

RICHARD, COEUR DE LION

Music by André Ernest Modeste Gretry

Libretto by Micheal-Jean Sedaine

First Performance: Comédie-Italien, Paris, October 21, 1784

Richard I, King of England, is a prisoner in Germany. His minstrel Blondel, disguised as a blind man, has spent a year searching for his master, accompanied by the youth Antonio. Hearing a song which Richard has composed, Blondel recognizes his voice and determines to rescue him. Marguerite, Countess of Flanders and Artois, is in love with Richard. Blondel tells her of Richard's captivity and enlists her aid. Florestan, governor in charge of Richard and the castle, loves Laurette, daughter of the English Sir William. Blondel assembles a band of English soldiers outside the castle and lures Florestan to the scene with the bait of a meeting with Laurette. The soldiers attack; Richard is freed and reunited with his courtiers and his love.

(Note: This is the third version of the plot, preferred by Gretry, employed in the Heugel score and in the Tanglewood production.)