dreams, and other such reminders to the audience that what they are seeing, and hearing, is fiction and artifice. I argue that the strange nature of the relationship between Cendrillon and the prince results from attempts on the part of its creators to balance the tension between, on one hand, the requirement of the plot for an ending that unites Cendrillon and Prince Charmant, and, on the other, the dissonance presented by the character of the prince. As a trouser role in the central romantic relationship, the prince is an unusual and gender-subversive presence; he is treated as male by his fellow characters on stage but has a woman's voice, and he courts a fellow soprano throughout the opera, so that two women end the opera as a couple.

### **Theorizing the Trouser Role**

"Gender *is* performance," Laurence Senelick states in the introduction to the anthology on that topic, declaring elsewhere, "The performing arts provide the most direct, most graphic, often most compelling representations of gender."<sup>2</sup> Theater's representation of gender becomes

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<sup>2</sup> Laurence Senelick, "Introduction," in *Gender in Performance: The Presentation of Difference in the Performing Arts*, ed. idem (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1992), ix, emphasis in original; id., *The Changing Room: Sex, Drag, and Theatre* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 6.

interestingly complicated in the case of cross-dressing. This is a common theatrical technique, and has been for centuries: During the time of William Shakespeare, for example, women were not allowed on stage and so boys played all female roles—a situation which Shakespeare complicated by writing women characters such as Viola and Rosalind who donned men’s clothes within the course of the plot. These days women usually (but certainly not always) play Shakespeare’s female characters, but the act of cross-dressing is still written into their part.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, in many amateur theater productions these days, if female participants outnumber the written roles for female characters, or if there are not sufficient male participants to fill all the roles for male characters, women will cross-dress and present themselves as male characters, to be interacted with as men by their fellow characters but recognized as female by the audience.<sup>4</sup>

Throughout this thesis I will make use of gender binaries, despite Marjorie Garber’s observation that “one of the most important aspects of cross-dressing is the way in which it offers a challenge to easy notions of binarity, putting into question the categories of ‘female’ and ‘male,’ whether they are considered essential or constructed, biological or cultural.”<sup>5</sup> Here I follow Mimi McGurl, who in her 2005 dissertation “She’s Her Own Man: Women in Cross-Gender Theatrical Performance” acknowledges:

What we study when we acknowledge a gender-crossing in the theater is really the diverse set of elements that have evolved from a very powerful short-hand for reproductive roles. This is why the popular terms man and woman can have any meaning at all.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The Shakespeare’s Globe all-male productions of *Twelfth Night* and *Richard III* came to Broadway from the West End in 2013, garnering much critical acclaim and earning a total of eight Tony Award nominations (with two wins) in 2014.

<sup>4</sup> This occurred, for example, in UNC’s Kenan Theatre Company production of Kurt Weill and Paul Green’s *Johnny Johnson*, directed by Serena Ebhardt, attended by the author November 20, 2014.

<sup>5</sup> Marjorie Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 10.

<sup>6</sup> Mimi McGurl, “She’s Her Own Man: Women in Cross-Gender Theatrical Performance” (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 2005), 27.

Scholarly analyses of theatrical cross-dressing take a variety of approaches, from performer intention to audience reception.<sup>7</sup> In her chapter “The Career of Cherubino, or the Trouser Role Grows Up,” from *Siren Songs: Representations of Gender and Sexuality in Opera*, Heather Hadlock focuses not so much on performers or audiences as on that which is embedded in texts and scores. She examines *Le Nozze di Figaro* (1786), with music by Wolfgang Mozart and libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte, and *Chérubin* (1905), with music by Jules Massenet and libretto by Francis de Croisset and Henri Cain.<sup>8</sup> Both of these operas employ the cross-dressing technique of the trouser role, an operatic role in which a female singer, usually with a soprano or mezzo-soprano voice type, plays a male character.

The trouser role initially developed as a replacement of the castrato role, which was prominent in opera from the genre’s inception in seventeenth-century Italy. Freya Jarman explores this phenomenon in “Pitch Fever: The Castrato, the Tenor and the Question of Masculinity in Nineteenth-Century Opera,” a contribution to the anthology *Masculinity in Opera: Gender, History, and New Musicology*. She summarizes the history of these roles thus:

Until the end of the eighteenth century, the castrato was the more frequent voice of a plot’s heroic roles, at least on Italian stages, and as he declined came the rise of the heroic *travesti* part in the first decades of the nineteenth century. The hero thus moved first from a castrated man to a woman in trousers—not along lines of (genital) biology or chromosomal identity (from castrato directly to tenor) but along lines of pitch (from male to female soprano). For a moment, the equation was between high (absolutely rather than relatively so) pitch and heroic nature, and only later came the more literal physical representation of male heroes by unequivocally male bodies.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> For respective examples, see J. S. Bratton, “Irrational Dress,” in *The New Woman and Her Sisters: Feminism and Theatre, 1850–1914*, ed. Vivien Gardner and Susan Rutherford (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1992), 78–79, and Martha Vicinus, “Turn-of-the-Century Male Impersonation: Rewriting the Romance Plot,” in *Sexualities in Victorian Britain*, ed. Andrew H. Miller and James Eli Adams (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 187.

<sup>8</sup> Hadlock, “Career of Cherubino.”

<sup>9</sup> Freya Jarman, “Pitch Fever: The Castrato, the Tenor and the Question of Masculinity in Nineteenth-Century Opera,” *Masculinity in Opera: Gender, History, and New Musicology*, ed. Philip Purvis (New York: Routledge, 2013), 51.



Once tenor roles became prominent in opera, a tenor and a soprano almost always constituted the central romantic couple. Furthermore, the trouser role now represented a deliberate choice on the part of the composer to create a discrepancy between male character and female voice.<sup>10</sup> Carolyn Abbate observes that “the one thing a transvestite cannot disguise is his or her *voice*, whose pitch and timbre will contradict his or her visual identity.”<sup>11</sup> Women performing in trouser roles by their nature cannot pass for men singing male roles. And yet this conceit is common in many operas, both in and out of the repertory past and present.

Despite the prevalence of trouser roles in opera, they are often positioned just out of the limelight. As Samuel Abel notes, “though drag roles occur frequently in opera, they tend to be secondary and marginal parts, whereas the central roles (at least from the nineteenth century on) remain predominantly gender-normalized.”<sup>12</sup> Margaret Reynolds, in her history of castrato and trouser roles, argues that as the nineteenth century progressed, the trouser role was suppressed and gender anxiety increased: “During the intense European upheaval of this time, one of the things that increasingly worried contemporary arbiters of morals was that men were no longer men and women were no longer women.”<sup>13</sup>

Late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century France was particularly anxious over gender, especially masculinity. Annegret Fauser argues that:

“Masculine” and “feminine” were loaded terms when used in political and aesthetic discourse of the late nineteenth century, but they were particularly meaningful in France

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<sup>10</sup> For an account of an unsuccessful attempt to remove gender from a singing role, in another time and place, see Jennifer Shaw, “Androgyny and the Eternal Feminine in Schoenberg’s Oratorio *Die Jakobsleiter*,” in *Political and Religious Ideas in the Works of Arnold Schoenberg*, ed. Charlotte M. Cross and Russell A. Berman (New York: Garland, 2000), 61–84.

<sup>11</sup> Carolyn Abbate, “Opera; or, the Envoicing of Women,” in *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship*, ed. Ruth A. Solie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 256. Emphasis in original.

<sup>12</sup> Samuel Abel, *Opera in the Flesh: Sexuality in Operatic Performance* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1996), 150.

<sup>13</sup> Reynolds, “Ruggerio’s Deceptions, Cherubino’s Distractions,” 139.

after the 1871 defeat [in the Franco-Prussian War], for the reciprocal connection made between women's emancipation and the loss of the war called into question the virility both of France and of Frenchmen.<sup>14</sup>

William Gibbons further notes that “demoralized and demasculinized men...turned to the theater for strong male role models.”<sup>15</sup>

*Cendrillon*'s strongest male character, however, is not the romantic lead, Prince Charmant, but Cendrillon's father, Pandolfe, who is himself emasculated at the beginning of the opera by his strong-willed wife and must declare to himself: “One day, I will finally end up as master in my house” (Un jour, enfin, chez moi, je finirai par être maître!).<sup>16</sup> Compared to Prince Charmant, though, Pandolfe is quite masculine indeed, most notably in his possession of a male voice. In contrast to Abel's observation about the use of trouser roles in nineteenth-century opera, *Cendrillon* does have a central character constituted by a trouser role; furthermore, the romantic lead Prince Charmant is not a disguise role, where a female character disguises herself as male for some portion of the opera, but someone represented as male within the story. His fellow characters see him as male, yet the audience hears a woman singing. And, of course, the opera ends upon the prince's successful reunion with Cendrillon. Thus, in a sense, two women are about to live happily ever after. Or are they? This thesis demonstrates that obstacles to this relationship arise throughout the opera, in the sung text, stage directions, and score.

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<sup>14</sup> Annegret Fauser, “Gendering the Nations: The Ideologies of French Discourse on Music (1870–1914),” in *Musical Constructions of Nationalism: Essays on the History and Ideology of European Musical Culture, 1800–1945*, ed. by Michael Murphy and Harry White (Cork: Cork University Press, 2001), 74.

<sup>15</sup> William Gibbons, *Building the Operatic Museum: Eighteenth-Century Opera in Fin-de-Siècle Paris* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2013), 76.

<sup>16</sup> All translations of the *Cendrillon* libretto mine. Jules Massenet and Henri Cain, *Cendrillon: Conte de fées en 4 actes et 6 tableaux*, vocal score (Paris: Heugel & Cie, 1899), 23. Neither measure nor rehearsal numbers are employed in the score. Thus, the vocal score will hereafter be cited as VS, [page number].

## Analyzing Gender in *Cendrillon*

In any opera, but especially this one, the trouser role draws attention more broadly to the role of performance in gender and the representation thereof. The female-bodied, female-voiced performer is considered male only within the story, and many creators play with this gender tension, in a similar manner to the Shakespearean situations discussed above. In both *Le Mariage de Figaro* and *Le Nozze di Figaro*, for example, the woman playing the teenage boy Chérubin/Cherubino dons women's clothing, and other characters comment on how pretty "she" looks. In *Cendrillon*, Prince Charmant is constantly urged by his father the king to perform masculinity (and fulfill the function of his status as a prince) by choosing an aristocratic woman to marry. Indeed, the teaching of gender is a pervasive theme in this opera, perhaps best exemplified by the multiple scenes in which the title character's stepmother, Madame de la Haltière, teaches her daughters Noémie and Dorothée to perform femininity in dress and countenance so they may better attract the prince (I.iii, I.iv, III.1.i).<sup>17</sup>

The gender subversion brought about by the presence of a trouser role also creates a sense of danger regarding the character as a sexual being. Hadlock discusses such gender anxiety in an analysis of *Le Nozze di Figaro* and its source play, Beaumarchais's *Le Mariage de Figaro*:

We may accept the travesty casting on the terms of a heterosexist logic that defines the woman in trousers as a creature who can at most achieve a sexless imitation of masculinity, a creature whose body doesn't matter, and whose discovery (and near discovery) in a series of highly compromising positions is pleasantly scandalous rather than fatal. The Count's reactions to him, according to this same logic, are comic precisely to the degree that they are overreactions: the "restless and vague desire" that is the essence of Chérubin's character cannot threaten the prevailing sex and gender order. Both the play and the opera, however, suggest that we should not be too credulous.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> As acts three and four of this opera are presented in two tableaux each, when referencing them I have modified the usual shorthand of uppercase Roman numerals for act and lowercase Roman for scene to interpose an Arabic numeral indicating the tableau number.

<sup>18</sup> Hadlock, "Career of Cherubino," 70.

In *Cendrillon*, the prince's desire is restless—and relentless—but not vague. Even before he meets Cendrillon, his opening aria describes his longing for the woman he loves, one whom he has so far only imagined. In some sense, his fixation on Cendrillon rather than a variety of women makes him less of a threat to the “prevailing sex and gender order,” as Hadlock puts it, yet the prince is actually a greater threat as he is a gender-subversive character seeking a permanent romantic partnership, i.e., seeking to integrate into the prevailing order.

The following three chapters will discuss the relationship of Prince Charmant and Cendrillon in this opera. Chapter One draws on scholarly discussion of operatic love duets, particularly Richard Stiefel's article on Mozart's seduction duets, to consider the ways in which the structure of *Cendrillon*'s love duets do and do not create a typical kind of romantic relationship.<sup>19</sup> Here, I analyze the ways in which Cendrillon and the prince interact dramatically and musically in their three duets: when they meet for the first time at the ball (II.iv), when they reunite in the forest (III.2.ii), and when they reunite once more at the palace, bringing the story to a close (IV.2).<sup>20</sup> I argue that there are distractions and obstacles occurring in each of these, so that what seem like typical love duets actually fail to complete their function in uniting the couple.

Chapter Two looks at the relationship of the lovers through the lenses of sight and sound, as Heather Hadlock does for Chérubin and L'Ensoleillad in her analysis of *Chérubin*.<sup>21</sup> Hadlock demonstrates that the trouser role of Chérubin is mediated by the absence of either his voice or his body when the other can be heard or seen by the audience; that is, either sound or sight is

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<sup>19</sup> Richard Stiefel, “Mozart's Seductions,” *Current Musicology* 36 (1983): 151–66.

<sup>20</sup> There are no numbered scenes in the second tableau of act four.

<sup>21</sup> Hadlock, “Career of Cherubino.”

suppressed by Massenet and his librettist, Henri Cain. I find that Massenet and Cain take similar approaches to Prince Charmant. Here I will discuss three instances where either sight or sound is suppressed: the prince's first appearance on stage, where he remains silent for an unusual amount of time (II.i, II.ii); his first meeting with Cendrillon, where they see each other and are instantly enraptured but, again, remain silent for quite some time (II.iii, II.iv); and their reunion in the forest, where much of their duet is performed under the influence of a spell rendering them unable to see each other (III.2.ii).

Chapter Three looks at the role of magic and dreams in emphasizing the unreality of the actions onstage. Notably, one or both of these elements are present every time the prince and Cendrillon are together. My argument draws on Edward Lippman's ideas about dreams and reality as found in Wagner's operas.<sup>22</sup> Surveying the opera, I discuss the many scenes in which sleep or a supernatural presence calls the reality of plot events into question and thus remind the audience that what they are seeing is itself entirely fictional. This is yet another way that the plot plays down the relationship of Cendrillon and the prince.

Finally, my conclusion points to the ways in which these ideas apply to other operas, especially those written in *fin-de-siècle* France or those with prominent trouser roles. This thesis contributes to recent scholarly calls to consider the trouser role more attentively: not as a sonic substitute for castrati, a practical substitute for a male performer, or an anomaly and marginality, but as a meaningful presence which influences the entire dramatic and musical world of an opera.

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<sup>22</sup> Edward A. Lippman, "Wagner's Conception of the Dream," *The Journal of Musicology* 8, no. 1 (Winter 1990): 54–81.

## CHAPTER ONE: LOVE DUETS

### Introduction

Cendrillon and Prince Charmant sing three duets in this opera: one upon their first meeting, which takes place at the royal ball (II.iv); one when they each come to an enchanted forest and, with the help of La Fée, find each other again (III.2.ii), and the last, very briefly, when they reunite once more, concluding the opera's narrative (IV.2). In his article on Mozart's seduction duets, Richard Stiefel observes:

In a duet...musical relationships are apportioned among the characters involved and thus may serve to underline the dramatic relationship between the characters. This is one of opera's greatest capabilities; the techniques by which it can be accomplished are among opera's greatest resources.<sup>23</sup>

Examining the three duets sung by Prince Charmant and Cendrillon, which correspond to the only three times they are on the stage together, I analyze how their dramatic relationship is undermined by circumstances of plot and personality, and how not even in love duets do these characters have a chance to unite convincingly.

Stiefel's work demonstrates how duets may persuade: "They begin with some degree of opposition between the characters," then "one character takes the initiative and, by persuasion, encouragement, threat, or insistence, eventually brings the other character into agreement."<sup>24</sup> Though he uses as his examples three duets in which the persuasion is of a seductive nature, and

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<sup>23</sup> Stiefel, "Mozart's Seductions," 151.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 162.

focuses on Mozart, his proposed sections of opposition, transition, and agreement or union apply to any number of dramatic situations and periods of composition. In *Cendrillon*, the two longer duets, each constituting significant portions of their respective acts and tableaux, both fit into this persuasion framework; I take this as my departure for analysis.

### **Act Two, Scene Four: In Which Cendrillon Appears and Disappears**

Cendrillon and Prince Charmant do not meet until almost halfway through the opera, toward the end of the second act. The prince has spent the entire ball avoiding the aristocratic women trying to catch his eye. As the stage directions indicate, he has been waiting for Cendrillon all along, and is transfixed as soon as she appears.<sup>25</sup> While the ensemble of those gathered at the ball offers thirty-seven measures' worth of commentary on the situation, the prince and Cendrillon remain silent until everyone has dispersed.<sup>26</sup> Even then, the orchestra plays for nine measures, modulating from E-flat major to E major, before the prince begins his melody, which starts the first of the opera's three love duets.

This duet can be read, after Stiefel, as a kind of persuasion duet, more specifically seductive persuasion. It corresponds to Stiefel's broad structure of opposition-change-union, but is followed by an undoing during which the bell chimes remind Cendrillon she must flee, and then concluded by the prince's disbelieving coda as he finds himself alone again. Thus the prince fails to seduce Cendrillon into staying with him, let alone consummating their relationship. Those four sections occur as summarized in Table 1.1:

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<sup>25</sup> "The prince, who seems to be waiting for [Cendrillon], contemplates her ecstatically from afar" (Le Prince qui semblait l'attendre la contemple de loin avec extase). VS, 189.

<sup>26</sup> A stage direction indicates that this is matchmaking work on the part of the king: "The King, very pleased, discreetly causes everyone to leave" (Le Roi, ravi, fait retirer tout le monde avec discrétion). VS, 198.

**Table 1.1** Structure of the Act Two Love Duet

Section	Text	Number of Measures <sup>27</sup>
Opposition	“Toi qui m’es apparue” to “O céleste Inconnue”	28
Change	“Vous l’avez dit” to “Lors, je serais ton prince infortuné”	69
Union	“Sa voix est comme une harmonie”/“Reste!” to “Mon esprit restera enbaumé”/“pour toujours enbaumé”	18
Separation	“Je t’aime et t’aimerai toujours” to “Ah! Minuit!”	8
Coda	“Suis-je fou?” to “O céleste Inconnue!”	16

Throughout the duet, the prince is the cajoler—asking Cendrillon to give her name, pleading with her to stay with him, to stop saying she is going to leave, and so on. His function is reflected structurally, since he begins four of these five sections (Cendrillon opens the Change section by explaining that she can only be with him temporarily) and sings for a greater total number of measures. Yet his seductive attempts ultimately fail, weakening the effect of this long, elaborate duet, which serves as an unsatisfactory end to the second act.

The section opens with a motive in the orchestra echoed by the prince (Example 1.1a). He sings a lyrical, diatonic line over lush orchestration and a triadic progression in E major. For seventeen measures, he asks to know the name of the woman he is addressing. Yet Cendrillon’s response rejects this request both textually and musically: “To you, I will be ‘The Unknown’” (Pour vous je serai L’inconnue), she sings, over a thin, static octave accompaniment, avoiding the E4 and E5 that the prince has returned to so often (Example 1.1b).<sup>28</sup> The prince asks again, with a more chordal accompaniment, but Cendrillon sticks with her answer and with her music.

<sup>27</sup> This chart echoes that which Stiefel uses: see “Mozart’s Seductions,” Table V, 158. As he observes on that same page, the number of measures yields a better sense of proportions among sections than number of poetic lines. VS; 199–201, 201–08, 208–10, 210–212, 212–13.

<sup>28</sup> VS, 201.



**Example 1.1a** Opening of the second-act love duet; prince's motive in boxes (VS, 199).

69 = *Assez lent.* *p* *rall.* *Lent et très chanté.*

*cresc.* *dim.* *p*

(à CENDRILLON)  
 - LE PRINCE CHARMANT. (en adoration)

Toi qui m'es ap - pa - ru - e, O beau rêve enchanteur, beau - té du Ciel venu - e,

*pp* *cresc.* *f*

**Example 1.1b** Conclusion of the prince's opening statement, with his motive in box; Cendrillon's response, with half-step motive circled (VS, 200–01).

*rall.* *a Tempo 1<sup>o</sup>* *Très lent.*

*f* *pp* *f* *pp*

...tié! Toi! Toi qui m'es ap - pa - ru - e!

*rall.* *a Tempo 1<sup>o</sup>* *Très lent.*

CENDRILLON, (simplement, chastement) - LE PRINCE. (en extase)

*p* *mf* *f*

Pour vous je se - rai l'inconnu - e! Beau - té du Ciel ve - nu - e, Qui

*a Tempo 1<sup>o</sup>* *pp*

Finally, after the prince asks, “Who are you, then?” (Qui donc es-tu?) for a second time, he echoes her response of “L’inconnue” (Example 1.2).<sup>29</sup> These two measures represent a turning point in this section, as for the first time the prince echoes Cendrillon’s music exactly, indicating his acceptance of her refusal to give her name. Finally, as if acknowledging that acceptance, Cendrillon sings an E minor version of the prince’s motive. The prince comes in one measure later on the E major version of the motive; they are harmonizing for the first time. Here, Cendrillon, singing just five words repeatedly (“Pour vous je serai L’inconnue”), has successfully opposed the prince and maintained distance between them—certainly an unusual start to a love duet.

Cendrillon does eventually, though, admit her affection for the prince. The shift occurs at the moment when the prince pleads with her not to say she has to leave: “Your truthful eye denies it” (Ton œil candide la dément).<sup>30</sup> She responds, “You are my Prince Charming” (Vous êtes mon Prince Charmant), not only completing the rhyme but picking up the D4 on which the prince ended (Example 1.3).<sup>31</sup> This is a significant and memorable motive, which Parisian critic Adolphe Jullien called “the most graceful passage in the whole world.”<sup>32</sup> The “Vous êtes mon Prince Charmant” motive, often varied but retaining its distinctive rhythm and contour, continues throughout the rest of the *Change* section, alternating between the treble and bass registers until the *Union* section. This motive will return in their later two duets, always recalling Cendrillon’s love for Prince Charmant.

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<sup>29</sup> VS, 201.

<sup>30</sup> VS, 205.

<sup>31</sup> VS, 205. When singing “Pour vous je serai L’inconnue,” Cendrillon was completing the rhymed couplet that the prince had begun with his repetition of “Toi qui m’es apparue,” indicating some cooperation despite her unwillingness to share her name.

<sup>32</sup> Quoted in Henry T. Finck, *Massenet and His Operas* (New York: John Lane, 1910), 205.

**Example 1.2** The prince echoes, then harmonizes with, Cendrillon; half-step motive circled; prince's motive in box, minor-mode motive in box with dotted line (VS, 201).

Example 1.2 is a musical score from a French opera. It features three systems of music. The first system shows the vocal parts (Cendrillon and Le Prince) and the piano accompaniment. The vocal parts have lyrics in French. The piano part has a half-step motive circled. The second system shows the vocal parts and the piano accompaniment. The vocal parts have lyrics in French. The piano part has a half-step motive circled. The third system shows the vocal parts and the piano accompaniment. The vocal parts have lyrics in French. The piano part has a half-step motive circled. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

**Example 1.3** Cendrillon admits affection to Prince Charmant; her motive in boxes (VS, 205).

Example 1.3 is a musical score from a French opera. It features three systems of music. The first system shows the vocal parts (Cendrillon and Prince Charmant) and the piano accompaniment. The vocal parts have lyrics in French. The piano part has a half-step motive circled. The second system shows the vocal parts and the piano accompaniment. The vocal parts have lyrics in French. The piano part has a half-step motive circled. The third system shows the vocal parts and the piano accompaniment. The vocal parts have lyrics in French. The piano part has a half-step motive circled. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

We now come to the Union section. The period of unity, both in purpose and in vocal lines, is very short. Though they have occasionally overlapped, the lovers have hardly harmonized with each other (in the sense of singing more or less the same thing at the same time). Now, after almost one hundred measures, they begin to sing in unison, though only for only six measures. Despite the difference of their texts, they are bringing their voices together on the same pitches and almost all the same rhythms, conveying a sense of togetherness and agreement (Example 1.4). After that brief unison, they begin to harmonize, though maintain that sense of simultaneity. And yet this does not last long, either. As Table 1.1 shows, the two characters spend very little time musically unified in comparison to the whole duet. But even in this section, they are working at cross purposes. Prince Charmant is addressing Cendrillon with the imperative, commanding her to stay, but Cendrillon is addressing herself and reflecting on the situation, making observations about her emotional reactions to the prince's presence.

The situation quickly becomes even more uneven, as Prince Charmant confesses, "I love you, and I always will" (*Je t'aime et t'aimerai toujours*), just as the chimes begin to stroke midnight.<sup>33</sup> Cendrillon is so attuned to the necessity of leaving that she responds to the first chime immediately, exclaiming "Ah!" just half a beat after the bell sounds (Example 1.5). The prince cannot understand why she is so upset about the time, but she flees, and he is left alone to wonder what just happened.

Prince Charmant persuaded Cendrillon to admit that she reciprocated his affection, but failed in the other aspects of his endeavor, most notably learning her name and keeping her at the palace with him. Though the duet proceeds (until the point of separation) in the same general way as do Mozart's (successful) seduction duets in Stiefel's model, there are many obstacles that

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<sup>33</sup> VS, 210–11.

**Example 1.4** Passage of unison singing (VS, 208–09).

Example 1.4 shows a passage of unison singing between the Soprano (C.) and Alto/Piano (P.) parts. The music is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The lyrics are in French. The Soprano part begins with a long note on 'voix' followed by a melodic line. The Alto/Piano part enters with a strong *f* dynamic, singing 'Res - te!..'. The two parts then sing in unison for several measures, with the lyrics 'est comme une har - mo - ni - e Qui - ra -'. The music continues with the Soprano part singing 'vil mon o - reil - le et tient mon' and the Alto/Piano part singing 'tié de mon cœur!.. pi - tié! pi -'. The dynamic *ff* is marked in the Alto/Piano part. The passage concludes with the Soprano part singing 'cœur char - mé!' and the Alto/Piano part singing 'tié de mon cœur!'.

**Example 1.5** First chime of midnight and Cendrillon's reaction, both circled (VS, 211).

Example 1.5 shows the first chime of midnight and Cendrillon's reaction. The music is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The Soprano (C.) part begins with a long note on 'Ah!' followed by a melodic line. The Alto/Piano (P.) part enters with a strong *f* dynamic, singing 'je fris - sonne!..'. The music continues with the Soprano part singing 'déjà! dé -' and the Alto/Piano part singing 'l'aimerai toujours! Rien ne m'éloignera de toi...'. The dynamic *mf* is marked in the Alto/Piano part. The music concludes with the Soprano part singing 'bien chanté.' and the Alto/Piano part singing 'bien chanté.'.

Annotations in the score include: (surprise par l'heure qui sonne) above the Soprano part, (se détachant peu à peu des étreintes du PRINCE CHARMANT) above the Alto/Piano part, (I) (Timbre) below the Soprano part, (II) below the Alto/Piano part, and (III) below the Alto/Piano part.

this first duet cannot overcome. Cendrillon refuses to give her name; even when she admits her feelings she speaks in the conditional; and finally abandons Prince Charmant despite his protests, leaving him alone. Rather than ending the act united, they finish the second act almost as distant as they had been before they met. The seduction of Cendrillon has been almost entirely a failure—this is only the first example of the creators avoiding the gender-subversive spectacle of a cross-dressed woman successfully wooing another woman.

### **Act Three, Second Tableau, Scene Two: Separation and Brief Reunion**

The next duet is a hybrid type: rather than a persuasive love duet, that is, a duet of seduction, this is both a persuasive duet and a love duet. It is a persuasive duet in that the two characters are both pleading with La Fée to help them; it is a love duet in that La Fée will not deign to respond until the two estranged lovers reunite. On the next page, Table 1.2 summarizes the former reading of this duet, while Table 1.3 summarizes the latter reading. In the persuasive case, the opposition section is the passage where the prince and Cendrillon remain oblivious to each other, simply appealing to La Fée; change begins when they acknowledge each other's voices and start communicating, as La Fée wishes them to do; and union occurs when La Fée removes the spell which prevents them from seeing each other. As in the previous duet, though, the number does not end with successful union. La Fée may have removed her spell, but she soon decides to cast another one, sinking the lovers into an enchanted slumber shortly after bringing them back together (see Table 1.2), and the act ends as La Fée and her spirits softly sing them to sleep.

**Table 1.2** “Persuasive” Structure of the Act Three Love Duet

Section	Text	Number of Measures <sup>34</sup>
Opposition	“A deux genoux”/“Je viens à vous” to “Tout! Hélas! Tout!”	63
Change	“Une pauvre âme en grand émoi” to “J’exauce ton espoir”	124
Union	“Ma Lucette! Je t’ai retrouvée” to “fidèlement...toujours... ah! toujours...”	15

This duet can also be analyzed, however, as a more generalized love duet. Hervé Lacombe describes the typical form in French opera as follows:

The love duet is traditionally cast in this mold: the meeting of the lovers is generally delayed by all manner of circumstances, and explanations are offered first of all. The two characters then express their feelings in turn, and finally give themselves over to amorous outpourings.<sup>35</sup>

Table 1.3 summarizes this duet thus. Notably, it does not at all align with the previous reading; the structure of this scene is quite complex.

**Table 1.3** “Romantic” Structure of the Act Three Love Duet

Section	Text	Number of Measures <sup>36</sup>
Delay	“A deux genoux”/“Je viens à vous” to “Vous n’ignorez pas ma souffrance”	41
Explanation	“Vous n’ignorez pas comment” to “Je vous implore à deux genoux”	73
Expression	“Suis-je assez malheureux!” to “De tes lèvres mon âme recueilli l’aveu”	44
Outpouring	“Et ta/sa voix me pénètre” to “fidèlement...toujours... ah! toujours...”	44

<sup>34</sup> VS; 287–92, 292–303, 304–07.

<sup>35</sup> Hervé Lacombe, *The Keys to French Opera in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Edward Schneider (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 136.

<sup>36</sup> VS; 287–89, 290–94, 294–99, 299–305.

Taking Lacombe's framework, the "delay" is the time when the lovers sing without specifying what is wrong; the explanations begin when Prince Charmant starts alluding to *why* he is calling on La Fée for help, namely in order to find his lost love. Cendrillon overhears him and takes pity, and the two modify their original pleas to ask La Fée to aid the other person in their troubles. While they reprise the unison melody with which they began the duet, their increased sense of purpose is reflected by the fact that they sing many more of the same words than they did before, sing one half step higher (moving from F-sharp natural minor to G natural minor), and end on the tonic above the staff, rather than the major mediant—the high note G5 is much more striking than A-sharp4, which lies in the middle of the soprano range (Examples 1.6a and b).

Prince Charmant then begins to suspect the identity of his fellow interceder, and in attempting to discern it describes his feelings for the mystery woman he met at the ball. In his description, he bestows key words like "beautiful" (*bell*) and "star" (*étoile*) with ornamentation (Example 1.7)—a striking effect, since these are two of the only examples of melisma in the opera, excepting the part of La Fée, whose normal mode of expression is melismatic coloratura. Soon enough, Cendrillon confesses her given name—Lucette—and confirms it with an unexpected variation of "Vous êtes mon Prince Charmant" (Example 1.8). The presence of the motive is immediately obvious from written notation, and set up by the need for completion of the rhyme with "ravisement." Yet the fact that the beginning is so different, when all previous variations had preserved the rhythm and contour of an eighth note and a large upward leap, makes it a surprise for the prince (and for the audience) when Lucette confirms her identity through this motive. The motivic surprise is accompanied by a harmonic one, as the E-flat dominant seventh chord resolves not to the A-flat major but to a D-flat chord with an A-flat in the bass—not deceptive, since the cadence still has a dominant-tonic function, just unexpected.



**Example 1.6a** End of the first unison passage from this duet (VS, 289).

Example 1.6a shows the end of the first unison passage. The Soprano (C) and Alto (A) parts are in unison, with lyrics: "rai - ne! Je viens à vous!". The Piano (P) part provides accompaniment. Performance markings include *rall.*, *Lent.*, *p*, and *pp*.

**Example 1.6b** End of the second unison passage from this duet (VS, 294).

Example 1.6b shows the end of the second unison passage. The Soprano (C) and Alto (A) parts are in unison, with lyrics: "raine, ayez pi - tié! Je vous im - plore à deux ge - noux! à". The Piano (P) part provides accompaniment. Performance markings include *rall.*, *ff*, *Lent.*, and *Très animé - agité.*

**Example 1.7** Ornamentation in the prince's vocal line, circled (VS, 295).

le P. j'aime est si bel - - - le Que tu di -

le P. - rais, voyant ses yeux: Pas une é - toi -

le P. - le n'é - tin - cel - - le Plus pu - re au fir - ma -

**Example 1.8** Variation of Cendrillon's motive, circled (VS, 298).

C. - me...

P. Vous é - tes mon Prin - ce Char - mant!

P. Ineffa - - ble ravissement!...

Now that each other's identity has been confirmed, they begin their "amorous outpourings," singing in a stretto alternation, and then harmonizing as Cendrillon slowly ascends chromatically to a B-flat5, the highest note in her range (Example 1.9). The subtle distance of the previous duet is still present, though, as in their musings on the ecstasy of the other's voice Cendrillon speaks of Prince Charmant in the third person, while the prince addresses Cendrillon directly.

**Example 1.9** Ecstatic outpourings by Cendrillon and the prince (VS, 300).

peu à peu plus chaleureusement.

C. *cresc.*  
- nè - tre d'une exta-se su - prè - - - me! su -

P. *cresc.*  
d'une exta-se supré - - me!... Ta voix

peu à peu plus chaleureusement.

C. *cresc.*  
- prè - - - me!... su - prè - - - me!...

P. *cresc.*  
me pé-nè - tre... d'u - ne exta - se su -

*f*

Once reunited, rather than ending on powerful high notes in their declarations of love, both characters decrease in dynamics and lower their pitch, ending on a *ppp* D-flat4 (Example 1.10). This note should hardly sound both due to the extreme dynamic as well as the lowness of that note in the soprano range; with this setting Massenet creates a mimetic effect of both characters falling asleep, their words of love becoming only murmurs, fading away. In the previous duet, Cendrillon left the Prince by himself; here, both characters are asleep, and those whose music ends the act are magical beings. The sprites command, “Sleep and dream”

**Example 1.10** Cendrillon and the prince fade away into sleep (VS, 307).



(Dormez! et rêvez), further drawing attention both to the somnolent state of the lovers as well as the questionable ontological status of the scene (dream or reality?).<sup>37</sup> Once again the emphasis has been taken away from the relationship between the two characters, despite the fact that they are the central romantic couple.

**Act Four, Second Tableau: A Distracting Ending**

The final love duet between Cendrillon and Prince Charmant is very short. It consists largely of Cendrillon's reprisal of "Vous êtes mon Prince Charmant," though it does gain a sense of finality when the prince, for the first time, imitates her iconic motive (Example 1.11a). The effect of a lovers' reunion, however, is decreased when less than a measure after the prince starts singing, La Fée joins him, and continues to sing (Example 1.11b), so that the only time in the finale when Cendrillon and the prince harmonize, La Fée is singing with them as well. Furthermore, there is a great amount of distance between this brief love duet and the end of the act. There are eleven measures of choral commentary and family dynamics, none of which involves Prince Charmant or Cendrillon singing, before Pandolfe's final statement to the audience tells them that the story has ended, and the ensemble bids their viewers a final farewell. Not only does such ending emphasize the artificiality of the story, but it features the entire ensemble rather than on the couple whose union is supposedly what brings the tale to a close.

<sup>37</sup> VS, 307–08.

**Example 1.11a** The prince sings Cendrillon's motive (VS, 355).



**Example 1.11b** Cendrillon and Prince Charmant's final duet becomes a trio (VS, 355).

## Conclusion

None of the three love duets ends on a convincing note, their uniting effect immediately disrupted by distractions. These obstacles prevent the courtship between two female performers from being too much the focus of the story, even as the plot revolves around this very phenomenon. Here we see some of the dramatic and musical approaches that Massenet and Cain took to mediate this tension. Even as the female performers romance each other on stage, the plot never advances far enough for suggestive action between them to take place. Yet they are able to join together in song; in the next chapter I will discuss the ways that their vocal harmonization implies sexual union, though these sounds are also carefully controlled.

## CHAPTER TWO: SIGHT AND SOUND

### Introduction

The trouser role, Heather Hadlock argues in her discussion of the “page” archetype, confounds the senses:

Opera is unique, perhaps, in how little visual verisimilitude it demands: we expect to look through or disregard a singer’s body and instead “see” the voice. Yet trouser roles require a more elaborate scaffolding from which to suspend our disbelief, for in order to accept the character *en travesti* as *male*, we must rationalize away the evidence of both our eyes and ears. In contrast with male travesty practice, which expects the audience to see, hear, and laugh at the discrepancy between performer and role, one can never be certain just what degree of double vision the audience is meant to bring to its scrutiny of the woman-as-pageboy. Such characters, particularly when they speak of love, often appear in shadow: the cross-dressed female body and its desires, though repeatedly characterized as harmless, are just as frequently veiled from sight.<sup>38</sup>

Hadlock finds that even in Massenet and Cain’s *Chérubin*, though the cross-dressed title character has matured beyond his status as the page so famously dramatized in Mozart and Da Ponte’s *Le Nozze di Figaro*, his body is often kept out of sight as he makes love to the ballet dancer L’Ensolleilad. She refers to the frequent uses of offstage singing and similar staging as “strategic ‘disappearings’” and points out that “the careful obscuring of this spectacle betrays its potency.”<sup>39</sup> Thus, she concludes: “Even as Massenet’s staging upholds the ban on our seeing

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<sup>38</sup> Hadlock, “Career of Cherubino,” 69. Emphasis in original.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 85.

Cherubino as an erotic spectacle, we may hear the ‘love that dares not speak its name’ raise its soprano voice in song.”<sup>40</sup>

*Cendrillon* preceded *Chérubin* in the composer’s output by a few years. Here, as I discuss in Chapter One, the level of “erotic spectacle” is kept to a minimum by the plot developments rather than the staging, which evinces an even more careful treatment of the trouser role. Indeed, one of the themes I will discuss in this chapter is how the trousered performer remains silent in the presence of other characters, with *Cendrillon* being the only exception. Here it is not his body that must be hidden from sight but his voice which must be kept from sounding; the cross-dressed female body can pass much more easily when not emitting what is clearly a woman’s voice.

Hadlock also discusses what she terms “the implicitly erotic sonority of the two-soprano duet,” particularly the phenomenon of a duet at the unison.<sup>41</sup> Though her main example is *Chérubin*, the same technique she identifies and discusses appears in *Cendrillon* as well. Elizabeth Wood also theorizes this phenomenon in her chapter on what she terms “Sapphonics” from *Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology*. Though she focuses on a particular vocal quality as exhibited by opera performers, she discusses the phenomenon of “paired” singing thus:

Women’s paired like-voices produce a bivocal Sapphonic effect especially, but not only, in travesty/transvestic duets formerly sung by castrati. (By “bivocal” I mean having two like-voices that inhabit like-bodies that together produce bisexual illusion: the sonic effect of having both sexes in one.)....If the travesty female, the borderline woman, voices female desire as Sapphonic transgression, two paired women in symmetrical bivocal

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 77.

sameness voice Sapphonic desire as lesbian difference: a doubly subversive symmetry in redoubled vocal drag.<sup>42</sup>

Hadlock's and Wood's queer readings of the soprano-soprano duet motivate the following analysis of the *Cendrillon* duets, in which I take for my second theme the idea of the unison duet as a figurative merging.

In this chapter, I will analyze the use in this opera of sight without sound and sound without sight, particularly the prince's public silence for the first case and Act Three's enchanted duet for the second. The disjuncture between the prince's masculine costume and feminine voice is frequently kept a secret from the other characters, as in Act Two, where the prince refuses to sing until all have left the stage. Only in the final scene of that act, enamored of Cendrillon and expressing his love for her, does he sing in another's presence; in Act Three, he sings to the supernatural figure of La Fée, initially unaware that someone else has heard him, too. It takes until the final tableau of Act Four for him to sing in public; that is, in the presence of characters who are neither magical nor his lover, Cendrillon. Both of the two major duets contain, as discussed in Chapter One, passages of harmonization as well as vocal lines at the unison. Here, I will discuss the use of unison singing and the way in which it is mediated within the drama, especially in the Act Three duet. This is the scene in which Cendrillon and Prince Charmant are most intimate, emotionally and vocally, and yet for the vast majority of the time, they cannot see, only hear, each other. While the prince's public silence protects the secret of his feminine voice, the inability of Cendrillon and the prince to see—and touch—each other throughout the duet keeps a literal and figurative distance between them. Massenet and Cain treat the senses of sight

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<sup>42</sup> Elizabeth Wood, "Sapphonics," in *Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology*, ed. idem, Philip Brett, and Gary C. Thomas, second edition (New York: Routledge, 2006), 36–37.



and sound carefully to keep the trouser role of the prince from reaching full expression, whether that expression would be sounding publicly or embracing Cendrillon at length.

### **Act Two, Scenes One, Two, and Three: Public Silence, Private Song**

Like a different Mozartian character—not Cherubino but the Countess—the Prince does not make his first appearance until the second act. Even though he is on stage for the entirety of the first scene, he remains silent, ignoring the pleas of three different groups of characters and only beginning to sing once everyone has left. Notably, each of the groups—the Master of Ceremonies with his courtiers, the Dean of the Faculty and three doctors, and a group of Ministers—comments on the prince’s silence.

Massenet and Cain carefully build the audience’s anticipation for the prince’s voice. Act Two begins with a vigorous prologue that recedes as the first scene begins. Prince Charmant is on stage, listening to the eighteenth-century pastiche being played diegetically.<sup>43</sup> He remains silent, though, as the humorously repetitive music plays for twenty-two measures (Examples 2.1 a and b), giving way to a completely different musical idea in an unrelated key with a prominent jocular bassoon motive, over which the Master of Ceremonies patters comically (Example 2.2). He and the courtiers ask the prince to cheer up, pleading, “Respond!” (Répondez).<sup>44</sup> After a beat’s rest, the accompaniment returns to the light trio music, where the strong contrast between the two styles serves as an effective dismissal of their request. The group gets the message and withdraws. The routine repeats, with comically ponderous music and a joke about the Dean who require the doctors’ assistance in order to remember what he is trying to say. They ask,

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<sup>43</sup> Stage directions: “Three musicians: The first playing the lute, the second the viola a’mour, and the third a crystal flute” (Trois joueurs d’instruments—le 1<sup>er</sup> joue du luth, le 2<sup>d</sup> de la viole d’amour, le 3<sup>e</sup> de la flûte en cristal). VS, 143.

<sup>44</sup> VS, 146.

**Example 2.1a** Beginning of trio music (VS, 143).



**Example 2.1b** End of first trio music section (VS, 145).



**Example 2.2** Music for the Master of Ceremonies (VS, 145).

—LE SURINTENDANT DES PLAISIRS. (au PRINCE CHARMANT)

Que les doux penses viennent éclore souri - ants sur vos lè -

“Listen,” (Écoutez), not even requesting a response, but the same musical rejection happens again.<sup>45</sup> Finally, a group of ministers enters; the music modulates to B-flat major, though this time the trio music remains (Example 2.3). All three groups ask, “Assent,” (Consentez,) as the music shifts from B flat major to G major once more, but the stage directions indicate that the

<sup>45</sup> VS, 149.

**Example 2.3** Trio music in B-flat major (VS, 151).

LE 1<sup>er</sup> MINISTRE. (au PRINCE)

Aux ter - mes d'un dé - cret Roy - al Il

prince remains silent.<sup>46</sup> Each of the three groups gives up and leaves. Three measures after the last person exits, the music shifts yet again, to a chromatic line that begins Scene Two, in a Wagnerian idiom that is a completely different sound world from the eighteenth-century pastiches of the first scene (Example 2.4). Finally, the prince begins to sing, starting on a B4 and rising on a diminished triad to F5. As this is a moderately high soprano range, the prince's voice sounds in no way masculine. The façade of a masculine costume is definitively belied by the female voice.

Ironically, after having petulantly ignored all these members of the court, the prince sings a yearning A minor aria about how lonely he is. He is dissatisfied with life, longing for the appearance of someone he could love. Thinking of her, he ascends to an F-sharp, a new high note for him, above an F-sharp major chord, and transitions into an A major section which echoes the rhythms and notes of the A minor section (Example 2.5, a and b). Both sections are about love: one bemoaning the lack of it, the other imagining the wonder of it, and the similarity draws attention to the continuity of subject matter while the contrast in mode reflects the difference in mood.

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<sup>46</sup> VS, 151–52.

**Example 2.4** The prince sings for the first time (VS, 156).

Très lent. 56 =  $\text{♩}$

*p* (Orchestre.) *dim.*

—LE PRINCE CHARMANT.  
(seul— avec lassitude)

en cédant un peu. **Lent.**

*mf* *f*

Allez, laissez-moi seul... seul— avec mes en\_nuis...

Un peu moins lent. **Lent. 66 =  $\text{♩}$**

*pp* *mf* suivez.

**Example 2.5a** The prince's A minor section (VS, 156).

*mf*

Cœur sans amour, prin\_temps — sans ro — — ses!.. Pour moi tous les

*pp*

**Example 2.5b** The prince's A major section (VS, 158).

(ému, tendrement passionné) *cresc.*

*mf* *f*

Je suis à toi. Prends ma jeu - nes - se, De

*mf* *cresc.* *f*

While the prince proves himself more than willing to express himself verbally, singing for forty-seven measures with few significant pauses, he falls silent again as soon as someone enters the room again. This time it is the king, followed by many members of the court. He commands his son to choose a noble wife at the ball, which event begins immediately. Despite frequent pleas by the ensemble for the prince to choose and marry (*Choisissez! Epousez!*), he makes no indication of obeying and remains silent throughout the long scene (extended by numerous dances).<sup>47</sup> Even when Cendrillon appears, the prince remains silent. The stage directions indicate that he is initially transfixed, contemplating her from afar, but slowly draws near while his father discreetly ushers everyone out (see notes 25 and 26). Meanwhile, the ensemble offers commentary on the situation for thirty-seven measures. Everyone, at first, is struck by this stranger's beauty, but soon they also acknowledge the instant attraction between Cendrillon and the prince: "Our future queen is here!" (*Notre Reine future que voilà*), they exclaim.<sup>48</sup> The prolonged interlude of commentary, as well as the fact that there are eight modulatory measures between Pandolfe's exit on an E-flat major cadence and the E major introduction to the duet, call attention to the prince's prolonged silence. Cendrillon's silence is to be expected, since with her obedient personality, she will respond to, but not initiate, conversation; it the prince who will speak first, but he insists on waiting. Once again, he does not begin to sing until everyone has gone—everyone, that is, except Cendrillon.

#### **Act Two, Scene Four: A Brief Joining of Voices**

Parallel thirds and sixths are well-known signifiers of union in operatic love duets. As Stiefel observes of his *Don Giovanni* and *Così fan tutte* examples: "lovers had been singing in

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<sup>47</sup> VS, 165; 164–80.

<sup>48</sup> VS, 194.

parallel thirds and sixths long before Mozart began writing operas, and they do so here, too.”<sup>49</sup>

Yet during the nineteenth century, this technique gradually became considered old-fashioned.

Heather Hadlock, for example, cites Hector Berlioz as complaining that Italians’ fondness for

parallel thirds, as he heard in Bellini’s *I Capuletti e i Montecchi* in 1831, was indicative of

“childish sensualism.”<sup>50</sup> She argues that by avoiding parallel intervals in his *fin-de-siècle* operas,

particularly in *Cendrillon* and in *Chérubin*, Massenet produces love duets that are “modern and

passionate rather than archaically ‘sweet.’”<sup>51</sup>

Massenet’s frequent use of the unison in his duets allows the characters’ voices to become one; the joining of voices has erotic implications, yet, as discussed in Chapter One, both duets keep the lovers separated at their conclusions. In the following two sections, I will discuss both the ways in which the Prince Charmant-Cendrillon duets sonically connote sexual union and some of the ways in which the threat of this gender-subversive union is mediated.

The first time Cendrillon and Prince Charmant sing in unison is during their first duet, in the palace. Cendrillon sings, “And you will not see me again” (*Et vous ne me reverrez pas*). She ends on a G5, is joined one beat later on the same note by Prince Charmant, then rearticulates the G before leaping to a B-flat, the highest note in her range (Example 2.6).<sup>52</sup> The accompanying text reinforces the power of the unison sound in three ways: first, Cendrillon references sight in a negative way, which opens up space for other senses to come to the fore; second, both characters sustain the G on an open “ah” sound, the likeness of vowel allowing the voices to project most clearly; and third, both characters are using exclamations—“Ah” and “Hélas”—to express

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<sup>49</sup> Stiefel, “Mozart’s Seductions,” 153.

<sup>50</sup> Hadlock, “Career of Cherubino,” 73.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

<sup>52</sup> VS, 204.

**Example 2.6** Cendrillon and the prince sing in unison for the first time (VS, 204).

The musical score is for a unison duet between Cendrillon and the Prince Charmant. It is written for two voices, both on treble clefs. The lyrics are in French. The first line of music shows Cendrillon singing 'fuir, hélas!' followed by the Prince singing 'Et vous ne me reverrez pas!'. The second line shows Cendrillon singing 'Hélas!' followed by the Prince singing 'Ah!'. The third line shows Cendrillon singing 'cet le pa-ro-le cru'.

emotion so deep it cannot be fully articulated.

What little time in this duet Cendrillon and the prince spend harmonizing is often devoted to short overlapping interjections or harmonization in imperfect, though non-parallel, consonances. They do, however come together for one powerful line (see Example 1.4, above). The vowel sounds often do not align, making the words harder to understand. This is related to Lawrence Kramer’s concept of “overvocalizing,” where the composer purposefully erases the text to leave only the voice.<sup>53</sup> Yet this is occurring as Cendrillon is singing, “His voice is like a harmony that enchants my ear and charms my heart” (*Sa voix est comme une harmonie qui ravie mon oreille et tient mon cœur charmé*), emphasizing the power of the prince’s voice to move her affections.<sup>54</sup> Though her words cannot be easily distinguished, her sentiment is clear: she is spellbound by the prince. By setting the prince and Cendrillon in a unison duet, Massenet is bringing their voices together as one, symbolizing their romantic and sexual unity at the moment. But, as discussed in Chapter One, the differences between what they sing and to whom they sing indicate that they are still not quite aligned.

Then, after twelve measures of harmonizing the clock starts chiming, and the prince ignores Cendrillon’s distress regarding the time. Desperately, she flees, knowing that the spell—

<sup>53</sup> Lawrence Kramer, *Music and Poetry: The Nineteenth Century and After* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 132.

<sup>54</sup> VS, 208–09. I would like to thank Annegret Fauser for her assistance in translating this line.

both the fairy's spell, which gave her the appropriate attire and transportation for attending the ball, and a more metaphorical spell, that of the attraction between her and the prince—must end. Their voices have entwined, signaling to the audience that they are a compatible romantic couple. The ecstasy of unified voices, however, was only brief, and the couple remained physically separated from each other. Even in the next scene I discuss, which contains more extended unisons, the sound of characters coming together is never accompanied by the sight of female performers embracing.

### **Act Three, Second Tableau, Scene Two: Vocal Unity, Physical Separation**

In this scene, Cendrillon and Prince Charmant have both entered an enchanted forest. La Fée sees both of them and decides to cast a spell, so that they cannot see each other. As they both ask for her help, they hear and soon recognize each other. Heather Hadlock theorizes the scene thus:

Three parameters define the relationship between a pair of lovers: their visibility to each other and the audience, their physical proximity, and the space between their vocal lines. In *Cendrillon*, song bridges the physical distance and darkness between Cinderella and her lost "Prince Charmant."<sup>55</sup>

The lovers will sing in unison three times: the first when they are unaware of each other's presence, in which case the unison symbolizes their intrinsic connection and foreshadows their coming together by the end of the duet; the second when the other's voice is acousmatic, that is, the source of the sound is unknown, and the unison reflects their determination to aid the other; and the third when they finally recognize each other as "Lucette" and the prince, and the unison duet is the climax of their plea to La Fée to see each other again.<sup>56</sup> Despite the "bridging" of

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<sup>55</sup> Hadlock, "Career of Cherubino," 90.

<sup>56</sup> Brian Kane offers a theory of the acousmatic in "Kafka and the Ontology of Acousmatic Sound," in *Sound Unseen: Acousmatic Sound in Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 134–61.



physical distance by song, the suppression of sight and of physicality reduces the impact of these unison sounds.

To open the scene, the orchestra plays a lilting repeated motive in F-sharp Aeolian mode, with no accompaniment beneath it; then strings and winds then hold F-sharp as a sustained pedal while the prince and Cendrillon begin singing in unison (Example 2.7). They will continue this unison for twenty-seven measures. Though La Fée has enchanted them so they cannot see each other, their extended passage of unison singing reflects their shared plight and plea: heartbroken, they beg the fairy ease their pain. They are not always singing the same words, notably since they address La Fée by different names.<sup>57</sup> Yet the highest note of the passage, F-sharp5, does begin a striking moment where all the notes are unison octaves in both the voices and the orchestra (Example 2.8). Furthermore, the two characters are singing the same text, “on two knees” (à deux genoux), emphasizing their humility and desperation in requesting assistance.<sup>58</sup> Neither of them knows the other is there, and yet they sing the same notes with the same message.

Retaining the lilting 6/8 meter, and yet pushing the tempo forward agitatedly, Prince Charmant breaks out of the duet to address La Fée separately. In reminding La Fée why he so desperately requires assistance, he reminisces on the great yet brief joy he felt on that night of the ball. Cendrillon listens, and takes pity on him. She is convinced that “there is nothing left for me but sadness and misery” (il n’est plus pour moi que tristesse et misère), and so requests, “Godmother, hurt me, but let him be healed!” (Marraine, frappez-moi, mais que lui soit guéri!).<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> “Good Godmother” (Bonne Marraine), and “Powerful Queen” (Puissante Reine); VS, 287.

<sup>58</sup> VS, 288.

<sup>59</sup> VS, 292, 293.

**Example 2.7** Opening unison passage of the third-act duet (VS, 287).

—CENDRILLON.  
*p* (simple et fervent)  
À deux ge - noux, Bonne Mar - rai - ne, à deux ge - noux,

—LE PRINCE CHARMANT.  
*p*  
Je viens à vous, Puissant Reine, je viens à vous,

**Example 2.8** “À deux genoux,” unison (VS, 288).

C. *f*  
plo - - - re à deux ge - noux,

1<sup>re</sup> P. *f*  
plo - - - re à deux ge - noux,

In return, the prince thanks and blesses her (Je te bénis).<sup>60</sup> As he does so, repeating a D5 incessantly, Cendrillon joins him on that note, and they ascend to a G5, singing different words but sustaining the high note on the same vowel (Example 2.9). They then sing ten measures of the same music and text (see Example 1.6b, above), the only exception being their terms for

<sup>60</sup> VS, 293.

**Example 2.9** Joining of voices (VS, 293–94).

CENDRILLON. (à LA FÉE)  
à part. **en cédant un peu.**

Pi - tié! pi - tié pour

le P. vu - e. Je te bé - nis! Je te bé -

**Animé.** *più f.* (tous deux avec ardeur)

C. lui! A - yez pi - tié! Bon\_ne mar.

le P. - nis! (à LA FÉE) *f* A - yez pi - tié! Puissante

La Fée. Their goals are even more unified, now that they are not just asking for themselves but asking for the other's benefit.

Prince Charmant now begins to reminisce again, this time not about how happy he was but how wonderful was his beloved. Soon, Cendrillon gasps, “Vous êtes le Prince Charmant” as she confirms to the prince that she is the woman whom he seeks. The prince reacts excitedly, and soon they begin the stretto alternation mentioned in the previous chapter as indicating amorous ecstasy (Example 2.10). The text reinforces the idea of the voice's power to connect the characters, as they both sing, “And your/his voice imbues me with supreme ecstasy” (Et ta/sa voix me pénètre d'une extase suprême).<sup>61</sup> Notably, this language echoes that of Cendrillon's in the last duet (“His voice is like a harmony that enchants my ear and charms my heart” [Sa voix est comme une harmonie qui ravie mon oreille et tient mon cœur charmé]). Here, as the two characters sing to each other of vocally-inspired ecstasy, the erotic implications of the voice and of vocal unisons have never been clearer. Notably, then, the two characters sing out of sync,

<sup>61</sup> VS, 299–300.

**Example 2.10** Voices echoing and alternating, with unisons (and one octave) circled (VS, 299–300).

—CENDRILLON.

en cédant un peu. a Tempo. (sans trop de lenteur)

*f* *très expressif.*

Et sa voix me pé-

*dim.* *f* *très expressif.*

- me a recueilli l'a-veu... Et ta voix me pénè - tre.

- nè - tre d'une exta-se su - prè - me... oui, sa voix me pé-

d'une exta-se suprè - me... oui, ta voix me pénè - tre

*crise.* *crise.* *sf*

- nè - tre d'une exta-se su - prè - me su -

d'une exta-se suprè - me... Ta voix

- prè - me!... su - prè - me!...

me pé-nè - tre... d'u - ne exta - se su -

*très expressif.* *f*

Ah! bonne fé - e... laissez - moi le re -

- prè - me!... Bonne fé - e...

rarely joining but rather constantly echoing each other. For all that the characters have sung in unison throughout this duet, the topics of those passages have been much less sexually charged. It would be entirely too suggestive for the prince and Cendrillon to be both singing *about* and *in* unison.

The lovers soon decide that voice is not enough; they would like to combine sight and sound (and touch) for their reunion. They beg, “Good fairy, let me see her/him again” (*Bonne fée, laissez-moi le/la revoir*), while Cendrillon laments, “to hear him, alas, it is not enough” (*l’entendre, hélas, c’est trop peu*).<sup>62</sup> They unite their voices once more, for only five measures, but ascend to the very top of their ranges, a B-flat<sup>5</sup> (Example 2.11). This will be the last time their voices thus combine; as Heather Hadlock observes, the scene is “manipulated to prevent the lovers from ever visibly embracing while singing in unison.”<sup>63</sup>

La Fée eventually lifts the spell, and the lovers rush into each other’s arms. Yet after only a short period of time, La Fée casts another spell, one that puts them to sleep. As Hadlock observes, they revert to “those old-fashioned (‘childish’) parallel thirds before sinking into a magical, innocent sleep” (see Example 1.10, above).<sup>64</sup> Once the two characters are able to see each other, and to embrace each other, the unison vocal lines disappear, for, yet again, vocal and physical union combined would be too subversive for this gender-problematic couple.

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<sup>62</sup> VS, 300–01.

<sup>63</sup> Hadlock, “Career of Cherubino,” 90.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

**Example 2.11** Highest unison of the opera (VS, 301).

peu à peu plus chaleureusement. (déchirant)

C. peu! — Laissez-moi le re-voir! — ah! par pi-tié! —

le P. Laissez-moi la re-voir! — ah! par pi-tié! —

**Example 2.12** Contrast between ensemble and Prince Charmant (VS, 349).

Très large.

— ses! Sa - lut! — Sa - lut! —

— ses! Sa - lut! — Sa - lut! —

— ses! Sa - lut! — Sa - lut! —

8 -

Très large.

Lent. — LE PRINCE CHARMANT. (d'une voix faible)

Po - sez dans son é-cri-n, sur un coussin de fleurs, La pau -

bien chanté, très expressif.

*f m.g. p*

*pp*

*poco*

*pp sans nuances.*

## **Conclusion**

Though the prince does sing in public in the final chapter of this tale, the contrast between the joyous triads of the crowd and his solo musings enforces his outsider status among this company (Example 2.12). The sound of the trouser role is one that is mediated carefully in this opera, as generally the prince sings within private environments rather than exposing the disconnect between character and voice to most of the characters in this narrative. Furthermore, even though the presence of a trouser role allows the composer to employ the powerful, ecstatic sound of two sopranos singing in unison, this sonority occurs infrequently. Even when the lovers sing thus, they do so within the context of the duets which, though seeming like traditional love duets, do not allow their participants to fully express the union that those duets symbolize.

## CHAPTER THREE: MAGIC AND DREAMS

### Introduction

Dreams, particularly as an operatic theme, are typically associated with German Romanticism and contrasted with nineteenth-century French culture. One example comes from Wagnerian scholar Edward A. Lippman, who said, “German Romantic opera—at the furthest possible remove from the realistic and social concerns of French opera—frequently dealt with dreams and with dreamlike situations.”<sup>65</sup> Even Hervé Lacombe, a scholar of French opera, argues that in his case study for *The Keys to French Opera in the Nineteenth Century* the “Germanic” themes are modified:

The art of conversation safeguarded the *esprit français* against the more profound powers of memory and dreams, which were so important for the Germans; it is seen in *Les Pêcheurs de perles* through the prism of romance, and more generally in the form of reverie and melancholy recollection of the past.<sup>66</sup>

Yet “sommeil,” a sleep scene, was a hugely popular technique in French operas of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The many occurrences of sleep in *Cendrillon* can thus be seen as working within, rather than outside of, the traditions of French opera. These references become particularly pertinent considering that Massenet often employed eighteenth-century references and pastiches in his operas—here, for example, in the trio that opens Act Two, Scene One, but perhaps most famously in operas such as *Chérubin* and *Manon*.

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<sup>65</sup> Lippman, “Wagner’s Conception of the Dream,” 54.

<sup>66</sup> Lacombe, *Keys to French Opera*, 288.



Dreams are a prominent theme in *Cendrillon*, and their illusory effects are yet another way in which Massenet and Cain mediate the function of the trouser role. The distinction between dream and reality, for example, is sometimes difficult to make. As Lippman theorized:

Drama is of course always a representation...but it makes a difference whether we stress its verisimilitude and continuity with life or its illusory quality...and if we are often invited to consider the whole action as a dream, we are similarly left in doubt as to whether particular figures are figments of a dream or apparitions that are “actual.”<sup>67</sup>

The frequent presence of the supernatural, as embodied by La Fée as well as a host of secondary characters in Act One, Scene Six, and Act Three, Second Tableau, Scene One, is another element of the departures from reality. According to Lippman, “the juxtaposition of different orders of humanity and especially of different realms of being—of the human and the supernatural—continually produces scenes that have an ambiguous and dreamlike quality.”<sup>68</sup> Thus not only is the relationship of Cendrillon and the prince, who have very different levels of social status, inherently dreamlike, but the presence of La Fée—who is with them during their second and third duets, and who is implicitly present at the first in the form of Cendrillon’s enchanted accoutrements—compounds this effect.

Rather than containing in-depth analyses as may be found in Chapters One and Two, this chapter will survey many different scenes, demonstrating the various ways in which magic and dreams are at work throughout the opera. As I have previously shown, there are many ways in which the prince and Cendrillon are kept apart despite being the romantic couple; the destabilization of reality is yet another of these techniques.

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<sup>67</sup> Lippman, “Wagner’s Conception of the Dream,” 55.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

## Act One, Scene Six: Cendrillon's Sommeil

As she falls asleep at the end of Act One, Scene Five, Cendrillon anticipates dreaming: “Often one is happy when one dreams, and one may have marvelous dreams” (Souvent, on est heureux quand on dort, et qu’on fait des songes merveilleux!).<sup>69</sup> And after a short orchestral interlude, the dream (or is it?) begins: rapid motion and restless chromatics in the orchestra give way to La Fée’s elaborate coloratura, a vocal style as yet unheard in this opera (Example 3.1). For an astounding three hundred and thirty-eight measures, Cendrillon lies asleep on the stage while La Fée, six spirits, and an offstage chorus weave the enchantment that will allow her to attend the ball. Even when Cendrillon finally begins to sing, she is still dreaming; only when she notices that she is no longer wearing tattered clothes but a beautiful gown does she wake.<sup>70</sup> She voices her doubts of reality: “Am I mad?” (suis-je folle?), and decides “I am no longer Cinderella” (Je ne suis plus Cendrillon).<sup>71</sup> Despite the suspect reality of this scene, Cendrillon does indeed arrive at the royal ball in her gown. Yet dreamlike elements will occur even here, at the ball.

### Example 3.1 La Fée sings in coloratura style (VS, 87).



## Act Two, Scenes Three and Four: A Dreamlike Duet

Soon after Cendrillon appears at the ball, the orchestra disappears. The extended unaccompanied commentary of the chorus—twelve measures’ worth—gives the impression that

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<sup>69</sup> VS, 85.

<sup>70</sup> Stage directions “dreaming” (en rêvant) and “awaking” (s’éveillant), VS 122, 123.

<sup>71</sup> VS, 123.

this is happening out of time, and perhaps out of reality. Prince Charmant's first line, "toi qui m'es apparue," indicates the mystery of Cendrillon's presence. She even tells him, "I am a dream," (je suis le rêve).<sup>72</sup> Finally, when Cendrillon flees, Prince Charmant's "suis-je fou?" echoes her question (suis-je folle?) from the previous act. The stage directions, in particular, emphasize the impression of a dream, specifying that "People dance as if nothing took place...and everything appears as if through a fog" (On danse comme si rien ne s'était passé...et tout s'aperçoit à travers un brouillard).<sup>73</sup> Such references, which frame the duet, mediate the queerness of the two-soprano duet as discussed in Chapter Two.

Cendrillon's family confirms in the second scene of Act Three that there really was a stranger who came to the ball and attracted the prince (only temporarily, to hear Madame de la Haltière tell it). Yet the scene between Cendrillon and the prince remains dreamlike and uncertain to both the viewer and Cendrillon.

### **Act Three, Second Tableau, Scenes One and Two: Magic Spells**

As in Act One, Scene Six, there is an extended scene of the supernatural to set up the coming action. La Fée conjures a host of spirits, and they spot two lovers—Prince Charmant and Cendrillon—each wandering disconsolately through the forest. As the scene ends, La Fée (for reasons unknown) casts a spell which prevents the prince and Cendrillon from seeing each other. I have discussed, in Chapters One and Two, some of the ways in which this spell constrains their relationship as conveyed in this duet. Most notably, it is a convenient way for Massenet to write a passionate love duet and yet to keep the lovers from visibly embracing until the very end. Even when La Fée finally removes the first spell, she almost immediately casts another one: "Love

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<sup>72</sup> VS, 202.

<sup>73</sup> VS, 212.

each other, your time is short, and believe it to be a dream” (Aimez-vous; l’heure est brève...et croyez en un rêve).<sup>74</sup> Again, the reason for this is unexplained; it seems to be only to put yet another obstacle between the two characters.

#### **Act Four, First Tableau, Scenes One and Two: Moving On From the “Dream”**

This scene opens as Pandolfe reminisces: months ago, Cendrillon was found unconscious by a stream. Once again, we see Cendrillon asleep on the stage—she awakens not long after the scene begins, but her somnolent state at the beginning of the scene reinforces the impression that the encounter in Act Three really was a dream. Pandolfe certainly believes Cendrillon was confused about what happened to her. She spoke of the prince while she was sleeping, but he thinks she was raving, particularly as he does not understand how she ever could have met the prince. He tells her this in a gently mocking tone, with a staccato patter reminiscent of the well-known Italian buffa tradition (Example 3.2).

Cendrillon sorrowfully accepts these pronouncements as fact. Massenet represents her reluctance with a sinuous chromatic line (Example 3.3). Yet she soon enough moves on from the devastating news that her true love was only a figment of her imagination to sing a duet in Scene Two with her father about the presence of spring, even briefly reverting to Hadlock’s “childish” parallel sixths (Example 3.4). Only after overhearing, far into the third scene of the act, the herald’s announcement that the prince is looking for the owner of a lost glass slipper does Cendrillon realize: “My dream was, therefore, real!” (Mon rêve était donc vrai).<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> VS, 307.

<sup>75</sup> VS, 338.

**Example 3.2** Pandolfe's patter (VS, 314).

(en se moquant d'elle, mais très gentiment)

Tu parlais du Prin\_ ce Charmant, Du Prince que tu n'as ja\_ mais vu seu\_ le\_ ment...

Tu parlais de brillant a\_ ve\_ nir et de promesses fol\_ les!..

**Example 3.3** Cendrillon mournfully concludes that she dreamt everything (VS, 315–16).

(inquiète)

Hé\_ las!\_ j'ai donc\_ rê\_ vé... Hé\_

rall. - - - a Tempo 1°

las!\_ Hé\_ las!\_ j'ai donc\_ rê\_ vé!..

**Example 3.4** Cendrillon and Pandolfe in parallel sixths, circled (VS, 326).

lai\_ nes sont\_ é\_ clo\_ ses! Prin\_ temps

C'est\_ l'A\_ vril\_ jov\_ eux qui\_

**Act Four, Second Tableau: A Magical Ending**

Meanwhile, the prince mourns the loss of Cendrillon. Just as he sinks into despair, La Fée appears, bringing with her his beloved. This magical interference calls the reality of this scene into question, as does the abrupt *deus ex machina* turn of the plot. Things proceed quickly after that: Cendrillon reprises her “Vous êtes mon Prince Charmant” material, the prince echoes her, and La Fée joins in for their final line. La Fée has never sung simultaneously with either of these

characters before, which is yet another way that the reality of the scene is called into question. Furthermore, as mentioned above, when the fairy joins what have could have been a Cendrillon-Prince Charmant duet to create a trio, she draws attention away from their reunion as a couple. This moment emphasizes the pervasive influence of magic throughout this opera, particularly on the lovers' interactions. That is, portraying Cendrillon and the prince as being brought together through magic, rather than through a mutual interest, raises questions about their future "after the curtain falls." In yet another way, the ending works to dissolve the relationship between these two characters even as it brings them together.

## **Conclusion**

Despite all the ways I have described in which Cendrillon and Prince Charmant are kept apart, Massenet and Cain still chose to end with a statement reminding the audience of the story's artifice. After some comic business with Madame de la Haltière embracing the stepdaughter she had repeatedly berated, Pandolfe turns to the audience and tell them, "here, all ends well" (*Ici tout finit bien*).<sup>76</sup> Then the entire ensemble, everyone on stage, announces to the audience that "the play is finished" (*la pièce est terminée*).<sup>77</sup> In explicitly stating that this was a play, Cain further disavows the union of Cendrillon and her soprano prince. Magic, dreams, and sleep have all worked throughout the opera to call reality into question, and this statement is the final reminder that what the audience is seeing—particularly the romance between two female performers—is not real but a story. Once the curtain falls, the spell will be broken and the soprano playing the prince will act like a woman once more.

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<sup>76</sup> VS, 357–58.

<sup>77</sup> VS, 358.

## CONCLUSION

### Other Central Trouser Roles in Nineteenth-Century French Opera

The mediation of the trouser role as romantic hero is not unique to *Cendrillon*. As Hadlock shows, Massenet and Cain carefully frame the sexual relationship of Chérubin and L'Ensoleillad in *Chérubin* and control the sight and sound of the trousered soprano. Furthermore, the dancer leaves Chérubin long before the opera ends, returning to her place as the king's mistress. The opera ends with the engagement of Chérubin and Nina, a young girl who has loved Chérubin for the entirety of the story, despite the fact that Chérubin has ignored and snubbed her all throughout the first act, and that she was completely absent from the second act as well as most of the third act. Not only does Chérubin propose to her quite abruptly, but the engagement is followed immediately by skeptical commentary from the bystanders regarding their future as a couple, including an instrumental quotation of *Don Giovanni* sure to be recognized by Parisian audiences as well as a verbal comparison of Chérubin to Don Juan and Nina to Elvira (Example 4.1, a and b).<sup>78</sup> The suddenness of the ending, the fact that Chérubin has mostly been developing his relationship with L'Ensoleillad rather than Nina throughout the opera, and the voiced suspicions that Chérubin and Nina will not have a successful relationship all undermine the opera's ostensibly romantic ending between Chérubin and Nina.

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<sup>78</sup> *Don Giovanni* was "easily the eighteenth-century opera best known to French audiences." Gibbons, *Operatic Museum*, 19.

**Example 4.1a** Chérubin as Don Juan (*Chérubin* vocal score, 311–12).

courant à NINA qui a conquis son tuteur  
et le plus ingénument du monde.

**a Tempo.** *f*

(parlé.) Ni-na, je t'ai-me!

**a Tempo.** *pp*

RICARDO. regardant CHÉRUBIN et joyeusement. *f*  
C'est Don Juan!

LE PHILOSOPHE. pensif, regardant NINA. *mf*  
C'est El - vi - re!

**Example 4.1b** Mandolin opening to “Deh vieni alla finestra” (manuscript).



Another Massenet opera, *Le Portrait de Manon* (1894), employs the same theme of “distraction” as *Cendrillon* in drawing attention away from the central romantic relationship. One of the distractions in *Cendrillon* is the strong relationship between father and daughter, particularly in the first tableau of Act Four. In *Le Portrait de Manon*, though the plot follows the



attempts of Jean (a trouser role) and Aurore to receive permission for marriage, the absent title character is undoubtedly the focus. The overture begins, for example, with a quotation of “Ah, fuyez, douce image, à mon âme trop chère!” from the third act of *Manon*, when Des Grieux had tried to resist memories of his lover, Manon (Example 4.2, a and b). But now that she is gone, he embraces those memories, as indicated by leitmotif quotations throughout the opera of its prequel. As Des Grieux gazes upon the titular portrait, for example, the orchestra plays the lilting melody the audience heard when Manon first descended from her carriage (Example 4.3, a and b). At the end, even as Jean and Aurore celebrate their impending marriage, they do so in the context of Aurore’s newly-revealed relation to Manon (she is Manon’s niece) and to the leitmotif that symbolizes Des Grieux’s love for Manon (Example 4.4, a and b). The characters all orient themselves around Manon; the audience does as well, as the music provides constant references to the opera’s famous prequel and thus constantly recalls the absent Manon.

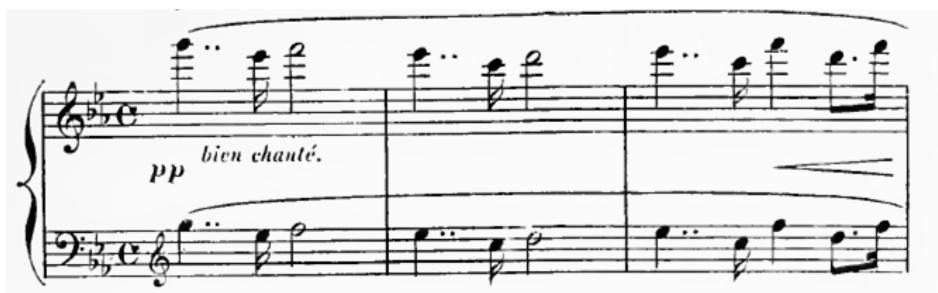
Even before the 1890s, the trouser role in French opera had gained new prominence. Jennifer Paulson, in her dissertation on humor in Emmanuel Chabrier’s operas, observes that *opéra bouffe* has a “preponderance of gender-bent central or title characters,” though this is hardly mentioned in the literature.<sup>79</sup> Indeed, in a recent well-respected text on French opera, Stephen Huebner seems to have ignored the fact that the male protagonist of Chabrier’s *Une Éducation manquée* (1879), Gontran de Boismassif, is a trouser role; he describes the operetta as “a one-act delight about a young couple who begin their wedding night uninformed about their physical differences” without a hint of irony or elaboration.<sup>80</sup> He also dismisses one of

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<sup>79</sup> Jennifer Ellen Paulson, “Riddled Constructs: A Study of Musical Humour in Emmanuel Chabrier’s Comic Operas” (Ph.D. diss., The University of British Columbia at Vancouver, 2011), 181, 181n246.

<sup>80</sup> Steven Huebner, *French Opera at the Fin-de-Siècle: Wagnerism, Nationalism, and Style* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 263.

**Example 4.2a** Opening of the overture to *Le Portrait de Manon* (vocal score, 1).



**Example 4.2b** Des Grieux: “Ah! fuyez, douce image,” (*Manon* vocal score, 272–73).

The musical score for Des Grieux's aria "Ah! fuyez, douce image," is written for voice and piano. It is in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The tempo is marked '1º Tempo.' and the instruction 'sostenuto.' is written above the vocal line. The piano accompaniment consists of a simple harmonic pattern in the right hand and a more active bass line in the left hand. The vocal line is marked 'f' (forte) and 'dim.' (diminuendo).

**Example 4.3a** Liltng motive in *Le Portrait de Manon* (vocal score, 13).

The musical score for the liltng motive in *Le Portrait de Manon* is written for voice and piano. It is in G major (one sharp) and 12/8 time. The tempo is marked 'a Tempo Aud.' and the instruction '54 = 1.' is written above the vocal line. The piano accompaniment consists of a simple harmonic pattern in the right hand and a more active bass line in the left hand. The vocal line is marked 'p' (piano) and 'expressif.' (expressive).

**Example 4.3b** Manon: “Je suis encor tout étourdie” (vocal score, 50).

The musical score for Manon's aria "Je suis encor tout étourdie" is written for voice and piano. It is in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The tempo is marked 'rall.' (rallentando) and the instruction '54 = 1.' is written above the vocal line. The piano accompaniment consists of a simple harmonic pattern in the right hand and a more active bass line in the left hand. The vocal line is marked 'p' (piano) and 'MANON (avec charme et emotion)'.

**Example 4.4a** Final vocals of *Le Portrait de Manon* (vocal score, 88).

Stesso tempo.  $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$ .

A. *ff* Ah! quel bon-heur nous en-i - vre! Quel bonheur! \_\_\_\_\_

J. *ff* Ah! quel bon-heur nous en-i - vre! Quel bonheur! \_\_\_\_\_

T. *ff* Ah! quel bon-heur nous en-i - vre! Quel bonheur! \_\_\_\_\_

U. *ff* Ah! quel bon-heur nous en-i - vre! Quel bonheur! \_\_\_\_\_

Stesso tempo.  $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$ .

*ff*

**Example 4.4b** Des Grieux: “Enchanteresse! Au charme vainqueur” (vocal score, 94).

DES GRIEUX (avec transport)

M. *f* Pour vous les ré-pé-ter... *poco rall.* En-cha-te-res se! Au *1º Tempo. 60 = ♩.*

D.G. *p più f ten.* charme vainqueur Ma-non! Vous êtes la maîtresse de mon- *expressif.*

*ff*

Chabrier's other prominent trouser roles. In *L'Étoile* (1877), the trouser role hero Lazuli woos the princess Laoula; Huebner comments:

The attraction between Lazuli and Laoula is obvious enough, but barely sentimentalized. They are not heard in a real love duet and situations of intimacy are so coloured by farce that they can scarcely be taken seriously (not to mention that Lazuli is a trouser role, not a tenor).<sup>81</sup>

Annegret Fauser, in her review of Huebner's book and Hervé Lacombe's *The Keys to French Opera in the Nineteenth Century*, points out that both texts are very weak in their consideration of women and gender; Huebner's unsatisfactory treatment of the trouser role is yet another such example.<sup>82</sup> Trouser roles are more frequent and more significant in French opera than much of the literature would seem to indicate.

### **Beyond the Score**

Those works discussed above are just a few examples of operas that feature trouser roles in prominent positions. Another factor that must be taken into account is how specific productions treat the presence of a trouser role in such operas. The only two commercially distributed realizations of *Cendrillon*, for example, lie at opposite ends of the spectrum of approaches to trouser role performance. On one end is Laurent Pelly's 2012 Royal Opera House production, which took these elements of magic, artifice, and gender play I have been discussing and magnified them, creating a lavish, campy, over-the-top production. On the other is the 1978 audio recording with mezzo-soprano Frederica von Stade as Cendrillon and tenor Nicolai Gedda

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 287.

<sup>82</sup> Annegret Fauser, review of *The Keys to French Opera in the Nineteenth Century* by Hervé Lacombe, translated by Edward Schneider, and *French Opera at the Fin de Siècle: Wagnerism, Nationalism, and Style* by Steven Huebner, *19th-Century Music* 26, no. 3 (Spring 2003): 285.

as Prince Charmant.<sup>83</sup> While Kristey Haney, in her recent D.M.A. dissertation on this opera, observes that this is “an accepted vocal substitution” which results in “a very different timbre,” I would argue that there is much more at work in this gender substitution.<sup>84</sup> The unusual sound of the female-female love duet, and extraordinary sound of the soprano-soprano unison line, both of which play such a prominent role in the interaction between the prince and Cendrillon, completely disappear from the recording. This offers a heteronormative version of *Cendrillon*; the listener hears male-female love duets and imagines a male and female performer doing so rather than hearing two women sing to each other and imagining two women, one cross-dressed, acting out the drama on stage. Gone is the gendered subtext, the reasons why the prince and Cendrillon are kept apart for so long.

Productions of operas with trouser roles, particularly if those roles are of central characters, have many options in ways to realize the trouser role in production. The Gedda version represents the replacement of the trousered soprano with a tenor, the erasure of gender subversion. The Pelly production represents the modern use of camp as a queer approach that draws attention to the gender at play. Other productions could retain the trouser role but treat it as an idiosyncrasy of opera, downplaying the trouser role by putting on an otherwise “normal” production. All this is to say that despite everything that I have discussed as being embedded in the score and in the libretto, performances add yet another layer to the treatment of gender in these operas.

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<sup>83</sup> Laurent Pelly, dir., *Cendrillon*, with Joyce DiDonato and Alice Coote, DVD (London: Royal Opera House, 2012); Julius Rudel, cond., *Cendrillon*, with Frederica von Stade and Nicolai Gedda, originally recorded on June 14–24, 1978, in All Saints Church, London, 2011, Sony Music Entertainment, 88697855742, two compact discs.

<sup>84</sup> Kristee Haney, “Massenet’s *Cendrillon*: Exploring the Interactions of the Orchestra and Vocal Line as Found in the Role of Cendrillon, and a Dramatically Rich Role for the Lyric Mezzo Soprano” (DMA diss., University of Kansas, 2014), 23n21.

## Considering the Trouser Role

Haney observes that Massenet and Cain have given Cendrillon “something that is truly rare for mezzos in the operatic canon: the chance to end up with the prince.”<sup>85</sup> As I have shown, the relationship of Cendrillon and Prince Charmant is not quite as simple or romantic as such a statement might imply. Indeed, the vexed presence of the prince is one of the reasons that Jennifer Paulson’s observation, “A trouser mezzo as *celebrated* hero is simply unknown in nineteenth-century opera,” rings so true.<sup>86</sup> That trouble with trouser roles would change in just a few years with Richard Strauss and Hugo von Hofmannsthal’s *Der Rosenkavalier* (1911). Heather Hadlock argues that “Strauss and Hofmannsthal, unlike their predecessors up to and including Massenet, no longer treat female travesty as a problem or a challenge, and their opera contains no trace of ambivalence about the practice.”<sup>87</sup> In this thesis, I have demonstrated the ambivalence shown in Massenet and Cain’s *Cendrillon*. Many of the obstacles within the opera arise as a result of navigating the presence of the trouser role. As my thesis demonstrates, the operatic trouser role, in nineteenth-century France as well as within the genre more broadly, offers an important yet frequently overlooked perspective to scholarship on gender and performance.

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>86</sup> Paulson, “Riddled Constructs,” 180. Emphasis mine.

<sup>87</sup> Hadlock, “Career of Cherubino,” 92.

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