

## THE USE OF THE HARMONIUM IN OPERA

ÁDÁM SÁNDOR FAZAKAS<sup>1</sup>

**SUMMARY.** The article explores the role of harmonium in opera during the transformative 19th and early 20th centuries, amidst significant reforms in orchestration. The author thoroughly explores how harmonium is used in opera, even providing a table of operas that feature this instrument. It delves into specific opera passages by composers representing diverse nationalities and spanning various epochs, covering the period from 1845 to 1936. Through examples from works such as Verdi's "Giovanna d'Arco" and "Don Carlos," Dvořák's "Rusalka," and Enescu's "Œdipe," the essay illustrates the diverse roles played by the harmonium in operas. The author highlights the historical and musical significance of the harmonium in opera, suggesting a reevaluation of its role in today's performances.

**Keywords:** harmonium, orchestra, opera, romantic music, 20th century music

### The reforms in opera orchestration

The 19th century witnessed a profound transformation in the world of opera, characterized by a series of reforms that reshaped the art form in fundamental ways. These reforms encompassed musical, dramatic, and performative aspects, ushering in a new era of operatic expression and innovation.

Musically, the 19th century marked a departure from the formal constraints of earlier operatic styles, as composers sought to imbue their works with heightened emotional intensity and individual expression. Figures such as Richard Wagner and Giuseppe Verdi played pivotal roles in revolutionizing operatic music, introducing novel harmonic languages, innovative orchestration

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techniques, and a deeper integration of music with dramatic narrative. Wagner, particularly championed the concept of “Gesamtkunstwerk,” or total artwork, advocating for a seamless fusion of music, drama, and visual elements to create immersive theatrical experiences<sup>2</sup>.

Dramatically, operatic plots became increasingly complex and psychologically nuanced during the 19th century. Composers and librettists delved into the depths of human emotion and experience, crafting narratives that explored themes of love, betrayal, redemption, and existential struggle. Characters evolved from archetypal figures to multi-dimensional personalities, reflecting the evolving sensibilities of audiences and the broader cultural currents of the time. Works such as Wagner’s “Tristan und Isolde” and Verdi’s “La Traviata” exemplified this shift towards greater psychological realism and dramatic complexity.

In terms of performance, the 19th century witnessed significant advancements in stagecraft and production techniques. Opera houses underwent renovations and modernizations, equipped with state-of-the-art facilities to accommodate the growing demands of increasingly ambitious productions. Elaborate sets, lavish costumes, and sophisticated lighting designs became standard features of operatic performances, enhancing the visual spectacle and immersive quality of the theatrical experience.

Furthermore, the 19th century saw the emergence of new operatic genres and styles, such as operetta and opera seria, catering to diverse tastes and audiences. These innovations expanded the creative possibilities of opera, paving the way for experimentation and cross-pollination with other artistic forms.

In conclusion, the reforms of the 19th century marked a watershed moment in the history of opera, ushering in a period of unprecedented artistic experimentation, innovation, and dynamism. The legacy of these reforms continues to resonate in the operatic landscape of today, shaping the evolution of the art form and inspiring generations of composers, performers, and audiences alike.

### **The *Harmonium*<sup>3</sup>: A novel addition to operatic works**

The use of the harmonium in operas has been somewhat limited compared to other musical instruments. While it may not have played a central role, it has been employed in certain contexts to enhance the musical texture or to achieve specific artistic effects.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/art/theater-building/German-Romanticism-and-Naturalism#ref464013> (27.03.2023)

<sup>3</sup> Aerophone keyboard instrument where the free reeds vibrate through air pressure generated by pedal pumping. It was patented in 1842 by Alexandre-François Debain.

THE USE OF THE HARMONIUM IN OPERA

The harmonium, with its portable and versatile nature, found occasional use in opera productions, particularly in the 19th and early 20th centuries. It was often utilized in smaller-scale opera performances, chamber operas, or in productions with limited resources. In these cases, the harmonium could substitute for larger keyboard instruments like the piano or organ, providing accompaniment for rehearsals or smaller venues where space or budget constraints precluded the use of a full orchestra.

Additionally, composers occasionally included the harmonium in their orchestration to add color or to evoke specific atmospheres. Its unique timbre and expressive capabilities made it suitable for creating ethereal or otherworldly sounds, enhancing certain dramatic moments or underscoring emotional tension in the music.

**Table 1**

<b>First perf.</b>	<b>Composer</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Part(s)</b>	<b>Position</b>
1845	Giuseppe Verdi	Giovanna d'Arco	Prologue	?
1867	Giuseppe Verdi	Don Carlos	Act II	On-stage
1894	Jules Massenet	Le portrait de Manon	one act	<i>Dans les coulisses ?</i>
1900	Antonín Dvořák	Rusalka, Op. 114	Act III	Behind the scene
1901	Richard Strauss	Feuersnot, Op.50	one act	Off-stage
1905	Richard Strauss	Salome, Op.54	one act	Off-stage
1911	Richard Strauss	Der Rosenkavalier, Op.59	Act III	Off-stage
1916	Richard Strauss	Ariadne auf Naxos, Op.60	Vorspiel, Act I	Orchestra
1920	Erich Wolfgang Korngold	Die tote Stadt, Op.12	Act II	Orchestra
1922	Franz Schmidt	Fredigundis IFS 6	?	?
1924	Richard Strauss	Intermezzo, Op.72	Act II	Orchestra
1925	Arthur Honegger	Judith H.57b	1,2,7,11,13	Orchestra

<b>First perf.</b>	<b>Composer</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Part(s)</b>	<b>Position</b>
1927	Paul Hindemith	Hin und Zurück, Op.45a	one scene	Behind the Scene
1928	Kurt Weill	Die Dreigroschenoper	Act I, II, III	?
1930	Kurt Weill	Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny	?	?
1930	Kurt Weill	Der Jasager	?	?
1932	Franz Schreker	Der Schmied von Gent	?	?
1936	George Enescu	Œdipe	Act II, III, IV	Orchestra
1978	Jack Beeson	Doctor Heidegger's Fountain of Youth	one act	?

#### **Operatic works using harmonium<sup>4</sup>**

The harmonium, with its portable and versatile nature, found occasional use in opera productions, particularly in the 19th and early 20th centuries. It is important to note that after the patenting of the harmonium in 1842, it was already in use in operas just three years later, as far as current knowledge indicates.

It was often utilized in smaller-scale opera performances, chamber operas, or in productions with limited resources. In these cases, the harmonium could substitute for larger keyboard instruments like the piano or organ, providing accompaniment for rehearsals or smaller venues where space or budget constraints precluded the use of a full orchestra.

Additionally, composers occasionally included harmonium in their orchestration to add color or to evoke specific atmospheres. Its unique timbre and expressive capabilities made it suitable for creating ethereal or otherworldly sounds, enhancing certain dramatic moments or underscoring emotional tension in the music.

However, it's essential to note that the harmonium's presence in opera remained relatively marginal compared to instruments like the piano, strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion, which formed the backbone

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<sup>4</sup> The operas utilizing the harmonium, discovered and systematized by the author.

of orchestral and vocal accompaniment in most opera productions. Nevertheless, its occasional use added variety and flexibility to opera performances, demonstrating the instrument's adaptability across different musical genres and settings.

### **Representative examples**

This text seeks to offer a succinct, yet comprehensive exploration of specific opera passages distinguished by the inclusion of the harmonium, without purporting to be exhaustive in scope. It will delve into compositions crafted by composers representing diverse nationalities and spanning various epochs within the operatic canon, covering the period from 1845 to 1936.

### **Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901)**

Giuseppe Verdi is a distinguished luminary in the realm of Italian opera, whose name epitomizes the essence of this esteemed musical tradition. Over multiple decades, Verdi crafted exceptional operas that endure in popularity and global performance. His profound influence permeates the evolution of Italian opera, spanning from the 19th century to contemporary times.<sup>5</sup>

Verdi's compositions are renowned for their fervent portrayal of human emotions and narrative conflicts, showcasing intricate musical structures alongside profound emotional depth. Verdi's works have significantly shaped the trajectory of opera, ushering in new artistic paradigms for Italian opera. Today, Verdi's legacy endures, with his operas retaining a central position in the repertoire and continuing to inspire successive generations of composers, performers, and aficionados of opera worldwide.

Verdi spent a considerable portion of his life in France, providing him ample opportunity to become acquainted with the harmonium. Indeed, the harmonium makes appearances in several of his operas, often as an onstage instrument.

The harmonium is featured numerous times in Verdi's works, adding a special atmosphere to the musical palette. While the role of the harmonium may vary in prominence across different operas, it consistently brings a distinctive color to the performance.

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<sup>5</sup> Wlaschin, Ken. *Encyclopedia of Opera on Screen*, Yale University Press, 2004, p. 737.

**Giovanna d'Arco** is a lyrical drama with a prologue and three acts composed by Giuseppe Verdi, with a libretto by Temistocle Solera. It premiered on February 15, 1845. This work marks an important milestone in Verdi's career as it showcases his mastery in blending poignant storytelling with powerful music, contributing to the opera's enduring legacy in the repertoire.

E.g. 1

Tu sei bella<sup>6</sup>

In scene 6 of the prologue, the harmonium emerges prominently, providing a stable accompaniment to the chorus solo “Tu sei bella.” In accordance with the story, a tempest ensues, mirroring Carlo’s act of genuflection before the altar of the Virgin Mary<sup>7</sup>. Its rich, sustained tones blend seamlessly with the voices, adding depth and texture to the musical landscape. To enhance the rhythmic dimension, a triangle is introduced, punctuating the harmonium’s chords with crisp, metallic accents.

<sup>6</sup> Giuseppe Verdi: Giovanna d'Arco-Prologue no.6,Z.: 24, page 120, Publisher: Ricordi [https://vmirror.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/b/b7/IMSLP152631-PMLP68986-Verdi\\_-\\_Giovanna\\_d'arco\\_-\\_Prologue\\_and\\_Act\\_I\\_\(orch.\\_score\).pdf](https://vmirror.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/b/b7/IMSLP152631-PMLP68986-Verdi_-_Giovanna_d'arco_-_Prologue_and_Act_I_(orch._score).pdf) (02.04.2024)

<sup>7</sup> Budden, Julian. The Operas of Verdi. Volume 1, from Oberto to Rigoletto. Revised edition. Clarendon Press – Oxford, 1992, page 212

As the scene progresses, the composer explores a distinctive instrumentation, introducing another free-reed instrument akin to the harmonium: the *fisarmonica*<sup>8</sup>. This addition introduces a new timbral color, enriching the sonic palette of the ensemble. Accompanied by the delicate arpeggios of the harp, the *fisarmonica* weaves intricate melodies, intertwining with the harmonium to create a mesmerizing tapestry of sound.

The combination of these instruments adds layers of complexity and nuance to the musical arrangement, captivating the audience and enhancing the emotional depth of the scene.

Giuseppe Verdi's famous opera, **Don Carlos**, is a five-act masterpiece. Among Verdi's other works, none explores the variety of human relationships to such an extent. Each principal character possesses a rounded individuality that stands unparalleled in the Verdi canon. Not only do the characters come to life, but so do the settings, such as the monastery, the royal palace, the square of Valladolid, or the gardens, with a realism akin to Klingsor's flower garden or the depths of the Rhine. The musical realization of the composition reaches heights unseen in the Italian operas of the time.<sup>9</sup> Its libretto, based on Friedrich Schiller's play, was crafted by Joseph Méry and Camille du Locle. It made its debut on March 11, 1867, at the Paris Opera House.

Verdi revisited his work several times, each iteration titled *Don Carlo*. Initially translated into Italian, it premiered in Naples in 1872. The second revision condensed the opera into four acts, with its premiere taking place in Milan on January 10, 1884. The third version reverted to five acts, premiering in Modena in 1886.<sup>10</sup> In the closing part of the second act, for a short while, the harmonium appears in a harmonic accompaniment.

In Verdi's three additional operas, "Il trovatore," "La forza del destino," and "Stiffelio," similar passages to those of the previous works, now appear as 'organ' parts. These sections can also be supplemented with a harmonium if an organ is not available at the venue.

### **Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)**

The Czech composer Antonín Leopold Dvořák, alongside Smetana, Fibich, and Janáček, is esteemed as one of the foremost nationalist Czech composers of the 19th century. Initially marginalized and disregarded as a simplistic Czech musician by the German-speaking musical community, he is

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<sup>8</sup> A free reed instrument, similar to the modern accordion.

<sup>9</sup> Budden, Julian. *The Operas of Verdi*. Volume 3, From Don Carlos to Falstaff. Revised edition. Clarendon Press – Oxford, 1992, page 157

<sup>10</sup> Giroud, Vincent. *French Opera: A Short History*, Yale University Press, 2010, p. 169-170

now acknowledged by Czech and international musicologists as Smetana's true heir. Dvořák garnered worldwide admiration and prestige for 19th-century Czech music through his symphonies, chamber music, oratorios, songs, and, to a lesser extent, operas.<sup>11</sup>

Deeply influenced by the folk music of Moravia and Bohemia, Dvořák often incorporated rhythms and elements from these traditions into his compositions, following the nationalist example set by his predecessor, and friend, Bedřich Smetana during the Romantic era<sup>12</sup>. His style is praised for its seamless blend of nationalistic elements with symphonic traditions, skillfully integrating folk influences into his works. Widely regarded as one of the most versatile composers of his era, Dvořák's legacy continues to endure.

Dvořák's prowess as a composer in symphonic and chamber music was widely recognized abroad, yet he didn't achieve the same level of acclaim with his lyrical compositions. Despite this, he continued to delve into opera throughout his career, with his final completed work also being in this genre. In his early years as a composer, he immersed himself in the theater's atmosphere and gained familiarity with a variety of foreign lyrical works while conducting from the orchestra pit. It's noteworthy that opera played a significant role in Czech intellectual circles during the latter half of the previous century, captivating audiences and earning their admiration.<sup>13</sup>

Dvořák infrequently utilized the harmonium in his compositions, he produced lasting pieces featuring this instrument. Notably, his "Bagatelles, Op. 47," written for two violins, cello, and harmonium, stands as a testament to his creativity. These pieces were crafted for his friend, cellist Josef Srb-Debrnov, who hosted intimate chamber concerts at home. Despite the absence of a piano, Dvořák adeptly adapted, utilizing the harmonium instead, resulting in an unusual instrumentation. Despite its intended domestic setting, the composition maintains its merit as a fine piece of music.

In addition to the bagatelles, Dvořák also utilized the harmonium in his church composition "Stabat Mater, Op. 58," and the famous opera "Rusalka" further showcasing his versatility as a composer.

Dvořák's opera "**Rusalka**" was composed in 1900, is one of Dvořák's most famous operatic works, known for its lush orchestration and lyrical melodies.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/display/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000051222?rskey=ly4F3p&result=1> (02.04.2024)

<sup>12</sup> Belza, Igor. Antonín Dvořák, viața în imagini, (*Antonín Dvořák, Life in pictures*), Editura Muzicală a Uniunii compozitorilor din R.P.R., 1959, p.7

<sup>13</sup> Holzknecht, Václáv. Antonín Dvořák. Orbis-Prague, 1959, page: 61



Dvořák primarily utilizes a standard symphony orchestra, including strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion. While the harmonium is not a central element of the orchestration, there are instances where Dvořák incorporates it subtly to enhance specific passages or create certain atmospheres.

In Act 3, the “Chor der Nixen unter dem Wasser” refers to the “Chorus of the Nymphs under the Water.” The addition of the harmonium in the orchestration suggests a mystical and ethereal atmosphere, enhancing the otherworldly quality of the scene.

E.g. 2

468 [Za scénou - dietro la scena]  
[Hinter der Szene]

Moderato

Armonio

515

rit.

*mp*

*pp*

Sbor rusalek pod vodou;  
Chor der Nixen unter dem Wasser

Moderato

Odešla jsi dosvěta, uprchla jsi našim hrám, sestřičko\_ ty prokletá, nese-stu-puj k nám!  
Du entfloht zur Menschenwelt, liefst unsre fro-hen Reih'n, die in Banu ein Zauber hält, kann nicht un-ser sein!

*mp*

*f* [*>*] [*f*]

*pp*

*rit.*

Chor der Nixen unter dem Wasser<sup>14</sup>

The harmonium, with its soft and resonant sound, blends with the voices of the chorus to create a haunting and immersive experience. This combination of voices and instrument evokes the mysterious underwater realm inhabited by the nymphs, adding depth and richness to the music.

Overall, this part with the harmonium contributes to the opera’s atmospheric and emotional impact, transporting the audience to a magical and enchanting world beneath the surface of the water.

<sup>14</sup> Antonín Dvořák: Rusalka, Op. 114, Act III, Publisher: Souborné vydání díla, series 1, vol.12 Prague: SNKLHU, 1959. Plate H 2140, Editor: Jarmil Burghauser, page 428, bars:511-518. [https://vmirror.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/4/4f/IMSLP84610-PMLP25047-Dvorak\\_-\\_Rusalka\\_-\\_Act\\_III.pdf](https://vmirror.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/4/4f/IMSLP84610-PMLP25047-Dvorak_-_Rusalka_-_Act_III.pdf) (04.04.2024)

## George Enescu (1881-1955)

George Enescu, one of the most renowned Romanian composer, violinist, educator, and conductor, displayed exceptional musical talent from an early age.

Beginning his violin studies at four and delving into composition by five, Enescu's journey led him to the prestigious Konservatorium der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna in 1888. There, under the guidance of distinguished mentors such as Sigmund Bachrich, Joseph Hellmesberger Jr., and Robert Fuchs, he honed his skills across various instruments, including the organ, cello, piano, and chamber music.<sup>15</sup>

Continuing his education at the Paris Conservatoire in 1895, Enescu further refined his compositional abilities under Massenet and Fauré, forming a special bond with his instructor of counterpoint and fugue, André Gédalge. Despite encountering challenges, Enescu thrived within Paris's musical community, forging enduring connections with luminaries like Ravel, Cortot, and Thibaud.

Following his graduation in 1899, Enescu maintained a presence in both France and Romania, with Paris serving as a hub for performances alongside esteemed colleagues like Cortot, Thibaud, and Casals.

The interwar period saw Enescu's unwavering dedication to completing his opera "Oedipe," which premiered triumphantly at the Paris Opéra in 1936. Despite international commitments, Enescu's dedication to composition remained steadfast, complemented by his growing influence as an educator. However, World War II and subsequent Communist rule in Romania forced Enescu into exile in 1946.

Despite personal challenges, he persisted in his devotion to music, leaving a lasting impact on those fortunate enough to know him. George Enescu's legacy endures through his compositions and the profound influence he had on the world of music, leaving an indelible imprint on future generations.

During his time in France, he also explored the harmonium, integrating it into several of his orchestral compositions, including Symphony No.2, Op.17, Symphony No.3, Op.21, and his opera "Oedipe," Op.23.

Enescu's opera "**Oedipe**, op. 23" stands as a monumental achievement in the realm of lyrical tragedy, comprising four acts and six tableaux. It is notable as his sole opera. The inception of this masterpiece dates back to as early as 1910, with its completion finally realized on April 27, 1931.

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/display/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000008793#omo-9781561592630-e-0000008793-div1-0000008793.1>  
(26.03.2024)

In late 1922, Enescu presented his fully realized opera to a select audience of musical peers in Bucharest. The following April, he extended this presentation to a public stage in Paris, showcasing his work at the Ecole normale de musique. This marked a pivotal moment in Enescu's life, signaling a period of intensive refinement that spanned almost nine years, during which he meticulously orchestrated his opera.<sup>16</sup>

On May 13, 1936, the opera premiered at the Opéra Garnier under the baton of Philippe Gaubert, featuring André Pernet in the titular role of Œdipe. The libretto, penned by Edmond Fleg, skillfully amalgamated Sophocles' plays "Œdipe-roi" and "Œdipe à Colone" into a cohesive narrative with a humanistic message.

Despite intermittent pauses in the creative process, Enescu's unwavering focus and spontaneity propelled the orchestration forward swiftly. "Œdipe" represents the zenith of Enescu's compositional and existential journey, serving as the centerpiece of his artistic legacy.

Its complexity and graphic richness make it a unique masterpiece in 20th-century music, increasingly celebrated on a global scale. The score encompasses a vast array of musical language resources and vocal expressiveness.

A Romanian version, overseen by the composer himself, premiered in Bucharest under the direction of Constantin Silvestri in 1958. Lasting approximately 2 hours and 30 minutes, the opera was published by Salabert Editions and dedicated to Princess Marie Cantacuzène, Enescu's spouse from 1937. In the landscape of 20th-century lyrical repertoire, "Œdipe" holds a significant and enduring stature.

In this production, the opera necessitates a substantial orchestra ensemble comprising triple winds, percussion, harps, piano, and harmonium, alongside segmented string sections.

The harmonium appears multiple times, but in relatively short segments, in the third tablet of the second act, in the third act and in the fourth act.

*Act II: Third tablet:*

Bars: 157-160, The harmonium accompanies the dialogue between the Sphinx and Oedipus.

Bars: 170-177, The Sphinx speaks to Oedipus, emphasizing destiny's inevitability with a dramatic tone. The composer adds the haunting timbres of the harmonium for theatrical effect.

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<sup>16</sup> Benteiu, Pascal, *Breviar enescian (Breviary of Enescu)*, Editura Universității Naționale de Muzică, 2005, pg. 62-63

Bars: 197-204, The Sphinx's ironic laughter begins with the introduction of a smaller ensemble: piano, brass instruments, percussion, double bass, and harmonium.

E.g. 3

The Sphinx's ironic laughter<sup>17</sup>

Act III:

Bars: 422-435: Phrobas recounts his dream to Oedipus, in which the God ordained that their newborn son should be brought up in the mountains. Jocasta also joins the conversation.

Bars: 573-578: A woman's horrifying screams, enriched with ominously extended chords from the harmonium.

<sup>17</sup> George Enescu: Œdipe, op. 23, Act II, Holograph manuscript, 1931. Reprinted in Bucharest: Editura Muzicală a Uniunii Compozitorilor din R.P.R., 1964. [https://petruccimusiclibrary.ca/files/imglnks/caimg/1/11/MSLP700067-PMLP508457-Oedipe\\_Act\\_II.pdf](https://petruccimusiclibrary.ca/files/imglnks/caimg/1/11/MSLP700067-PMLP508457-Oedipe_Act_II.pdf)

**Horreur!**<sup>18</sup>

**Act IV:**

Bars: 164-168 Misérable Créon! ... In the second half of the fourth act, Oedipus speaks to Creon with deep contempt in a restrained tone, accompanied by the harmonium in the orchestra.

Bars: 326-332 Invisible choir of the Euminides

Bars: 363-382: ... Suis-moi parmi les fleurs, les mousses et les lierres...

Oedip's romantic farewell solo is enriched by the harmonium.

<sup>18</sup> George Enescu: Œdipe, op. 23, Act III, Holograph manuscript, 1931. Reprinted in Bucharest: Editura Muzicală a Uniunii Compozitorilor din R.P.R., 1964. [https://petruccimusiclibrary.ca/files/imglnks/caimg/e/ea/IMSLP700068-PMLP508457-Oedipe\\_Act\\_III.pdf](https://petruccimusiclibrary.ca/files/imglnks/caimg/e/ea/IMSLP700068-PMLP508457-Oedipe_Act_III.pdf) (05.04.2024)

E.g. 5

The image shows a handwritten musical score for a scene from George Enescu's opera *Oedipe*. The score is arranged in four systems, each with a different instrument: Harmonium, Violins 1 and 2, Alto, and Oboe. The Harmonium part is written in a grand staff. The Violins 1 and 2 parts are in a single staff. The Alto part is in a single staff. The Oboe part is in a single staff. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Handwritten annotations in French provide performance instructions, including "(sans sourd.)", "pp", "mf", "p", "entre les sourdines", and "fil commence à murmurer et à balancer sa tête". The lyrics "Duo à mon tour." and "Duo cant. / Sois-moi par-mi les fleurs, les" are also present.

Oedip's romantic solo<sup>19</sup>

Bars: 396-399 Elders of Athens - Au sein des gouffres éthérés, que tout soit accompli!

Bars: 441-445 The harmonium enriches the grand finale of the gigantic opera orchestra.

The examples provided above vividly demonstrate Enescu's appreciation for the unique sound of the harmonium.

### Conclusion

As noted in the introduction, the incorporation of the harmonium in operatic pieces has been somewhat restricted in comparison to the abundance of other instrument types in this particular genre. Despite its peripheral presence, harmonium is utilized in specific contexts to enhance the musical depth or to fulfill artistic aims.

<sup>19</sup> George Enescu: *Oedipe*, op. 23, Act IV, Holograph manuscript, 1931. Reprinted in Bucharest: Editura Muzicală a Uniunii Compozitorilor din R.P.R., 1964 *Oedipe\_Act\_IV.pdf* [https://petruccimusiclibrary.ca/files/imglnks/caimg/4/45/IMSLP700069-PMLP508457-Oedipe\\_Act\\_IV.pdf](https://petruccimusiclibrary.ca/files/imglnks/caimg/4/45/IMSLP700069-PMLP508457-Oedipe_Act_IV.pdf) (05.04.2024)

As evidenced by musical examples, esteemed composers throughout the last 150 years have acknowledged the harmonium's aptitude for specific effects and orchestral enhancements. Consequently, I find the ideas presented in this documentation to be noteworthy.

Regrettably, in modern times, the majority of operas replace harmonium with organs or electronic keyboard instruments. Nonetheless, it's fortunate that several institutions have recognized the essential role of harmonium in achieving authentic and original instrumentation.

Nevertheless, this task is challenging, as mastering the harmonium requires prior acquaintance and technical skill with the instrument. In addition, it is important to use a harmonium of suitable quality and condition.

However, notwithstanding the difficulties, I hold a strong belief that as time progresses, more institutions will reintroduce this unfairly neglected instrument.

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