

# Meyerbeer Edition of Works

A monochromatic blue-toned portrait of Giacomo Meyerbeer. He is shown from the waist up, turned slightly to his left, looking off-camera. He has dark, wavy hair and is wearing a dark, high-collared coat over a white waistcoat and a white shirt with a dark cravat. A large, ornate medal is pinned to his cravat. In his right hand, he holds a rolled-up document or scroll. The background is dark and indistinct.

*G. Meyerbeer*

## Invitation to Subscribe

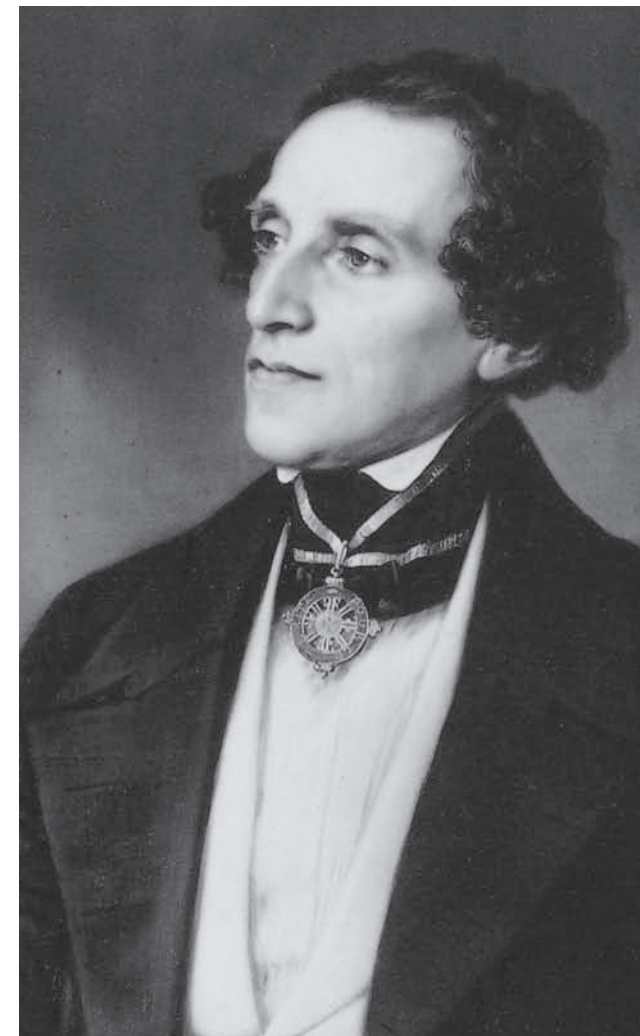
The Edition of Meyerbeer's Works will be published by G. Ricordi & Co., Munich, in collaboration with the Meyerbeer Institute Schloss Thurnau.

The edition is being planned as a historical and critical edition of the works. Because of the particular situation regarding sources, and the losses to Meyerbeer-Estate sources that occurred during the Second World War, it is not currently possible to embark on a Meyerbeer Complete Edition. The main focus will be on the stage works.

Meyerbeer's compositions will be presented in editions which on the one hand match up to all the demands of modern philology, and on the other, satisfy the needs of performance practice. The Meyerbeer Edition will make Meyerbeer's musical output available to scholars. Meyerbeer's Correspondence and Diaries are being issued by the de Gruyter-Verlag, Berlin. In conjunction with the edition of Meyerbeer's Works and the edition of letters and diaries, preparatory work will commence on an Index of Meyerbeer's Works. Participants in the Edition of Works, the edition of letters and diaries, and the Index of Works are in contact with one another.

The scholarly work on the text of the Meyerbeer Edition forms a basis for making Meyerbeer's works a renewed subject of discussion in the theatre and the concert hall.

Note: German version available on Internet:  
<http://www.ricordi.de>



## Giacomo Meyerbeer (1791 - 1864)

### Edition of Works

**G. Ricordi & Co.**  
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**Schloss Thurnau**

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# On the Edition of Meyerbeer's Works

In the wake of attention aroused by the premiere of *Robert le Diable* (1931) at the Paris Opera, Jean François Le Sueur, himself an opera composer and Hector Berlioz's teacher, summed up the impression of a new artistic epoch that the work had created among critics and audiences in a neat formula: The era of music devoted to pleasure and enjoyment was now over, and a new era of music had begun – one of power, energy and human maturity. A few years later, after the appearance of Meyerbeer's next opera *Les Huguenots* (1836), Heinrich Heine revived these ideas, confirming the view of leading European critics that the composer was creating „socially modern music“ in which a mankind ensnared in spiritual collapse regains its hopes and desires, and a little later the young Richard Wagner explained Meyerbeer's role in the history of opera precisely in terms of this idealist dimension of his music: „Meyerbeer wrote world history, the history of hearts and feelings, he shattered the closets of national prejudices, obliterated the confining limits of speech idioms, and wrote music's great deeds.“ Meyerbeer became the leading figure in European music drama, the innovator and inciter par excellence. He remained so till the end of the century. No operatic composer could escape his influence, be he Verdi, Wagner, Puccini or Strauss.

It is different today. A way of writing music history based on national identity has pushed the works of this declared cosmopolitan among composers into historical marginality.

Moreover, the defamatory attacks on the composer and his works which had already begun during his lifetime, and often had an anti-semitic aspect, have had lasting consequences. These days, Meyerbeer is by no means forgotten: his operas are still performed, though not very often; individual scenes and arias are still known and popular. But on the whole, for the general public, Meyerbeer is little more than a name in the history of opera.

Yet in terms of musical and theatrical scholarship, a very different picture emerges. In recent times Meyerbeer research has gained enormous impetus, and people have once again become aware of the predominant role of this composer in the history of opera. In the process, the form in which Meyerbeer's operas were handed down is turning out to be more and more problematic. Investigation of the sources has revealed complicated geneses, whose course was determined as much by conceptual changes as by varying performance situations. In this light, the printed scores and piano scores emerge as incomplete, unreliable, and hence unusable. So the theatres that would like to perform Meyerbeer's works find that, to a great degree, their hands are tied.

This makes a historical-critical edition of the works an urgent necessity. Only then can opera audiences rediscover the „real“ Meyerbeer.

# Il crociato in Egitto

Melodramma eroico in due atti

First performance: 7.3.1824, Venice. Teatro La Fenice



With Meyerbeer's last Italian opera, whose lead role was written for the famous castrato Giovanni Battista Vellutti, the composer achieved the greatest triumph of his career so far. In this work Meyerbeer took a step towards historical opera that was crucial to his later operatic output. Admittedly, the plot is clearly determined by personal conflict, but this conflict is embedded in the historical events of the Sixth Crusade. To create a drama of contrasts, Meyerbeer uses the confrontation between two cultures and religions, the antagonism between knight crusaders and Egyptians. The dramatic means range from separate numbers to integrated solo/choral tableaux, from traditional vocal virtuosity to a modern dramatic use of timbre, from melodic turns typical of the 18th century to anticipations of middle-period Verdi, these antitheses being held together purely by the strikingly forceful individual style.

The autograph is lost. The critical edition is based on surviving copies (Venice, Bologna, Boston, and others).

Critical Edition, edited by Claudio Toscani

## Text:

Gaetano Rossi

## Cast:

Aladino, sultan of Damietta (b)

Palmide, his daughter (s)

Osmino, vizier (t)

Alma, Palmide's confidante (s)

Adriano of Monfort, Grand Master of the Knights of Rhodes (t)

Felicia, Adriano's niece, disguised as a man (contralto)

Armando of Orville, Knight of Rhodes, calling himself Elmireno (s)

## Silent role:

Mirva, a five-year-old boy

## Corps de ballet

## Chorus

## Extras

## Orchestra:

2 fl (also picc), 2 ob (2nd also c.a), 2 cl, 4 fg, c-fg, 4 hn, 4 tpt, 3 tbn, timp, perc (bs dr, cym, trg), hp, strings, b.c.; stage ensemble: 8 tpt, c-fg, 3 tbn, 3 s dr, bs dr, cym, 4 ten dr; banda: picc. 2 fl, 2 ob, F cl, 5 cl, 2 fg, 4 hn, 2 key tpt, 6 tpt, 2 tbn, serpent, s dr, bs dr.

## Place and Time of the Action:

In and around the Egyptian harbour city of Damietta, c. 1250

## 10 scenes:

- Act I: A beachside courtyard in the sultan's palace, close to the harbour  
Garden with pavilion  
Harbour  
Location in the garden  
In the palace
- Act II: In the palace  
Location in the garden  
Secluded beach  
Prison cell  
Big town square in Damietta

# Robert le Diable

Opéra en cinq actes  
First performance:  
21.11.1831,  
Paris, Opéra



Meyerbeer's first work for the Paris Opéra represents a high-point in the history of the genre. With the title figure, Scribe and Meyerbeer created the typical vacillating hero, reacting naively and almost helplessly. Many saw Robert as representing the July Monarchy; thus even this work was being credited with a political accent which was to become far more prominent in the later operas. The character of the 'fallen angel' Bertram, who must destroy what he loves, enables Meyerbeer to raise the work above the sphere of melodrama, and endow it with the dimensions of a modern character drama.

It is not beauty that is central to the work, but characterisation and expressive force. There are considerable parallels to E.T.A. Hoffmann, but also to the Faust theme. The invocation of the sinful nuns, who rise from their graves with a lascivious dance, is a dramatic innovation in the history of opera. Here ballet is fully integrated into the plot for the first time. Meyerbeer establishes formal connections with the aid of particular sounds: the fanfares evoking Bertram and the Andante cantabile for the dance of the abbess Hélène are notable examples: paradigms that constantly recur in new but similar compositions by other composers.

The critical edition is based on the autograph text (locations: Paris and Cracow), and the printed scores of 1831 and 1837. It takes into account the performance material of the Paris premiere as well as numerous autograph sketches, expansions and arrangements. Previously unknown material is presented here for the first time, making possible performances of a completeness hitherto unknown.

Critical Edition, edited by Wolfgang Kühnhold and Peter Kaiser

## Text:

Eugène Scribe and Germain Delavigne

## Characters:

Robert, Duke of Normandy (t)  
Bertram, his friend (b)  
Raimbaut, a Norman peasant (t)  
A Priest (b)  
A Majordomo to the King of Sicily (t)  
A Herald (t)  
Alberti, a knight (b)  
4 knights (2 t, 2 b)  
5 gamblers (3 t, 2 b)  
8 heralds (4 t, 4 b)  
Isabelle, Princess of Sicily (s)  
Alice, a Norman peasant (s)  
A lady-in-waiting to Isabelle (s)  
Hélène, abbess

## Silent roles:

King of Sicily  
Prince of Granada  
Robert's chaplain

## Corps de ballet

## Chorus

## Extras

## Orchestra:

2 picc, 2 fl, 2 ob (2nd also c.a), 2 cl, 4 fg, 4 hn, 2 tpt, 2 keyed tpt, 3 tbn, ophicleide, 4 timp, perc (bs dr, cym, tamtam, trg, bell in B), 2 hp, strings; stage ensemble: picc, 4 hn, 2 tpt, 2 keyed tpt, 3 tbn, b tbn, ophicleide, cym, trg, mil dr, tamtam, 2 hp, org, thunder machine

## Place and Time of the Action:

In and around Palermo, about 1300

## 7 Scenes:

Act I: Harbour of Palermo  
Act II: Hall in the palace of the King of Sicily  
Act III: Rocks near St. Irène  
A ruined convent  
Act IV: Isabelle's room  
Act V: In front of Palermo Cathedral  
Inside the cathedral

# Les Huguenots

Opéra en cinq actes  
First performance:  
29.2.1836,  
Paris, Opéra



In *Les Huguenots*, for the first time, Meyerbeer transfers the kind of drama of ideas he had developed in *Robert le Diable* to a historical subject. The revolutionary exuberance of the crowd scenes and the significant use of the Lutheran chorale "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott" give the work a novel political-religious flair which his contemporaries found exemplary in terms of modern drama. Embedded in the historical event of the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre is the tragic fate of a pair of lovers. Among the most brilliant parts of the score are the scenes involving the Huguenot warrior Marcel, "an iron statue, clad in buffalo hide, his soul alight with divine fire" (George Sand), and the Valentine/Raoul "Grand Duo" from Act IV, whose auratic "Tu l'as dit" phrase has been described as "Meyerbeer's immortal melody" and the "melody of the century".

The critical edition is based on the text of the autograph in Cracow, and the first printed edition of 1836. It also takes account of the performance material from the Paris Opéra and the Royal Theatre Covent Garden, as well as numerous autograph sketches and elaborations. Previously unknown material is presented here for the first time, and can be incorporated into performances.

Critical Edition, edited by Milan Pospíšil and Marta Ottlová

## Text:

Eugène Scribe, Gaetano Rossi, Emile Deschamps

## Characters:

Marguerite of Valois, betrothed of Henri IV (s)  
Count of Saint-Bris, a Catholic nobleman (b)  
Valentine, his daughter (s)  
Count of Nevers (b)  
Cossé (t)  
Thoré (b)  
Tavannes (t)  
De Retz (b)  
Méru (b)  
Raoul of Nangis, a Protestant nobleman (t)  
Marcel, his servant (b)  
Urbain, page to Queen Marguerite (s)  
Bois-Rosé, a Protestant soldier (t)  
Maurevert (b)  
A maid of honour to the queen (a)  
A servant of the Count of Nevers (t)  
2 Catholic girls (s, a)  
2 gypsy women (2 s)  
An archer (b)  
A student (t)  
3 monks (t, 2 b)

## Silent role:

Henri IV

## Mimes

## Corps de ballet

## Chorus

## Extras

## Orchestra:

Picc, 2 fl, 2 ob (2nd also c.a), 2 cl, b cl, 4 fg, 4 hn, 4 tpt, 2 valve-tpt, 3 tbn, ophicleide, timp, perc (bs dr, cym, trg, mil dr, tambourine, tamtam), 2 hp, strings (with obligato vla d'amore); stage ensemble: picc, 2 ob, picc cl in F, 6 cl, 2 fg, 4 hn, 4 tpt, valve-tpt, 2 tbn, ophicleide, bs dr, cym, trg, dr, mil dr, 3 bells in F, C' and A'

## Place and Time of the Action:

In Tourraine and Paris, August 1572

## 7 scenes:

Act I: Hall in the Count of Nevers' castle  
Act II: Castle and garden of Chenoncaux  
Act III: Prè-aux-clercs on the banks of the Seine  
Act IV: Room in the Count of Nevers' civic palace  
Act V: Ballroom of the Hôtel des Nesle  
Cemetery  
Paris street



# Le Prophète

Opéra en cinq actes  
First performance: 16.4.1849, Paris, Opéra



In choosing the Anabaptist movement of the 16th century, Scribe and Meyerbeer once again opted for religious-historical materials: a conflict that is stirred up by sectarians and zealots and gives the dramatist an opportunity for crowd scenes and large-scale choruses. The characters in the plot invite critical contemporaries parallels to be drawn: hypocritical tempters, a false prophet, the dissolute gangs known as the 16th century socialists, reactionary princes, corrupt informers, and an incapacitated populace. Meyerbeer also pursues new paths in orchestration: in Act V, for example, triple divisi double basses produce a dissonant chord that has the effect of a menacing, diffuse noise. An overall formal concept interlocks heterogeneous structures, and creates extended arcs of tension independently of traditional individual numbers. The climax of this tableau composition is the Cathedral Scene in Act IV: within a stage- and sound-space of epic dimensions, a multi-perspectival musical montage technique achieves an unheard-of interpenetration of „spectacle“ and „drame“.

The critical edition is based on the autograph and the first printed score, as well as autograph materials (Cracow and Paris). There are also fragments and parts of the work which were found in the Bibliothèque de l'Opéra Paris, and are published here for the first time.

Critical Edition, edited by Matthias Brzoska

## Text:

Eugène Scribe and Emile Deschamps

## Characters:

Jean de Leyde (t)  
Zacharie (b)  
Jonas (t)  
Mathisen (b)  
Count of Oberthal (b)  
2 peasants (t, b)  
A soldier (t)  
4 citizens (2 t, 2 b)  
Fidès (mez or a)  
Berthe (s)  
2 boy choir singers (boy s, a)  
2 peasant women (s, mez)  
4 anabaptists (t, 3b)  
2 officers (t, b)

## Corps de ballet

## Chorus

## Extras

## Orchestra:

Picc, 2 fl, 2 ob, c.a, 2 cl, b cl, 4 fg, 4 hn, 2 valve-tpt, 4 tpt (2nd also valve-tpt), 3 tbn, ophicleide, 4 timp, perc (bs dr, cym, trg, tamtam, mil dr), 4 hp, strings; backstage ensemble: cl, 4 tpt, 4 mil dr, org (4 hands); stage ensemble: 2 picc cornets in E flat, 4 alto cornets in E flat, 3 rotary-valve or valve hn, 2 rotary-valve tpt or tpt, 4 tenor hn or rotary-valve or valve hn, 2 baritone hn or tbn, 4 b tba or ophicleides, 2 cb tba or bombardons, 4 mil dr, small bell in A<sup>4</sup>, sounding stone, rattle.

## Place and Time of the Action:

In the Netherlands, and in Münster, 1534-1535

## 9 scenes:

Act I: Rural location in the vicinity of Dordrecht  
Act II: Jean's tavern in a suburb of Leyden  
Act III: The anabaptist camp, before Münster  
Zacharie's tent  
The anabaptist camp  
Act IV: Marketplace in Münster  
Münster Cathedral  
Act V: Subterranean vault in the municipal palace of Münster  
Hall in the municipal palace

# L'Etoile du nord

Opéra comique en trois actes

First performance:

1<sup>st</sup> version: 16.2.1854, Paris, Opéra Comique;  
2<sup>nd</sup> version (with recitatives): 19.7.1854, London,  
Covent Garden



Tsar Peter the Great is working incognito as a dockyard carpenter, under the name of Péters Michaeloff. The story of his love for Catherine is skilfully woven into the historical events, leading up to the uncovering of a plot against the tsar by Catherine, who has lost her mind as a result of fears that her beloved has been unfaithful. The couple finally comes together at the tsar's court in St. Petersburg. Catherine recovers, becoming Péters' wife and the new empress.

At times, the opera's lavish musical and theatrical demands go way beyond the confines of an Opéra comique, evolving into an extravagant Grand opéra with dialogue. Péters is portrayed throughout as an ambivalent character, as a popular regent and sentimental lover on the one hand, and on the other as a turbulent and irascible man. Particularly notable is Catherine's mad scene, a rondo which is expanded to a tableau, with musical reminiscences of the two preceding acts, as fragmentary memories, being linked in a collage of quotations.

Since it is not known whether the autograph has survived, the critical edition is based on Brandus's 1854 edition of the score.

Critical Edition, edited by Hugh Macdonald.

## Text:

Eugène Scribe

## Characters:

Péters Michaeloff, carpenter (b)  
George Skawronski, cabinet-maker and village musician (t)  
Catherine, his sister (s)  
Prascovia, his bride (s)  
Danilowitz, confectioner (t)  
Gritzenko, a Kalmuck (b)  
Meister Reynolds, publican (b)  
General Tchérémeteff (spk)  
Colonel Yermoloff (b)  
Nathalie and Ekimonna, camp-followers (2 s)  
Ismailoff, a Cossack officer (t)  
2 workers (t, spk)

## Chorus

## Extras

## Orchestra:

2 picc, 2 fl, 2 ob, c.a, 2 cl, 2 fg, 4 hn (also valve hn), 2 tpt (also valve tpt, also valve cornet), 3 tbn, timp, perc (bs dr, cym, dr, tamtam, mil dr, tambourine, trg), 2 hp, strings; stage ensemble: 4 picc, 4 picc cl in F, 5 valve cornets, 2 valve tpt, 3 baritone hn, 4 tpt; backstage ensemble: 2 fl, 2 picc cornets in E flat or valve tpt, 4 valve cornets, 3 valve tpt, baritone hn or t tbn, b tba or tbn or ophicleide, cb tba or bombardon or ophicleide, mil dr, 2 bells in D, cannon

## Place and Time of the Action:

In Finland and in St. Petersburg, at the time of Peter the Great

## 3 scenes:

Act I: In Finland, a village near Wiborg  
Act II: Russian army camp  
Act III: Lavish room in the Tsar's palace in Petersburg

# Le Pardon de Ploërmel/ Dinorah

Opéra comique en trois actes

First performance:

1<sup>st</sup> version (*Le Pardon de Ploërmel*): 4.4.1859,

Paris, Opéra Comique

2<sup>nd</sup> version (*Dinorah*, with recitatives):

26.7.1859, London, Covent Garden



For this simple, folk-based plot based on a Breton legend – in effect, a piece for three characters – Meyerbeer came up with music that contains some of his best inspirations. He knows how to make clever use of folk-music traits: memorable melodies are combined with an original musical language whose formal development indicates new paths. Among the coloratura soprano's showpieces, the virtuoso *Shadow Aria* is still known today for extreme vocal demands and excellent dramatic capabilities it demands of the protagonist. One might think that in this demanding and varied score Meyerbeer was seeking to create a new type of 'Grand comique'.

Critical Edition, edited by Clive Brown

## Text:

Jules Barbier, Michel Carré, Giacomo Meyerbeer

## Characters:

Hoël (bar)

Corentin (t)

Loïc (spk)

Claude (spk)

A hunter (b)

A woodcutter (t)

Dinorah (s)

2 little shepherds (2 s)

2 girl goatherds (2 s)

## Chorus

## Extras

## Orchestra:

2 picc, 2 fl, 2 ob, c.a., 2 cl, b cl, 2 fg, 4 hn, 3 valve hn, 2 valve cornets, 2 tpt, 2 valve-tpt, 3 tbn, timp, perc (bs dr, cym, mil dr, trg, little bell in F sharp'''), hp, strings; backstage ensemble: harm, bell in A flat', wind machine, thunder machine.

## Place of the Action:

In Brittany

## 4 scenes:

Act I: „Evening“, Breton landscape

Act II: „Night“, birch forest; edge of a rocky gorge near the coast

Act III: „Morning“, in the country

# L' Africaine

Opéra  
en cinq actes

First performance:

28.4.1865,

Paris, Opéra



Plans for this opera date back to 1837. But it was only after the premiere of *Le Prophète* that Meyerbeer got to work on this adventure story about Vasco da Gama. Consistent work on the composition dates from March 1861. In his last opera, Meyerbeer again adheres to the typical indecisive hero, ensnared in the spontaneity of his feelings, reacting as a human being, but not as a hero. Meyerbeer was consciously putting himself at odds with the German conception of the hero. Accordingly, the 'coloured' roles – Sélika and Nélusko – are more firmly shaped, and more inspired, than those of Vasco and his beloved, Inès. Meyerbeer died while composing this work. The final editing of the score for the premiere was undertaken by François Joseph Fétis.

The critical edition takes account of all the published and unpublished parts of the work that were extant at Meyerbeer's death. The main sources are the autograph of Acts I to IV in Cracow, and of Act V in Berlin, as well as the edition executed by Fétis and published by Brandus in 1865.

Critical Edition, edited by Jürgen Schläder

## Text:

Eugène Scribe

## Characters:

Don Pedro, president of the King of Portugal's council (b)

Don Diégo, admiral, council member (b)

Inès, his daughter (s)

Vasco da Gama, naval officer (t)

Don Alvar, council member (t)

The Grand Inquisitor of Lisbon (b)

Nélusko, a slave (bar)

Sélika, a slave (s)

The High Priest of Brahma (b)

Anna, Inès' confidante (s)

A beadle (t)

A priest (t)

4 sailors (2 t, 2 b)

8 bishops (8 b)

## Silent role:

A servant

## Corps de ballet

## Chorus

## Extras

## Orchestra:

4 fl (2nd also picc), 2 ob, 2 c.a., 2 cl, 2 b cl, 4 fg, 4 hn, 2 valve hn, 2 valve cornets, 2 tpt, 2 valve-tpt, 2 cornets-à-piston, 3 tbn, ophicleide, 3 timp, perc (bs dr, cym, trg, dr, mil dr, tamtam, glsp), 4 hp, strings; backstage ensemble: 2 fl, 2 cl, 2 fg, 2 valve hn, 2 hp, cannon; onstage ensemble: 2 picc, cornets, 4 flghn, 4 alto cornets, 4 tenor hn, 2 baritone hn, 4 tpt, 6 b tba, cym, trg, mil dr, bell in F'

## Place and Time of the Action:

In Portugal and in India, beginning of the 16th century

## 6 scenes:

Act I: Council chamber of the King of Portugal

Act II: The inquisition's prison

Act III: A ship

Act IV: In front of an Indian temple

Act V: The queen's garden

A promontory by the sea

# Complete Survey

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