### The Composer

German-born Jacques Offenbach (1819-1880), son of a Jewish cantor, left his native Cologne and headed for Paris early in life. He attended the Conservatoire at the age of 14 years and left one year later when he realized that serious study could not hold his interest. His adeptness for composing light pieces and an uncanny flair for showmanship finally received an outlet for expression at a small theater in the Champes Elysées, where he later became manager in 1855. A succession of operettas brought him great popularity, leading to his entrance to the Opéra-Comique and eventually to the Paris Opéra.

Offenbach is the most representative musician of Paris during its most splendid period, the Second Empire of Napolean III. He composed Orpheus in the Underworld and 90 other delightful, witty operettas during the 1850s, 60s, and 70s. He remains the best symbol of those glittering years when all of Europe's royalty was drawn to Paris and the Théâtre des Variétés or the Théâtre de la Gaîté where Offenbach was frequently featured.

## The Composition

Orpheus in the Underworld, as interpreted by Offenbach, treats the legend of Orpheus and Eurydice with something less than classical respect. Orpheus and Eurydice are married, but Eurydice loves the shepherd Aristeus, who is really Pluto in disguise. Orpheus is attracted to Chloe the shepherdess. When Eurydice elopes to Hades with Aristeus, Orpheus is delighted, but convention dictates that he try to reclaim her. He calls upon Jupiter for help. Jupiter commands Pluto to surrender Eurydice to her husband, but Orpheus must personally go to Hades and lead her back home. During the journey out of Hades Orpheus must not look back at Eurydice until after he has passed the River Styx. As the couple is leaving Hades, Jupiter himself falls in love with Eurydice. Jupiter hurls a bolt of lightning at Orpheus that so frightens him that he turns to look at his wife. Jupiter thus gains another bacchante, and Orpheus happily returns to Chloe.

This opera bouffe has some of the best known vocal excerpts in all opera, and the overture is a staple in the repertoires of orchestras. However, when it was introduced in 1858 it was not well received. Both the music and libretto seemed created to shock the opera-going populace with the sacrilegious treatment of the Olympian gods and the discordant and surprising combinations of musical satires. Fortunately for Offenbach, the scathing reviews stimulated so much curiosity that the opera was performed 228 times to capacity audiences, closing only because the cast needed to rest.

The Overture begins with a bristling fanfare, and is followed by a tender love song and then an "infernal" passage. The finale, after a fairly elaborate waltz, is the ever-popular and renowned can-can.

#### Instrumentation List

- 2 Piccolo / 4th Flute
- 3 1st Flute
- 3 2nd & 3rd Flutes
- 2 1st & 2nd Oboes
- 1 English Horn
- 2 1st & 2nd Bassoons
- 1 Eb Clarinet
- 2 1st & 2nd Solo Bh Clarinets
- 3 1st Bh Clarinet
- 3 2nd Bb Clarinet
- 3 3rd Bb Clarinet
- 1 Bh Bass Clarinet
- 1 Eb Contra-Alto Clarinet
- 2 1st & 2nd Eb Alto Saxophones
- 1 Bh Tenor Saxophone

- 1 Eb Baritone Saxophone
- 2 1st & 2nd F Horns
- 2 3rd & 4th F Horns
- 4 1st & 2nd Bb Cornets
- 4 3rd & 4th Bb Cornets
- 2 1st & 2nd Bh Trumpets
- 3 1st & 2nd Trombones
- 3 3rd & 4th Trombones
- 3 Baritone B.C.
- 5 Tuba
- 1 Cello (optional)
- 1 String Bass
- 1 Timpani
- 2 Percussion 1:

Snare Drum

- Cymbals Bass Drum
- 3 Percussion 2:
- **Triangle** 
  - Temple Blocks
  - Wood Block
  - **Tambourine**
- Vibraphone
- **Bells**
- 1 Harp (optional)
- 1 Full Conductor Score

Additional Score: \$6.00

# OVERTURE TO ORPHEUS IN THE UNDERWORLD



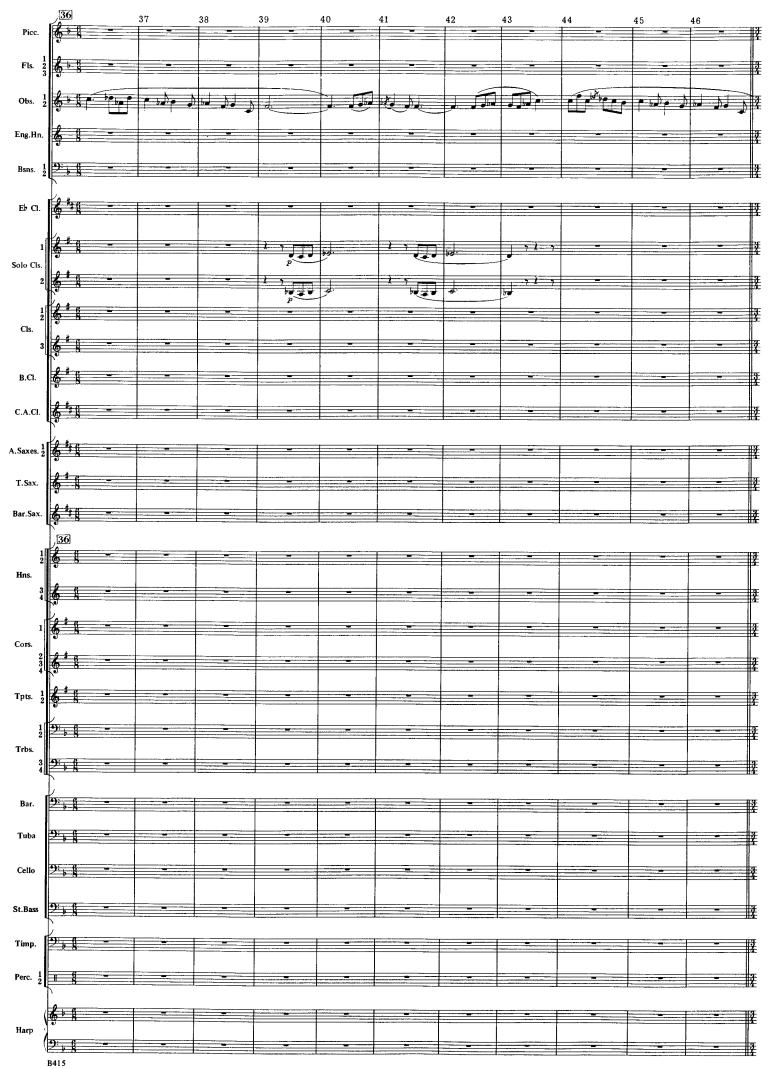


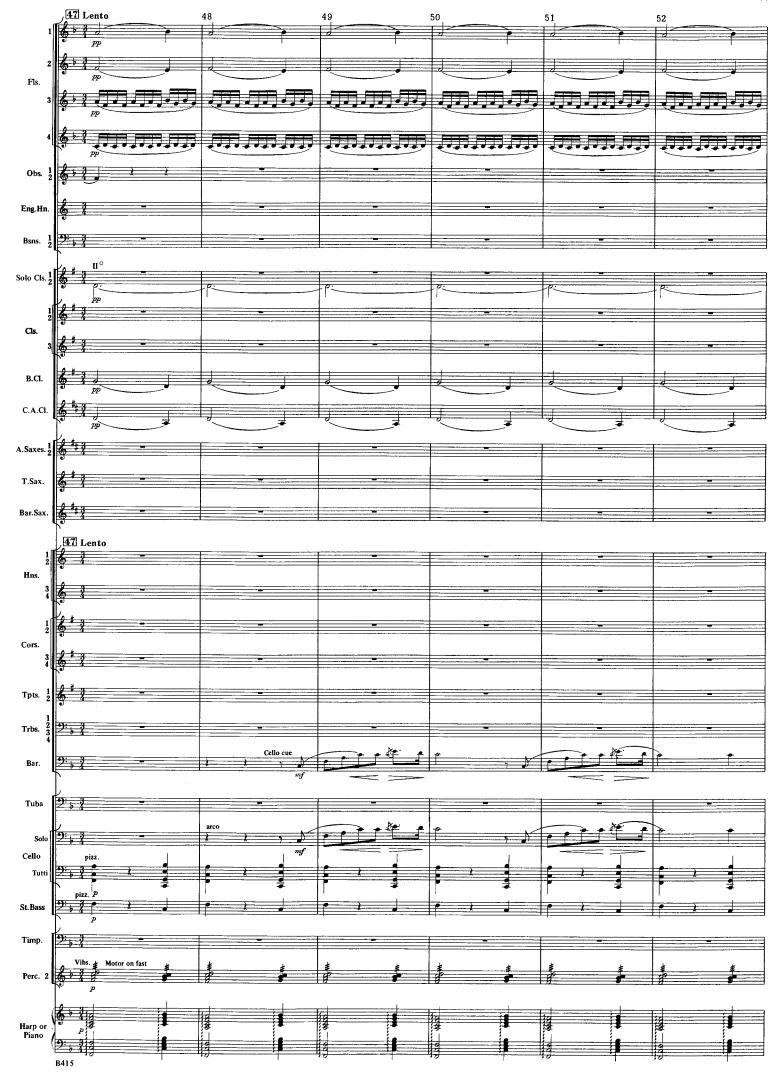




























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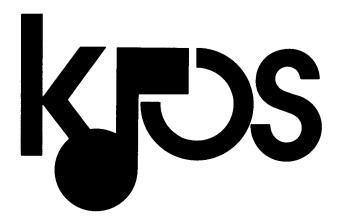












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