

OPERAS FOR JANUARY 2021

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The Tales of Hoffmann [Offenbach]

Born in Cologne in 1819, Jakob Offenbach went to Paris in 1833 to train as a cellist. Not long afterwards, he changed his name to Jacques and made his name firstly as a cello virtuoso and then as a composer. In 1855 he opened his first small theatre, the Bouffes-Parisiennes, where government rules limited the number of players on the stage to three and the audience was about 300. Despite this, Offenbach soon established a reputation as a composer of witty and tuneful parodies on French society. In 1858 the limitations on cast size were lifted and with a winter season in a more substantial theatre complemented by a London season, Offenbach became [in Rossini's words], "the Mozart of the Champs-Élysées". But Offenbach was extravagant in his productions as well as in his personal life and the 1870 war between France and Germany saw his reputation destroyed as well as the audience for his satires on the Second Empire of Napoleon III. By 1872, things were back to normal and the merry life of Offenbach continued. But Offenbach always wanted to write a serious opera and he worked on adapting the stage play of *The Tales of Hoffmann* by Jules Barbier and Michel Carré. Now in failing health, he hoped to live long enough to finish it and when he died in 1880, the work needed additional orchestration and sung recitatives to complete it. He was given a state funeral and *Hoffmann* in its almost complete state was in February 1881. Since then many producers and composers have meddled with the order of the acts, whole scenes have been removed, restored or added later. Despite all this, the work has entered the repertoire of major opera companies and is recognised as a masterpiece. This is to take nothing away from the masterly operettas with which Offenbach had made his name.

The opera is in a Prologue, three Acts and an Epilogue. In the theatre, it is common to have a different leading soprano for each of the three acts.

Prologue: A tavern in Nuremberg. The Muse appears and reveals to the audience that her purpose is to draw Hoffmann's attention to herself, and to make him abjure all other loves, so he can be devoted fully to her: poetry. She takes the appearance of Hoffmann's closest friend, Nicklausse. The prima donna Stella, currently performing Mozart's *Don Giovanni* sends a letter to Hoffmann, requesting a meeting in her dressing room after the performance. The letter, and the key to the room, are intercepted by Councillor Lindorf who is the first of the opera's incarnations of evil, Hoffmann's nemesis. Lindorf intends to replace Hoffmann at the rendezvous. In the tavern students are waiting for Hoffmann. He finally arrives and entertains them with the legend of Zaches [Kleinzack] the dwarf and is coaxed by Lindorf into telling the audience about his life's three great loves.

Act 1 (Olympia): Hoffmann's first love is Olympia, an automaton created by the scientist Spalanzani. Hoffmann falls in love with her, not knowing that Olympia is a mechanical doll. Nicklausse, who knows the truth about Olympia, sings a story of a mechanical doll that looked like a human to warn Hoffmann, but is ignored by him. Coppélius, Olympia's co-

creator and this act's incarnation of Nemesis, sells Hoffmann magic glasses which make Olympia appear as a real woman.

Olympia sings one of the opera's most famous arias, "Les oiseaux dans la charmille" ("The Doll Song"), in which she periodically runs down and needs to be wound up before she can continue. Hoffmann is tricked into believing that his affections are returned, to the bemusement of Nicklausse, who subtly tries to warn his friend. While dancing with Olympia, Hoffmann falls on the ground and his glasses break. At the same time, Coppélius appears and tears Olympia apart, in retaliation for having been tricked out of his fees by Spalanzani. With the crowd laughing at him, Hoffmann realizes that he was in love with an automaton.

This act is based on a portion of "Der Sandmann" (The Sandman).

Act 2 (Antonia): After a long search, Hoffmann finds the house where Crespel and his daughter Antonia are hiding. Hoffmann and Antonia loved each other, but were separated when Crespel decided to hide his daughter from Hoffmann. Antonia has inherited her mother's talent for singing, but her father forbids her to sing because of the mysterious illness from which she is suffering. Antonia wishes that her lover would return to her. Her father also forbids her to see Hoffmann, who is encouraging Antonia in her musical career, and is therefore a danger to her without knowing it. Crespel tells Frantz, his servant, to stay with his daughter and when he leaves.

When Crespel leaves his house, Hoffmann takes advantage of the occasion to sneak in, and the lovers are reunited. When Crespel comes back, he receives the visit of Dr Miracle, the act's Nemesis, who forces Crespel to let him heal Antonia. Still in the house, Hoffmann listens to the conversation and learns that Antonia may die if she sings too much. He returns to her room to make her promise to give up her artistic dreams. Antonia reluctantly accepts her lover's will. Once she is alone, Dr Miracle enters Antonia's room and tries to persuade her to sing and follow her mother's path to glory, stating that Hoffmann is sacrificing her to his brutishness and loves her only for her beauty. With mystic powers, he raises a vision of Antonia's dead mother and induces Antonia to sing, causing her death. Crespel arrives just in time to witness his daughter's last breath. Hoffmann enters the room and Crespel wants to kill him, thinking that he is responsible for his daughter's death. Nicklausse saves his friend from the old man's vengeance.

This act is based on "Rath Krespel".

Act 3 (Giulietta): Venice. The act opens with the barcarolle "Belle nuit, ô nuit d'amour". Hoffmann falls in love with the courtesan Giulietta and thinks his affections are returned. Giulietta is not in love with Hoffmann but only seducing him under the orders of Captain Dapertutto, who has promised to give her a diamond if she steals Hoffmann's reflection from a mirror. The jealous Schlemil, a previous victim of Giulietta and Dapertutto (he gave Giulietta his shadow), challenges the poet to a duel, but is killed. Nicklausse wants to take Hoffmann away from Venice and goes looking for horses. Meanwhile, Hoffmann meets Giulietta and cannot resist her: he gives her his reflection, only to be abandoned by the courtesan, to Dapertutto's great pleasure. Hoffmann tells Dapertutto that his friend Nicklausse will come and save him. Dapertutto prepares a poison to get rid of Nicklausse, but Giulietta drinks it by mistake and drops dead in the arms of the poet.

This act is very loosely based on Die Abenteuer der Silvester-Nacht (A New Year's Eve Adventure).

Epilogue: The tavern in Nuremberg. Hoffmann, drunk, swears he will never love again, and explains that Olympia, Antonia, and Giulietta are three facets of the same person, Stella. They represent, respectively, the young girl's, the musician's, and the courtesan's side of the prima donna. When Hoffmann says he doesn't want to love any more, Nicklausse reveals himself as the Muse and reclaims Hoffmann: "Be reborn a poet! I love you, Hoffmann! Be mine!" The magic of poetry reaches Hoffmann as he sings "O Dieu! de quelle ivresse" once more, ending with "Muse whom I love, I am yours!" At this moment, Stella, who is tired of waiting for Hoffmann to come to her rendezvous, enters the tavern and finds him drunk. The poet tells her to leave ("Farewell, I will not follow you, phantom, spectre of the past"), and Lindorf, who was waiting in the shadows, comes forth. Nicklausse explains to Stella that Hoffmann does not love her any more, but that Councillor Lindorf is waiting for her. Some students enter the room for more drinking, while Stella and Lindorf leave together.

Don Quichotte (Don Quixote) Massenet

Don Quichotte is an opera in five acts by Jules Massenet to a French libretto by Henri Cain. It was first performed on 19 February 1910 at the Opéra de Monte-Carlo.

Massenet's comédie-héroïque, like many dramatized versions of the story of Don Quixote, relates only indirectly to the novel Don Quixote by Miguel de Cervantes. The immediate inspiration was *Le chevalier de la longue figure*, a play by the poet Jacques Le Lorrain first performed in Paris in 1904. In this version of the story, the simple farm girl Aldonza (Dulcinea) of the original novel becomes the more sophisticated Dulcinée, a flirtatious local beauty inspiring the infatuated old man's exploits.

Roles

La belle Dulcinée (The beautiful Dulcinea)	contralto
Don Quichotte (Don Quixote)	bass
Sancho (Sancho Panza)	baritone
Pedro (travesti)	soprano
Garcias (travesti)	soprano
Rodriguez	tenor
Juan	tenor
Chief of the Bandits	spoken
Two valets	baritones
Four bandits	spoken

Synopsis

Place: Spain

Act 1 A square in front of Dulcinée's house

A festival is being celebrated. Four hopeful admirers of Dulcinée serenade her from the street. Dulcinée appears and explains philosophically that being adored is not enough, 'Quand la femme a vingt ans' ('When a woman is twenty'). She withdraws and a crowd, largely of beggars, acclaim the arrival of the eccentric knight Don Quichotte (riding on his horse Rossinante) and his comic squire Sancho Panza (on a donkey). Delighted by their attention, Don Quichotte tells a reluctant Sancho to throw them money. After the crowd disperse, Don Quichotte himself serenades Dulcinée, 'Quand apparaissent les étoiles' ('When the stars begin to shine') but he is stopped by Juan, a jealous admirer of the local beauty. A sword fight

follows, interrupted by Dulcinée herself. She is charmed by Don Quichotte's antique attentions, chides Juan for his jealousy and sends him away. The old man offers her his devotion and a castle. She suggests instead that he might retrieve a pearl necklace of hers stolen by Ténébrun, the bandit chief. He undertakes to do so, and Dulcinée quickly rejoins her men friends.

Act 2 In the countryside. A misty morning, Don Quichotte and Sancho enter with Rossinante and the donkey. Don Quichotte is composing a love poem. Sancho delivers a grand tirade against their expedition, against Dulcinée, and against women in general. 'Comment peut-on penser du bien de ces coquines' ('How can anyone think anything good of those hussies'). The mists disperse revealing a line of windmills that Don Quichotte takes for a group of giants. To Sancho's horror, Don Quichotte attacks the first one, only to be caught up in one of the sails and hoisted up in the air.

Act 3 In the mountains. Dusk, Don Quichotte believes they are getting close to the bandits. Sancho goes to sleep while Don Quichotte stands guard. The bandits suddenly appear and after a brief fight take the knight prisoner. Sancho escapes. Surprised by the defiance of the old man, the bandits give him a beating and intend to kill him, however Don Quichotte's prayer 'Seigneur, reçois mon âme, elle n'est pas méchante' ('Lord receive my soul, it is not evil') moves Ténébrun, the bandit chief, to mercy. Don Quichotte explains his mission 'Je suis le chevalier errant' ('I am the Knight-errant'), and the necklace is returned to him. The bandits ask for the blessing of the noble knight before he leaves.

Act 4 The garden of Dulcinée's House

Music and dancing, a party is in progress, but Dulcinée is melancholy, 'Lorsque le temps d'amour a fui' ('When the time of love has gone'). Rousing herself, she snatches a guitar and sings 'Ne pensons qu'au plaisir d'aimer' ('Think just of the pleasures of love'). All retire to dinner. Sancho and Don Quichotte arrive. While waiting for Dulcinée, Sancho asks for his reward to which Don Quichotte responds with vague promises of an island, a castle, riches. Dulcinée and her party greet the knight and he returns the necklace to universal acclaim. However, when he asks her to marry him he is greeted with hysterical laughter. Taking pity, Dulcinée tells the others to leave, apologizes 'Oui, je souffre votre tristesse, et j'ai vraiment chagrin à vous désemparer' ('I share your sorrow and am truly sorry') but explains that her destiny, her way of life, is different from his. She kisses him on the forehead and leaves. But the company return to make fun of the old man. Sancho vigorously upbraids them, 'Riez, allez, riez du pauvre idéologue' ('Laugh, laugh at this poor idealist') and takes his master away.

Act 5 A mountain pass in an ancient forest. A clear starry night, Don Quichotte is dying. He remembers once promising Sancho an island as his reward, and offers him an isle of dreams, 'Prends cette île' ('Take that isle'). Nearing death, Don Quichotte looks up at a star shining brightly above and hears the voice of Dulcinée calling him to another world. Then he collapses as Sancho weeps over his body.

The Fair at Sorochyntsi (Russian: Сорочинская ярмарка, Sorochinskaya yarmarka, Sorochyntsi Fair) is a comic opera in three acts by Modest Mussorgsky, composed between 1874 and 1880 in St. Petersburg, Russia. The composer wrote the libretto, which is based on Nikolai Gogol's short story of the same name, from his early (1832) collection of Ukrainian

stories Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka. The opera remained unfinished and unperformed at Mussorgsky's death in 1881. Mussorgsky worked on the opera between 1874 and 1880, in competition with his work on Khovanshchina (1872–1880); both were incomplete at the time of his death in 1881. He reused some music that he had written previously (such as the "Market Scene" from Act II of the ill-fated *Mlada* of 1872, used for the opening scene of *Fair*). Incorporation of the music of *Night on Bald Mountain* as a dream sequence involving the hero was a late addition to the scenario in the course of composition, despite the fact that such an episode is not suggested by the original story. Although Mussorgsky managed to complete some numbers and even some of the orchestration, significant portions of the scenario were left only in bare sketches, or without any music at all.

Several subsequent composers and editors played partial or maximal roles in bringing the work into a performable state. The first staged performance, with spoken sections, occurred on 8 October 1913 in Moscow under Konstantin Saradzhev. Beginning in 1917, the first of several fully-sung versions reached the stage. Today, the completion by Vissarion Shebalin, premiered in 1931, has become the standard, and is the one used in the *Brilliant Classics* recording being broadcast.

Roles

Cherevik	bass
Khivrya, Cherevik's wife	mezzo-soprano
Parasya, Cherevik's daughter, Khivrya's stepdaughter	soprano
Kum	bass-baritone
Gritsko, a peasant lad	tenor
Afanasiy Ivanovich, a priest's son	tenor
The gypsy / Chernobog	bass
Sorochyntsi Fair people and others	mixed chorus and silent roles.

Synopsis

Time: Beginning of the 19th century

Place: The village of Velikiye Sorochyntsi, near Poltava

Act I

A hot summer's day. A noisy market is underway. Cherevik has come here to sell wheat and a mare. His daughter, the beautiful Parasya, is with him. Intending to scare the buyers and get the goods he needs cheaper, the Gypsy tells the crowd that not far off, a Red Coven has settled in an old barn; it belongs to the Devil and brings destruction on people. In the meantime, the peasant lad Gritsko is murmuring sweet nothings to Parasya, whose beauty has captured his heart. Cherevik is initially incensed at the lad's bold amorousness, but on discovering that Gritsko is the son of his old friend he has nothing against the marriage. Now it is time to go into the tavern. Cherevik emerges to go home late together with Kum. Khivrya meets her husband in fury. There is no end to her wrath when she discovers that the bridegroom is none other than the very same peasant lad who recently made fun of her. Hearing this talk, Gritsko is deeply saddened. However, the Gypsy declares he will help on the condition that the lad will sell him his oxen cheaply.

Act II

Khivrya has thrown her husband out of the house for the night under some specious excuse, and is eagerly awaiting her lover Afanasy Ivanovich. At last, the priest's son appears, generously showering her with high-flown compliments. Tirelessly Khivrya entertains her guest. But the priest's son's declarations of love are interrupted by a knock at the gate – it is Cherevik and Kum with some guests. Shaking in fear, Khivrya's lover hides on the sleeping bench. The unexpected arrivals are scared to death by the Red Coven, which rumour has it came to the fair. Only once having drunk some liquor do they calm down somewhat. Kum leads a talk about the Devil, who has pawned the inn-keeper his Red Coven, and now, disguised as a pig, is searching for it all over the fair. The sudden appearance of a pig's snout at the window throws everyone into indescribable terror. The guests and master and mistress flee to safety.

Act III

Headed by the Gypsy, the peasant lads seize Cherevik and Kum and tie them up, ostensibly for stealing the mare. In line with the Gypsy's cunning plan, Gritsko appears in the role of their rescuer. As a reward, the lad demands the wedding take place quickly, and Cherevik agrees gladly enough.

In the Intermezzo which follows, Gritsko, dreaming of Parasya, the happy bridegroom falls asleep. He dreams Chernobog and his retinue are celebrating the Witches' Sabbath that ceases only with the peal of the church bell.

Parasya misses her beloved, and so the lovers' reunion is even more joyous when he joins her dancing on her own. Taking advantage of Khivrya's absence, after she has been removed from the scene and her objections ignored, Cherevik blesses the young couple. All dance a hopak in joy.

Les Huguenots –The Huguenots Giacomo Meyerbeer

An opera in five acts; music by Meyerbeer, words by Scribe and Deschamps, Produced, Grand Opera, Paris, February 29, 1836, New York, Astor Place Opera House, June 24, 1850, with Salvi (Raoul), Coletti (de Nevers), Setti (St. Bris), Marini (Marcel), Signorina Bosio (Marguerite), Steffanone (Valentine), Vietti (Urbain); Academy of Music, March 8, 1858, with La Grange and Formes; April 30, 1872, Parepa-Rosa, Wachtel, and Santley (St. Bris): Academy of Music, 1873, with Nilsson, Cary, Del Puente, and Campanini; Metropolitan Opera House, beginning 1901, with Melba or Sembrich as Marguerite de Valois, Nordica (Valentine), Jean de Reszke (Raoul), Edouard de Reszke (Marcel), Plançon (St. Bris), Maurel (de Nevers), and Mantelli (Urbain) (performances known as "the nights of the seven stars"); Metropolitan Opera House, 1914, with Caruso, Destinn, Hempel, Matzenauer, Braun, and Scotti. The first performance in America occurred April 29, 1839, in New Orleans.

CHARACTERS

VALENTINE, daughter of St. Bris	Soprano
MARGUERITE DE VALOIS, betrothed to Henry IV, of Navarre .	Soprano
URBAIN, page to Marguerite	Mezzo-Soprano
COUNT DE ST. BRIS, Catholic nobleman	Baritone
COUNT DE NEVERS, Catholic nobleman	Baritone
COSSE	Tenor

MERU, Catholic gentleman	Baritone
THORE, Catholic gentleman	Baritone
TAVANNES, Catholic gentleman	Tenor
DE RETZ	Baritone
RAOUL DE NANGIS, a Huguenot nobleman	Tenor
MARCEL, a Huguenot soldier, servant to Raoul	Bass

Catholic and Huguenot ladies and gentlemen of the court; soldiers, pages, citizens, and populace; night watch, monks, and students.

Place: Touraine and Paris.

Time: August, 1572.

It has been said that, because Meyerbeer was a Jew, he chose for two of his operas, "Les Huguenots" and "Le Prophète," subjects dealing with bloody uprising due to religious differences among Christians. "Les Huguenots" is written around the massacre of the Huguenots by the Catholics, on the night of St. Bartholomew's, Paris, August 24, 1572; "Le Prophète" around the seizure and occupation of Munster, in 1555, by the Anabaptists, led by John of Leyden. Even the ballet of the spectral nuns, in "Robert le Diable," has been suggested as due to Meyerbeer's racial origin and a tendency covertly to attack the Christian religion. Most likely his famous librettist was chiefly responsible for choice of subjects and Meyerbeer accepted them because of the effective manner in which they were worked out. Even so, he was not wholly satisfied with Scribe's libretto of "Les Huguenots." He had the scene of the benediction of the swords enlarged, and it was upon his insistence that Deschamps wrote in the love duet in Act IV. As it stands, the story has been handled with keen appreciation of its dramatic possibilities.

Act I. Touraine. Count de Nevers, one of the leaders of the Catholic party, has invited friends to a banquet at his chateau. Among these is Raoul de Nangis, a Huguenot. He is accompanied by an old retainer, the Huguenot soldier, Marcel. In the course of the fête it is proposed that everyone shall toast his love in a song. Raoul is the first to be called upon. The name of the beauty whom he pledges in his toast is unknown to him. He had come to her assistance while she was being molested by a party of students. She thanked him most graciously. He lives in the hope of meeting her again.

Marcel is a fanatic Huguenot. Having followed his master to the banquet, he finds him surrounded by leaders of the party belonging to the opposite faith. He fears for the consequences. In strange contrast to the glamour and gaiety of the festive proceedings, he intones Luther's hymn, "A Stronghold Sure." The noblemen of the Catholic party instead of becoming angry are amused. Marcel repays their levity by singing a fierce Huguenot battle song. That also amuses them.

At this point the Count de Nevers is informed that a lady is in the garden and wishes to speak with him. He leaves his guests who, through an open window, watch the meeting. Raoul, to his surprise and consternation, recognizes in the lady none other than the fair creature whom he saved from the molestations of the students and with whom he has fallen in love. Naturally, however, from the circumstances of her meeting with de Nevers he cannot but conclude that a liaison exists between them.

De Nevers returns, rejoins his guests. Urbain, the page of Queen Marguerite de Valois, enters. He is in search of Raoul, having come to conduct him to a meeting with a gracious

and noble lady whose name, however, is not disclosed. Raoul's eyes having been bandaged, he is conducted to a carriage and departs with Urbain, wondering what his next adventure will be.

Act II. In the garden of Chenonceaux, Queen Marguerite de Valois receives Valentine, daughter of the Count de St. Bris. The Queen knows of her rescue from the students by Raoul. Desiring to put an end to the differences between Huguenots and Catholics, which have already led to bloodshed, she has conceived the idea of uniting Valentine, daughter of one of the great Catholic leaders, to Raoul. Valentine, however, was already pledged to de Nevers. It was at the Queen's suggestion that she visited de Nevers and had him summoned from the banquet in order to ask him to release her from her engagement to him -- a request which, however reluctantly, he granted.

Here, in the Gardens of Chenonceaux, Valentine and Raoul are, according to the Queen's plan, to meet again, but she intends first to receive him alone. He is brought in, the bandage is removed from his eyes, he does homage to the Queen, and when, in the presence of the leaders of the Catholic party, Marguerite de Valois explains her purpose and her plan through this union of two great houses to end the religious differences which have disturbed her reign, all consent.

Valentine is led in. Raoul at once recognizes her as the woman of his adventure but also, alas, as the woman whom de Nevers met in the garden during the banquet. Believing her to be unchaste, he refuses her hand. General consternation. St. Bris, his followers, all draw their swords. Raoul's flashes from its sheath. Only the Queen's intervention prevents bloodshed.

Act III. The scene is an open place in Paris before a chapel, where de Nevers, who has renewed his engagement with Valentine, is to take her in marriage. The nuptial cortege enters the building. The populace is restless, excited. Religious differences still are the cause of enmity. The presence of Royalist and Huguenot soldiers adds to the restlessness of the people. De Nevers, St. Bris, and another Catholic nobleman, Maurevert, come out from the chapel, where Valentine has desired to linger in prayer. The men are still incensed over what appears to them the shameful conduct of Raoul toward Valentine. Marcel at that moment delivers to St. Bris a challenge from Raoul to fight a duel. When the old Huguenot soldier has retired, the noblemen conspire together to lead Raoul into an ambush. During the duel, followers of St. Bris, who have been placed in hiding, are suddenly to issue forth and murder the young Huguenot nobleman. From a position in the vestibule of the chapel, Valentine has overheard the plot. She still loves Raoul and him alone. How shall she warn him of the certain death in store for him? She sees Marcel and counsels him that his master must not come here to fight the duel unless he is accompanied by a strong guard. As a result, when Raoul and his antagonist meet, and St. Bris's soldiers are about to attack the Huguenot, Marcel summons the latter's followers from a nearby inn. A street fight between the two bodies of soldiers is imminent, when the Queen and her suite enter. A gaily bedecked barge comes up the river and lays to at the bank. It bears de Nevers and his friends. He has come to convey his bride from the chapel to his home. And now Raoul learns, from the Queen, and to his great grief, that he has refused the hand of the woman who loved him and who had gone to de Nevers in order to ask him to release her from her engagement with him.

Act IV. Raoul seeks Valentine, who has become the wife of de Nevers, in her home. He wishes to be assured of the truth of what he has heard from the Queen. During their meeting

footsteps are heard approaching and Valentine barely has time to hide Raoul in an adjoining room when de Nevers, St. Bris, and other noblemen of the catholic party enter, and form a plan to be carried out that very night -- the night of St. Bartholomew -- to massacre the Huguenots. Only de Nevers refuses to take part in the conspiracy. Rather than do so, he yields his sword to St. Bris and is led away a prisoner. The priests bless the swords, St. Bris and his followers swear loyalty to the bloody cause in which they are enlisted, and depart to await the order to put it into effect, the tolling of the great bell from St. Germain.

Raoul comes out from his place of concealment. His one thought is to hurry away and notify his brethren of their peril. Valentine seeks to detain him, entreats him not to go, since it will be to certain death. As the greatest and final argument to him to remain, she proclaims that she loves him. But already the deep-voiced bell tolls the signal. Flames, blood-red, flare through the windows. Nothing can restrain Raoul from doing his duty. Valentine stands before the closed door to block his egress. Rushing to a casement, he throws back the window and leaps to the street.

Act V. Covered with blood, Raoul rushes into the ballroom of the Hotel de Nesle, where the Huguenot leaders, ignorant of the massacre that has begun, are assembled, and summons them to battle. Already Coligny, their great commander, has fallen. Their followers are being massacred.

The scene changes to a Huguenot churchyard, where Raoul and Marcel have found temporary refuge. Valentine hurries in. She wishes to save Raoul. She adjures him to adopt her faith. De Nevers has met a noble death and she is free-free to marry Raoul. But he refuses to marry her at the sacrifice of his religion. Now she decides that she will die with him and that they will both die as Huguenots and united. Marcel blesses them. The enemy has stormed the churchyard and begins the massacre of those who have sought safety there and in the edifice itself. Again the scene changes, this time to a square in Paris. Raoul, who has been severely wounded, is supported by Marcel and Valentine. St. Bris and his followers approach. In answer to St. Bris's summons, "Who goes there?" Raoul, calling to his aid all the strength he has left, cries out, "Huguenots." There is a volley. Raoul, Valentine, Marcel lie dead on the ground. Too late St. Bris discovers that he has been the murderer of his own daughter.

Originally in five acts, the version of "Les Huguenots" usually performed contains but three. The first two acts are drawn into one by converting the second act into a scene and adding it to the first. The fifth act (or in the usual version the fourth) is nearly always omitted. This is due to the length of the opera. The audience takes it for granted that, when Raoul leaves Valentine, he goes to his death.