

## **LES DEUX JOURNEES**

Music by Maria Luigi Cherubini

Libretto by Jean Nicolas Bouilly

First performance: Théâtre Feydeau, Paris, January 16, 1800

**Act I.** Dwelling of the water-carrier Michèle. Anton narrates to his friends that he had once as a lad been saved from death through cold and hunger by a stranger. Michèle ascertains that Mazarin has been pursuing his benefactor, Count Armand and his wife, Constanza. He desires to save them. When he has brought them safely to his dwelling, Anton recognizes in Armand the savior of his life. Michèle now insists that the count and his wife shall be carried to safety out of Paris. He has a pass made out in the name of his daughter, Marcelinne, and Anton is to take her through the gates.

**Act II.** The gates and guard house. The watch retains Anton and Constanza. The countess plays the part of sister so naturally that they allow her to pass, while Anton is detained. Michèle now arrives with a large water butt. He seemingly betrays the whereabouts of the count in order to get rid of the soldiers, and they depart eager to earn the price set by Mazarin upon his head. While the watch is preparing to leave, Michèle cautiously opens the cask; Count Armand slips through the gate and disappears.

**Act III.** A square in a village near Paris. Anton's arrival is expected to celebrate his marriage with Angelina, but he does not appear. The soldiers, who have followed the count to the village, enter. The countess arrives dressed as a peasant in order to bring food to her husband. When the soldiers threaten the countess the count rushes to her rescue and his name escapes her lips. About to be arrested, the honest Michèle appears and brings the pardon of the king.