

Daniel-Francois Auber – Fra Diavolo



1. Act I 2. Act II & III Fra Diavolo – Kenneth Tarver Zerline – Sumi Jo Lorenzo – Antonio Gigueroa Lady Pamela – Doris Lamprecht Lord Cockburn – Marc Molomot Matheo – Vincent Pavesi Giacomo – Thomas Dolie Beppo – Thomas Morris Choeur de Chambre Les Elements La Cercle de l'Harmonie Jeremie Rorer – director Fra Diavolo at Opera Comique, Paris, France, 2009

Fra Diavolo is based on a true character although the plot of this opera is totally fictitious - it is a black comedy about a highway robber - the music is rossinian in style with florid arias and many group ensembles with every singer pattering at the same time but recitatives are replaced by spoken-dialogues as is the custom in french opéra-comique. It takes a first-class cast to pull it off and that is what we get here although most soloists are in their twilight years. Nicolai Gedda at 58 re- mains amazingly suave and dexterous as Diavolo - Mady Mesplé (52) is charmingly girlish and very agile - Jane Berbié (52) and Rémy Corazza (50) are delightfully funny as an english couple recently robbed - the rest of the cast is excellent. It is well conducted and recorded - it comes on two super-bargain CDs with a synopsis but no libretto which may be a drawback for non french-speaking people - otherwise it is highly recommandable.

---Michel-Amazon.com

Daniel François Esprit Auber (29 January 1782 – 12/13 May 1871) was a French composer. Auber had already attempted musical composition, and at this period produced several concertos pour basse, modeled after violoncellist Lamarre, in whose name they were published. The praise given to his concerto for the violin, which was played at the Paris Conservatoire by Mazas, encouraged him to undertake a resetting of an old comic opera, Julie (1811). He also began to study with the renowned Luigi Cherubini. In 1822 began his long association with librettist Eugène Scribe. Their first opera, Leicester, shows evidence of the influence of Gioacchino Rossini in its musical style. Auber soon developed his own voice, however: light, vivacious, graceful, and melodious--characteristically French. Le maçon (1825) was his first major triumph, staying in the repertory until the 20th century, with 525 performances at the

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Opéra-Comique alone Official and other dignities testified to the public appreciation of Auber's works. In 1829 he was elected a member of the Institute. Fra Diavolo, which premiered on 28 January 1830, was his most successful opera.

In his later years, Auber's output slowed down considerably. The 1850s were marked by Manon Lescaut, an opéra comique with a tragic end (1856), and revisions of Le cheval de bronze and Fra Diavolo (both 1857). He had one major success in the 1860s: Le premier jour de bonheur (Opéra comique, 1868). Despite his slowdown in composing, he remained a well-loved figure, known for witty sayings and personal generosity. He survived the German siege of Paris in 1870-71, but died during the upheaval of the Paris Commune on 12 or 13 May 1871. Today, the Rue Auber leads up to the Paris Opera House and the nearest RER station is called Auber.

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