

Adolphe Adam - Le Postillon de Lonjumeau (1985)

Written by bluesever

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1. Ouverture-Act I 2. Act II 3. Act III Chapelou - John Aler Saint-Phar - John Aler Le Marquis de Corcy - François Le Roux Biju - Jean-Philippe Lafont Alcindor - Jean-Philippe Lafont Madeleine - June Anderson Madame de Latour - June Anderson Bourdon - Daniel Ottevaere Rose - Balvina de Courcelles Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte-Carlo Thomas Fulton – conductor

Le postillon de Lonjumeau (The Coachman of Lonjumeau) is an opéra-comique in three acts by Adolphe Adam to a French libretto by 'Adolphe de Leuven' and 'Brunswick' (pen names of Adolphe von Ribbing and Léon Lévy).

The opera has become the most successful of Adam's works and the one by which he is best known outside his native France. The opera is known for the difficult aria 'Mes amis, écoutez l'histoire' which has been called a test for tenors because of the demanding high D, or D5, in the end of the aria.

The opera was premiered by the Opéra-Comique at the Salle de la Bourse in Paris on 13 October 1836. Performances followed in London at the St. James Theatre on 13 March 1837, and in New Orleans at the Théâtre d'Orléans on 19 April 1838.

Synopsis

Act 1

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Prévost and Chollet as Madeleine and Chapelou

The newly married postillion, or coachman, (Chapelou) and his wife (Madeleine), an innkeeper, to ensure that their marriage will be a joyous one, decide to consult a clairvoyant, who predicts that things will not go smoothly in their marriage but does not state exactly what will occur nor when. Initially concerned, their thoughts are temporarily forgotten as they enjoy their wedding night. Several days into the marriage, the Marquis de Corcy (who is also the director of the Royal Paris Opera House) arrives at the inn that Madeleine owns and Chapelou works at. He is immediately smitten with Chapelou's wife, but doesn't say anything to her. Then he overhears her husband singing his 'usual' song with other guests at the inn, and is impressed with his beautiful voice. He decides to invite the young coachman to join the Marquis' company, but they have to leave immediately. With excitement, Chapelou asks his friend, Bijou, to tell his wife where he has gone and what he plans to do. Chapelou and the Marquis then quickly depart for Paris, leaving Madeleine in a state of shock.

Act 2

Ten years later. By now Madeleine has come into an inheritance and is now known as Madame Latour, and Chapelou has become a star at the Paris Opera. After a performance, the Marquis holds a reception to which he has invited Madame Latour. As soon as they meet at the reception, Chapelou falls for the Madame's charms, not recognising the wife he left behind. He proposes, she accepts, and a wedding occurs.

Act 3

The Marquis has gone to inform the police and denounce this apparent act of bigamy. On the wedding night, Madeleine appears in her old peasant clothes and Chapelou recognises her. Then she transforms before his eyes into Madame Latour, the rich heiress. She reveals her deception to the Marquis, as he arrives with the police and declares to them her game - the couple have married twice and vow from that day on to love like good village people. This induces a hearty response from the chorus to provide a stirring finale.

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