Prince of Haiti/King of Paris: The Research, the Creative Process and the Script

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UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI


By

Kyle Siebrecht

A THESIS

Submitted to the Faculty of the University of Miami in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Music

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the requirements for the degree of
Master of Music

PRINCE OF HAITI/KING OF PARIS: THE RESEARCH, THE CREATIVE PROCESS
AND THE SCRIPT

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Prince of Haiti/King of Paris: 
The Research, the Creative Process and the Script

Abstract of a thesis at the University of Miami.

Thesis supervised by Professor Frank Cooper.
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Prince of Haiti/King of Paris is an original theatre piece containing eighteenth-century period recreations of the music, dance, opera and ritual on the French colonial island of Saint-Domingue, now Haiti. The reconstructions, several of which have not heretofore been attempted, include the French Baroque style, African heritage, and styles including both of these influences. They are based on the descriptive writings of Moreau de Saint-Méry (Martinique 1750 – Paris 1819). The script centers on the life of this noted French Caribbean jurist and journal writer, who found himself at the helm of the French Revolution on Bastille Day, and at the hub of a scandal that rocked both Paris and Saint-Domingue when he was appointed governor of the island. Was Moreau de Saint-Méry an abolitionist? This question is passionately debated in the courtroom scene at the climax of the theatre piece. The thesis includes descriptions of the research behind the theatrical piece, and of the creative process including multiple workshops, and the script in English with footnotes, and in French.
PREFACE

The purpose of this document is to describe the process, starting with research and writing and progressing into fundraising and production, that lay behind in the realization of my original play in two acts with music, dance, opera and ritual, entitled *Prince of Haiti/King of Paris*.

In childhood, I studied ballet with the incomparable Marie Hale, artistic director of Ballet Florida. About age fourteen I remember telling my mother “I’m going to invent a play that combines all the art forms.” I’m pretty certain this made no impression on my mother, but I remembered it.

After college at Duke University and the University of Florida, I was artistic director of Still Moving Dance Company in Gainesville, Florida from 1976-81, and choreographed over twenty ballets for the company, including a popular full-length work, *Black God’s Kiss*, based on the science fiction classic by Catherine L. Moore. Another favorite was the comedic ballet, *Felix Goes to the Circus*, based on a classic cartoon starring the well-known feline trickster. Still Moving Dance Co. was a professional contemporary dance company that featured performance series in the Fall, Winter and Spring, as well as touring the region and teaching at the Thomas Center in Gainesville.

As the reality of making a living set in, I shifted to arts administration, and had a career as the executive or managing director of mid-sized performing arts organizations including Florida Repertory Theatre in West Palm Beach, and Seattle International Music Festival. While I was an arts administrator, I fulfilled the creative urge by studying dance history, going back as far as the so-called pre-ballet period of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Studies of baroque ballet with Ken Peirce at Longy School of Music,
in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1999, led me to the conclusion that my comprehension of the music of that period was not adequate. The music and dance forms are so inextricably integral to each other during the Baroque period, that I could not hope to understand the dance without a much better grasp of the music. Being an overachiever I decided to return to university and study musicology.

Upon entering graduate school at the University of Miami, my thoughts turned to the question of the relevance of Baroque dance to a community as racially and culturally mixed as that of South Florida. So I began to research early dance in the Caribbean. It must have been in the Fall of 2000 that Professor Edward Baptist in the History Department handed me a slim volume entitled *Danse* by Moreau de Saint-Méry. This little book of 78 pages described the dances, of both French and African heritage, on the island of Saint-Domingue in the eighteenth century. I was startled to find that there was almost nothing in English on Moreau de Saint-Méry, nor had reconstructions of these fascinating dances ever been attempted. As I researched eighteenth-century music and dance further, in French, I found an incredibly rich culture, and one of which few in the United States seemed to be aware. As I spoke with professors, and colleagues, everyone was intrigued and excited. Even as I gradually came to know members of the Haitian community, they knew little of this period in their history. But everyone shared a desire to know more, and it seemed that the best way to make this material accessible was to present it onstage. Thus, rather than confining my graduate work to a purely academic thesis in musicology, and with the approval of my teachers, I took a giant jeté of faith, and launched into the necessary research in music, choreography, history and
playwriting. Inadvertently I was realizing my teenage ideal of writing a play “combining all the art forms”.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PREFACE</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT AND SYNOPSIS</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of the Project and Its Principal Characters</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synopsis: The Story of <em>Prince of Haiti/King of Paris</em></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 RESEARCH</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History: Moreau de Saint-Méry</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History: Eighteenth-Century Saint Domingue</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History: The French Revolution</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History: Minette</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History: Chevalier de St.-Georges</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History: Talleyrand</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History: Lafayette</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History: Jean Milhet</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music: Late Eighteenth-Century French Operas in Saint Domingue</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music: Compositions of St.-Georges</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music: French Dances</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music: Afro-Haitian Drumming and Voudou Rituals</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance: Eighteenth-Century Saint-Domingue Dance - French Heritage</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance: Eighteenth-Century Saint-Domingue Dance - African Heritage</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playwriting</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 CREATIVE PROCESS/COMPOSITIONAL METHODS</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Comments</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Script</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deviations from Fact</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Translation</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Music</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Choreography</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 PRODUCTION PROCESS</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia Workshop 2003</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miami Workshop 2004</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association of Performing Arts Presenters Conference 2005</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miami Script Workshop 2005</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montreal Workshop 2006</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 CONCLUSION</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE OF CONTENTS – Continued

SOURCES CONSULTED................................................................. 68

Appendices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>French Text of M. le Comte de Ségur</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Table of French Operas in Saint Domingue</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>List of Recordings of St.-Georges' Compositions</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Musical score for Hachikian overture</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Music Outline</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Notes for Choreographers</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Photo Brochure</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Script in English with Footnotes</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Script in French</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT, ITS PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS, AND SYNOPSIS OF THE PLAY

Description of the Project and Its Principal Characters

Prince of Haiti/King of Paris is a multidisciplinary theatre piece that includes drama, instrumental and vocal music, and dance. Woven throughout the story are performances based upon the writings of Moreau de Saint-Méry. He was a man who led two lives. In the first, he was a political activist in Saint-Domingue and in the Paris of the great Revolution. In the second, he was a keen observer and recorder of the commingling of French and African cultures on the island of Saint-Domingue. It was in this role that he wrote detailed descriptions of the French Caribbean, including the dance and theater of his day. Historians of the Caribbean are familiar with Moreau’s name and writings, especially his little volume Danse. But few are aware of his dramatic leadership in the struggle for liberty of those revolutionary days. So this play reveals the two sides of Moreau de Saint-Méry, a little known hero of the New World.

The leading lady is Minette, the first black diva of the New World, at the luxurious opera house in Cap Français, Saint-Domingue. Minette was so famous in her day that ships were named after her. That was after she struggled to overcome the barriers to her performing on stage at all. She perfected her craft and chose the most difficult repertoire. When she started her career, the newspapers would only announce “a certain young person” was starring in that week’s opera.

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1 “Saint-Domingue” was the name of the French Colony that occupied the Western territory of the island of Hispanola. The name “Haïti” was adopted at the time of the Revolution, as the new name. Actually it was the “new/old” name, since it was the original Arawak term for the island. Americans are usually confused by the use of “Saint-Domingue” thinking that what is intended is “Santo Domingo” or “The Dominican Republic.” Thus, in Prince of Haiti/King of Paris the colony is referred to as “Haïti”, although this is not, strictly speaking, historically correct.
Included in the play is a scene from the immensely popular, but since neglected, opera by French composer André-Ernest-Modeste Grétry, *Zemire et Azor (Beauty and the Beast)*, featuring Minette as Beauty, one of her most celebrated roles in Saint-Domingue. The production also includes a recreation from Moreau de Saint-Méry’s writings (the earliest known description) of a voodoo² ceremony. Other dances recreated from Moreau’s writings include the Congo minuet and Parisian *contredanses*, which were the delight of the sumptuous French colonial balls in Saint-Domingue, and vibrant African slave dances with their complex drum rhythms.

Another important character in the play is the Chevalier de St.-Georges, (1739 Guadeloupe – 1799 Paris), known as the “Black Mozart." This renowned composer was music director at the Palais Royal, the residence of the French King’s cousin. A virtuoso violinist, champion swordsman, and leader of a legion of free black men in the French Revolution, Saint-Georges was born on Guadeloupe of a slave mother and French father. His compositions are also included in the production. The Chevalier appears in the cast as the guardian of Minette’s son.

Eighteenth-century Saint-Domingue was the richest island in the Caribbean due to its plantations. On that island the colorful African and French rococo cultures influenced each other’s music, dance, and dress in surprising ways. The free ladies of color were the most elegant, most desired women on the island of Saint-Domingue, and laden with jewels and fragrant flowers they danced with French men at the quadroon balls. The Congo minuet was the latest thing. In the play we see all the gradations of influence from

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² "Voodoo" is the current preferred spelling in English, according to *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*. However, eighteenth-century sources used the following spellings: "voudou", "vodou", and "vaudoux", and they are retained where they occur in document titles, or in quotations from period documents.
the purely African styles, (the Slave Trade was still bringing blacks directly from the continent), to the mixed influences, to the purely French rococo style.

The play itself addresses the ideas about freedom that were in the air during this era of the French and Haitian Revolutions. The questions Moreau faced were: Freedom for whom? Was the French Revolution fought only to grant liberty to white French men? What about the Enlightenment ideas that were wafting their way across the Atlantic to an island populated by 30,000 French, about an equal number of free people of color, and half a million slaves?

**Synopsis: The Story of Prince of Haiti/King of Paris**

“What happened to Minette?” is the question posed by this murder mystery musical. Minette, the first black diva of the New World, the most famous soprano of late eighteenth-century Saint-Domingue, disappeared from the historical record in late 1789. It is a mystery that has baffled scholars. Was Minette’s tragic accident (as described by Moreau in the beginning of the play) just that, or something more sinister? Minette’s son travels from Paris to the French exile community in Philadelphia, where he confronts the father he never knew: Moreau de Saint-Méry (1750 Martinique – 1819 Paris). Did the noted man of letters and the law from Saint-Domingue, who rose to become the self-proclaimed “King of Paris” during the French Revolution, do away with her? The white father and mulatto son challenge each other, as the son comes to understand his island heritage and the complexity and sacrifices of the fight for freedom. The shadow of doubt also falls upon Charton, of the Saint-Domingue plantation family, instigator of the scandalous “Charton Affair” which rocked Paris. His accusation that Moreau de Saint-
Méry supported the abolition of slavery caused Moreau’s political ruin and the lynching of his family in Saint-Domingue.

As the end of the play draws near we find out if father and son will resolve their differences, and with a surprise twist at the very last moment the question is answered: “What happened to Minette?”
CHAPTER 2
RESEARCH

History: Moreau de Saint-Méry

Given his stature as a chronicler of the eighteenth-century Caribbean, and his leadership during the French Revolution, Moreau de Saint-Méry has been the subject of very little published scholarship in any language. Of his own works only three have appeared in English. First there is the extremely abbreviated translation of his Description topographique, physique, civile, politique, et historique de la Partie Française de L’Isle Saint-Domingue called A Civilization that Perished: The Last Years of White Colonial Rule in Haiti. The latter, translated by Ivor Spencer, only contains about 15% of the 700,000 words in the former. Second, in English, is the translation of Danse by Lily and Baird Hastings. Third there is Moreau de St.-Méry’s American Journey (1793-1798) translated and edited by Kenneth Roberts and Anna M. Roberts. In French there is the three volume Description mentioned above with an excellent biography by Étienne Taillemite, the the Description topographique et politique de la partie espagnole de l'isle Saint-Domingue, the Loix et constitutions des colonies françaises de l'Amerique sous le vent, published 1784-1790, and the only biography, Un Colonial Sous la Revolution en France et en Amérique: Moreau de St.-Méry (1934) by Anthony Louis Elicona. These documents were obtained during a trip to the French Colonial Archives, the Centre des archives d'outre mer in Aix-en-Provence, funded by the Presser Music Award.
Amis-des-Noirs, and Observations d’un Habitant des colonies, sur le Mémoire in faveur des Gens de Couleur, ou Sang-Mêlés adressé à L’Assemblée Nationale, par Mr. Grégoire, Curé d’Emberménil, Député de Lorraine. Also important in the assessment Moreau’s character was the inflammatory and accusatory pamphlet by M. Louis Charton, Observations sur la Conduite de M. Moreau, dit Saint-Méry, Député de la Martinique à l’Assemblée Nationale de France, which is also at the colonial archives in Aix-en-Provence. With the exception of the Spanish translation of Description topographique et politique de la partie espagnole de l’isle Saint-Domingue, I have not found any evidence of Moreau de Saint-Méry’s works being translated into German, Russian or other languages.

Secondary sources are sparse, so most research and much of the script are centered on primary source material, especially Moreau’s own writings. Dr. David Geggus, Professor of History at the University of Florida and author of several books on this period in Saint-Domingue, served as a resource and attended the staged reading at the University of Miami in 2004. I asked Dr. Geggus for his assessment of the accuracy of my portrayal of Moreau. He exclaimed that he thought it accurately portrayed how moderate and tempered Moreau was, and that he was surprised a play could be made out of so moderate a stance.\(^4\) It was Dr. Geggus who pointed toward the genealogical records that showed Moreau was the father of an illegitimate child with a domestic slave.

After examining the above documents on Moreau de Saint-Méry. I searched for a dramatic climax around which the play could turn. I started with the core question: “What broke Moreau de Saint-Méry’s heart?” For me, the Charton Affair stood out. It may be that because of this Affair Moreau lost what he had dreamed of since he was a

boy: the governorship of Saint-Domingue. His family had been established on Martinique for more than 150 years, and his forefathers were island administrators. From his voluminous writings we can see that he knew and treasured every inch, every breeze that wafted, in the French Caribbean. After the Charton Affair he was never to see his homeland again. But beyond the personal tragedy for Moreau, the Charton Affair is representative of the complex political and philosophical ideas that were so new and exciting in the latter half of the eighteenth century, and how they conflicted with practical matters of commerce, the French Treasury, and national security. When speaking with scholars of Moreau or his era and mentioning the Charton Affair, they often respond “the what affair?” To that question I respond, “Let Moreau and Charton have their day in court – again!”

**History: Eighteenth Century Saint-Domingue**

Groundbreaking scholarship on the cultural history of French Saint-Domingue was presented in the works of Jean Fouchard. Particularly useful in research for the play were four volumes: *Artistes et Repertoires des Scenes de Saint-Domingue; Le Theatre à Saint-Domingue; Plaisirs de Saint-Domingue;* and *La Meringue, danse nationale d’Haiti.* Among the primary sources that demonstrate the context of music and dance in eighteenth-century Saint-Domingue are *Saint-Domingue, la société et la vie créoles sous l’ancien régime (1629-1789)* by Pierre de Vaissière, and *Saint-Domingue à la veille de la Révolution (souvenirs du Baron Stanislas de Wimpffen).* One of the most informative books as an overview of Saint-Domingue, not only concerning science, is *Colonialism and Science, Saint Domingue in the old regime,* by James E. McClellan III. On the role

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Life in the eighteenth-century French colony of Saint-Domingue, now Haiti, was a study in contrasts and contradictions. It was not all “habitations [plantations] where I should repose beneath the shade of orange groves; walk on carpets of rose leaves and frangipani; be fanned to sleep by silent slaves, or have my feet tickled into ecstasy by the soft hand of a female attendant,” as Leonora Sansay wrote to Aaron Burr in 1802. She was describing life on the island before the slave uprisings that started in the 1790s. Descriptions of the splendors and horrors of the colony of Saint-Domingue were recorded by her contemporaries: Monsieur le Comte de Segur, Moreau de Saint-Méry, and Pierre de Vaissière.

Arriving in Saint-Domingue…I found…this island cultivated everywhere with care, resembling a beautiful garden…the elegant homes of the plantation owners. The roads were always covered with wagons which took their products to the ports, and a crowd of light carriages that drove the voluptuous colonists from plantation to plantation. The all visited and got together continually; there were no end to the parties, balls, concerts and games…These riches of the colony present a sort of picture, with their luxury and their movement, of the grand capitals, divided into

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numerous quarters, where the trade, the business, the intrigues and the pleasures keep alive a perpetual agitation and a movement without rest...Few of our great cities [in France] equaled the Cap in prosperity and magnificence.7

Moreau de Saint-Méry describes the delights of the island thus: “charming aviaries where birds brought from Senegal, Guyana, Mississippi and even the Spanish part of (this island) bewitch the eye and ear,” and “On the grounds of the Hospital of Charité is a sizeable pond full of the gilded fish of China.”8 In Cap Français there were a hundred boutiques selling jewelry of gold and precious stones.9 The tables were laden with tropical delicacies and “l’oycou ou le mabi herites des indiens.”10 Here referring to the indigenous fruit drinks and Carib beer made by the Amerindian inhabitants of the island, who had long since fled to the mountainous interior of Saint-Domingue to escape slavery.

In 1789 wine and spirits were imported in voluminous quantities: 81,972 barrels of wine, 12,037 cases of wine, 2,979 barrels of beer, 5,432 baskets of beer, 7,875 crates of liqueurs, 15,330 ances of brandy, and 14,416 baskets of anisette.11

On the other hand, accounts of the lives of the African slaves are brutal. Vaissière states they were usually branded with the owners identifying mark. This was done on the breasts of both sexes. Slaves often became so tired, especially at night, that they sang as they worked to prevent themselves from falling asleep. The danger with the night work, which was mostly in the mill or the boiler room, was that one might be caught in the

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10 Ibid., 19.
11 Ibid., 18.
rollers or fall into one of the vats.\textsuperscript{12} They lived in little huts, divided into small unfurnished rooms, one room per family.\textsuperscript{13} The “usual” punishments for insignificant offenses were the putting of salt or pepper into wounds made by the lash, the cropping off of ears or noses. The special punishments ran to such abominations as burying a slave alive after he dug his own grave in the presence of the whole gang.\textsuperscript{14} Is it any wonder that Alfred de Laujon descried, “Ah, Saint-Domingue! Saint-Domingue! Vous etiez a la fois le paradis de la terre et la perte des ames!” (“Ah, Saint-Domingue! Saint-Domingue! You were at the same time paradise on earth and the damnation of souls!”)\textsuperscript{15}

In 1639 the first French sugar plantation was established on the island of Martinique. The seventeenth century saw the establishment of the plantation culture in Saint Domingue, with tobacco, indigo, coffee and sugar constituting the chief exports. In 1697 the Treaty of Ryswick was signed in Europe, in which Spain officially ceded the western third of the island of Hispaniola to the French. By 1700 the population of whites in Saint Domingue numbered 4,074 and slaves numbered 9,082.\textsuperscript{16}

Toward the middle of the eighteenth century sugar overtook grain as the most valuable single commodity entering world trade, and 44\% of this came from the French colonies in the Caribbean.\textsuperscript{17} In 1713 there were 138 sugar mills in Saint Domingue. By 1790 there were 339. The boom in production was not limited to sugar. The number of

\textsuperscript{14} Vaissière, 190-193.
\textsuperscript{15} Fouchard, \textit{Plaisirs de Saint-Domingue}, 9.
\textsuperscript{17} Blackburn, 403.
cotton, indigo and coffee estates grew at least as rapidly. In 1789 the population of Saint-
Domingue reached 520,000 persons: 40,000 whites, 28,000 freedmen or descendants of
freedmen, and 452,000 slaves.\footnote{Saint-Méry, \textit{A Civilization that Perished}, 15.}

Slaves came from a variety of African states. These included Bantu speaking
Africans, those described as Congos, who constituted 41\% of the slaves on sugar
plantations and 64\% of those on coffee plantations. Those from Senegambia and the
Bight of Benin tended to be taller and were preferred by sugar plantation owners. Creole
slaves usually held the more elite slave positions such as drivers, wheelwrights,
coachmen, housekeepers, master carters, while Africans were relegated to positions such
as sugar boilers.\footnote{Blackburn, 442.}

French emigrants to the Caribbean throughout the colonial period were relatively
fewer than their European counterparts, which resulted in a larger mulatto class, free and
even elite. The overwhelming number of African slaves, were an additional factor which
lent a distinctly African-American Creole flavor to the French culture. Cuisine, fashion,
art and entertainment, all were influenced by this interplay of cultures.

\textbf{History: The French Revolution}

For Moreau’s role in the French Revolution the pamphlet/memoir by Jean
Dusaulx, \textit{L’Oeuvre des Sept Jours}, gives daily accounts of the events in the Hotel de
Ville, the Paris City Hall where Moreau, as president of the Electors of Paris, was holed
up and from whence he issued the much touted thousands of orders without leaving his
desk. These events are described in further detail in Act II, pages 47 through 50, of the
script. M. Dusaulx was with Moreau during those important seven days of July 11
through July 18, 1789, when the Electors, at the Hotel de Ville became the de facto headquarters of the Revolution. M. Dusaulx was himself a member of the Electors of Paris. Moreau's stable and wise leadership during the chaotic, inflammatory early days of the Revolution was deeply respected and appreciated by many including the Marquis de Lafayette. Simon Schama’s classic, *Citizens, A Chronicle of the French Revolution*, proved excellent for crosschecking the perceptions and viewpoint of Dusaulx against the current scholarly account of events. Mitchell Bennett Garrett’s *The French Colonial Question 1789-1791*, concerns itself with the handling of colonial representation, and colonial issues (most notably of course, rights for people of color) by the French General Assembly during the first years of the Revolution. Its careful examination of the minutes of the Assembly also demonstrate Moreau de Saint-Méry’s prominent role in the proceedings. Norman Hampson’s *The French Revolution, a concise history*, offers many engravings, prints, reproductions of paintings, and cartoons which give a visual sense of the events.

**History: Minette**

Very little is known about Minette. The only research conducted about the soprano appears in a chapter titled “Minette and Lisette [her younger sister]” in Jean Fouchard’s *Le Théâtre à Saint-Domingue*. A novel based on her life, that is frequently referred to but offers no scholarly substantiation or footnotes, is *Dance on the Volcano* by Marie Chauvet. A conversation at the New Orleans International Ballet Conference (see p. 31) with iconic author and self-styled “Ghost of the Paris Opera,” Ivor Guest (*Ballet of the Enlightenment*, etc.), led me to believe that he deems there to be no evidence that Minette ever performed in Paris. He commented that he had perused virtually all of the
newspapers of the day as well as the operatic programs at the Opera Garnier. Furthermore, he noted that a soprano of color on the stage in Paris would not have gone unnoticed or unmentioned.²⁰

History: Chevalier de St.-Georges

There are three biographies of this mulatto composer and colonel of the Legion of St.-Georges in the French Revolution. The first is Emil Smidak’s Joseph Boulogne, called Chevalier de Saint-Georges (1996), and second, Monsieur de Saint-George, Virtuoso, Swordsman, Revolutionary, A Legendary Life Rediscovered (1999), by Alain Guédé. Suffice it to say that the former cannot compare with the latter for thoroughness of scholarly research. Claude Ribbe’s biography, Le Chevalier de St.-Georges, is also helpful, although the footnoting is not as complete as one would wish. The Canadian Broadcasting Company’s video of its television program, Le Mozart Noir, with the exquisite performances of Jeanne Lamon and her Tafelmusik Orchestra, provided an example of how the subject matter could be handled theatrically, integrating musical elements. Two articles also contributed to understanding the Chevalier de St.-Georges within an historical context: World’s Great Men of Color, Volume II by J.A. Rogers contained “Chevalier de St. Georges, Master Athlete, Swordsman and Musician” and the New York Times article, “The Composer as Musketeer.”

History: Talleyrand

Although Talleyrand ended up on the cutting room floor, so to speak, as far as the script is concerned, a thorough search into his activities in the United States from 1794 - 1796, was conducted, and he still remains as a device -- and a valid one given the facts --

in the script. It should also be noted that Moreau de Saint-Méry considered Talleyrand his best friend, saying “We are as two fingers of one hand” in his American diary.\textsuperscript{21} Moreau and Talleyrand were inseparable during the time that both were French exiles in Philadelphia from Robespierre’s Terror in France. The only reference to Talleyrand’s negro mistress in Philadelphia is to be found in the memoirs of the Chevalier de Pontgibaud, \textit{A French Volunteer of the War of Independence} translated and edited by Robert B. Douglas.\textsuperscript{22} It is interesting that the discreet Moreau de Saint-Méry never mentions it in his “American Journey” diary, despite many citations of the times he and Talleyrand spent together. Pontgibaud’s volume is also the source of the “King of Paris” moniker. Pontgibaud states that this is what Moreau called himself.\textsuperscript{23} Research on Talleyrand included: \textit{Talleyrand in America}, a study of his exile in the United States, doctoral dissertation by John L. Earl; \textit{Talleyrand and the Revolution Nobilaire, an interpretation of his role in the French Revolution}, a doctoral dissertation by Peter Voris Curl (here trying to understand the relationships between Talleyrand, Lafayette and Moreau de Saint-Méry); \textit{Talleyrand aux Etats Unis 1794-1796} by Michel Poniatowski; \textit{Talleyrand amoureux} by Casimir Carrère, \textit{Talleyrand, profiles in power} by Philip G. Dwyer, and the web article by Bob Arnebeck, “Talleyrand and His Black Mistress: the Morals of the French in Philadelphia.” A conversation with Arnold Talleyrand, Haitian author, led me to believe that his family does accept as true that they are descendants of


Talleyrand, and that this could be proved were they permitted access to the eighteenth-century letters of the Dupont (de Nemours) family in Delaware.24

**History: Lafayette**

Lafayette’s memoirs and Harlow Giles Ungar’s recent biography, *Lafayette*, were consulted in hopes that Moreau de Saint-Méry’s relationship to the general and revolutionary leader might be commented upon, however there was no mention of Moreau. Nevertheless, there is considerable substantiation of Lafayette’s dedication to the cause of emancipation in Ungar’s biography.25 As pointed out in the footnote in the script, Lafayette’s daughter is quoted as saying Moreau was one of her father’s oldest and dearest friends.

**History: Jean Milhet (Mrs. Moreau’s father)**

Alfred Lehmann, curator of the Historic New Orleans Collection was most kind to point me towards *Revolt in Louisiana, The Spanish Occupation 1766-1770* by John Preston Moore. This work confirms Moreau’s mention in his *Mémoire Justicatif* of his father-in-law’s heroism during the revolt by residents of French Louisiana in the course of the takeover by Spain, and Milhet’s subsequent imprisonment in Havana.26

**Music: Late Eighteenth-Century French Operas in Saint-Domingue**

In 1744, the first subscription series of theatrical performances was presented in a large private residence in the city of Cap-Français.27 Eventually eight cities and towns in

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Saint-Domingue would have theaters in the eighteenth century. At Cap Français a theatrical company would contain twenty well-trained actors, and an orchestra of at least eleven musicians. In addition popular French artists would be featured on the island for a season or two and return to Paris well-compensated.\(^{28}\) The first public performance of which we have a record is that of Rousseau’s *Le Devin du Village* on June 6, 1764.\(^{29}\) As Michael Largey states in *Caribbean Currents*, “There were over three thousand European dramatic and musical performances in St.-Domingue between 1764 and 1791, most of which were imported from the theatres of France.”\(^{30}\) Slaves were taught to play musical instruments such as the french horn, violin, trumpet and mandoline, additionally they were known to participate in the orchestras that accompanied operas given at Le Cap.\(^{31}\)

It was during the boom period of the plantations, 1750 through 1791, that the Salle de Spectacle was built in Cap Français, as well as theaters in six other cities: Cap Français, Port-au-Prince, Saint-Marc, Léogane, Les Cayes and Jérémie. The Salle de Spectacle at the Cap could accommodate an audience of 1,500 colonists, which was three to four times the capacity of any theater in the American colonies at that time.\(^{32}\) It was touted that the set décor could be changed up to eleven times in one piece.\(^{33}\)

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Performances were given on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. The local paper reported the following description of the Salle de Spectacle at the Cap on its opening night, April 23, 1766:

Last Sunday we saw for the first time the newly constructed Salle de Spectacle. This hall, 120 feet in length by forty in width, fulfills well our expectations that we could build a Salle de Spectacle. It is divided into three equal parts: the stage; the Parterre and the Orchestra; and the Amphitheatre and exits. The stage layout is oval and close to the listeners. In the middle of a scene, the actor finds himself advanced downstage, this prevents his voice from being lost in the wings. There are ten first row and ten second row boxes on each side. On the right is the King’s which is double sized, and painted in gold with the Arms of France and of Navarre, and decorated with two carpets embroidered with gold and with fleur de lys scattered throughout. On the left is a box of six feet for M. l’Intendant, with Naval décor. The other first row boxes are also beautifully decorated in a manner appropriate to their occupants. The second row boxes are all painted in a Neapolitan yellow mosaic pattern, upon a background of royal blue. The theatre decorations were remarked upon by gentlemen of good taste: two huge satyrs seem to support the whole edifice, on the frontispiece we see the arms of the King. The curtain is blue, upon which are painted four spirits, symbols of Tragedy and Comedy and two others floating in the air supporting a caption which reads in gold letters: “Castigat ridendo mores.” The decorations and painting were the works of Mr. Gervais of this city and do him honor. We observed in general that the lighting was not successful, equally so near the stage as by the audience. It is necessary to admit that it fails the art. The hall demands more lighting than was evident at this first showing. The dimness obscures the charms of the performance and the beauty of the decorations. We think that some fixtures spaced out along the first row of boxes would produce the desired effect.

As this reporter left the elegant opera house at Cap Français that festive Spring evening he could not foresee that the Salle de Spectacle would survive the earthquake of 1770 and serve the colonists, with some renovations, until the Salle de Spectacle disappeared into the flames that engulfed Cap Français during the brutal slave uprisings in 1791, twenty-five years later.

34 Saint-Méry, A Civilization that Perished, 132.
Many of the operas which appeared on the colony’s stages were *opera-comiques*, a genre which developed in mid-eighteenth century France. John Cale explains the *opera-comique’s* appeal to the island colony’s audiences: “Here was a vehicle which could embody musical excellence and at the same time entertain the less cultivated. Furthermore, the relatively small casts of singers, pit musicians, and stage settings could be moved about or improvised in part in the outlying provinces or overseas colonies.”

Some of the composers and authors whose works were represented on the island’s stages included: Rameau, Grétry, Gluck, Voltaire, J.-J. Rousseau, Philidor, Duny, and Monsigny. My own unpublished paper, “French Operas in Eighteenth-Century Saint-Domingue” researched the composers of the operas, the frequency of their performances in Saint-Domingue, and their appearance in the repertory of Parisian theatres during the period when they were performed on the island. The conclusion reached in that paper is: “This roster of operas, *opera comiques*, and *operas bouffons* [performed in Saint-Domingue during the second half of the eighteenth century] certainly represents a variety of styles, approaches, and influences from the classic to the slight. It is evident that a significant number were performed in Saint-Domingue shortly after their premieres in Paris (for example Grétry’s *Silvain* which opened in Paris on February 19, 1770, and at the Salle de Spectacle on October 17, 1770), and that the colonists prided themselves on being up to date with the French capital. So how does this repertoire of productions compare with that of the Theatre Italien in Paris at the same time? Were the offerings at the Salle de Spectacle also being shown in Paris contemporaneously, or were they already out of vogue?

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36 Cale, 35.
In order to answer these questions, a table has been compiled on a year by year basis for the first seven years of the Salle’s productions (1764-1770) looking at the most popular composers (Monsigny, Favart, Duni, Pergolesi, Grétry, and Gossec) with their operas presented in the colony that year, and comparing this with the date of each work’s premiere in Paris and the years it was produced at the Theatre Italien in Paris (see Appendix Two). It is evident from this comparison that, although at first glance it might seem that some of the operas being presented in the colony were not brand new, these pieces were still, in most cases, in the early stages of their runs in Paris. What was being produced in the Salle de Spectacle was *au courant* with the repertoire of the Theatre Italien in Paris.”

I also made a list of the operas in which Minette performed and, after examining the scenarios in the *New Grove Dictionary of Opera Online*, was able to narrow to three the list of operas that could possibly work in the script. Then during the research trip to France supported by the Presser Foundation, I went to the archives at the Opéra Garnier and searched for original costume and set designs for these three. I decided upon Grétry’s *Zemire et Azore Act III Scene V* because there were original or early costume designs available, because it could be excerpted in the play without requiring the audience to learn a new plotline, as everyone is already familiar with *Beauty and the Beast*, and because I thought the aria in the excerpted scene reflected Minette’s situation in the play and offered interesting possibilities for further development in that regard, besides being a gloriously lovely piece of music. Next I read Grétry’s memoires as pertains to this opera. I translated the appropriate scene in directed research with Dr.

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Barbara Woshinsky, Professor of French, Department of Foreign Languages, University of Miami, and edited it down several times to the present version.

The Paris successes of composer Andre-Ernest-Modeste Grétry (1741-1813) were certainly mirrored by the colony. From the first performance of *Le tableau parlant* (1769) at the Salle in 1770 through the production of *L'épreuve villageoise* on April 9, 1791 months before the Salle burned to the ground, his works were continually presented. This successor to Duni, Philidor, and Monsigny created enjoyable pieces with Italianate melody, post-Mannheim symphonic impulse, a sensitivity to the text, and imaginative use of "local color". The popularity of his works in France was declining in favor of his successors Dalayrac and Dezède as it was in the colony during the last several years of the Salle. Thomas Bauman states in the Oxford Illustrated Dictionary of Opera, “During the 1770’s Grétry’s command of popular approval with Parisian audiences was unchallenged – the works of his closest rival, Monsigny, were performed scarcely half as often as his.” A review of the performance schedules for Saint-Domingue in the decade 1770-79 reveals this to be the case in the colony as well: 61 performances of Grétry’s work, 28 of Monsigny’s. Among Grétry’s works produced in Saint-Domingue were *Le Huron* (1768), *Silvain* (1770), *Zemire et Azor* (1771), *La fausse magie* (1775), *Les événcemens emprévus* (1779), *La belle esclave* (1781), *La caravane du Caire* (1783), and *Richard Coeur-de-lion* (1784).

Music: Compositions of St.-Georges

I was able to obtain copies of the scores of “Six String Quartets dedicated to Monseigneur le Prince de Robecq by Mr. de St. George” (1773) at the Bibliothèque National Musique in Paris during my research trip to France.40

There is quite a bit of the Chevalier de St.-Georges’ orchestral and chamber music recorded. Among academic scholars and professional classical musicians there is such a wide diversity of opinion regarding the merit of his talent, that I decided to listen to everything that was recorded. The list of recordings auditioned is included in Appendix Three. I chose the Overture to L’Amant Anonym for the overture to Act II in the play. It displays all of the verve and feeling of anticipation one seeks in an overture and is so very quintessentially late eighteenth century in its rococo delicacy at the same time. In the context of the play, one might even interpret this piece in terms of the “African” energy contrasted with, or struggling to express itself in the context of, late eighteenth-century French style.

Music: French dances

The contredanse from Jean-Philippe Rameau’s Les Boréades was selected for the opening dance in the French ball scene because of its exuberance and ability to sweep the audience away, in this case to Saint Domingue. Graham Sandler states in the New Grove Dictionary of Opera, "Most astonishing, given that Rameau was by now in his late 70s, is the sheer vigour of so much of the music [from Les Boréades]. Many of the ballet

40 Joseph Boulogne, chevalier de Saint-Georges, Six quatuors a deux violons, alto et basse œuvre 1er. 1770.
movements have an almost pagan intensity and lack of inhibition." This vigor in the score allows the French music to stand up to the energy in the subsequent Haitian dances without seeming etiolated. Cale states that in 1771, “La Chaconne des Indes galantes” was performed as a ballet in Cap Français. This substantiates that Rameau’s compositions were played on the island in this period. There is no known date of performance for Les Boréades in Rameau's lifetime, although it appears to have been rehearsed in France in April 1763. The opera had its first documented stage production in 1982 at the Aix-en-Provence Festival. It is thus doubtful that this exact piece was heard in eighteenth-century Saint Domingue.

The “Dance of the Peace Pipe” from Rameau’s opera-ballet Les Sauvages, one of four Acts in Les Indes Galantes, was chosen as entertainment at the French ball because of its subject matter, that is the French encounter with the New World. It is the first glimpse of the juxtaposition of “savage” and “rococo” cultures. The dance shows at once the attraction of the exotic, the fear of it, and the attempt to view another civilization through the French cultural framework. The substantiation in the source material is documented in the previous paragraph.

The opening words for the libretto of the opera-ballet Les Sauvages begins: "The stage represents a grove in a forest of America, bordering on the French and Spanish colonies, where the ceremony of the Great Pipe of Peace is to be celebrated." Which forest, in which American colony, and which "savages" were about to commence the

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42 Cale, 107.
Peace pipe ceremony have been matters of some confusion to scholars. Three different locales have been put forward: Florida, the Caribbean, and Louisiana.

Eminent Florida musicologist, the late Wiley Housewright asserted in his *A History of Music and Dance in Florida, 1565-1865*:

> The French fascination with exotic settings peopled with red Indians did not end with the destruction of Fort Caroline…one example of its continuance is the opera ballet heroique "Les Indes Gallantes"…(the) fourth act is set among the noble savages of Florida.  

Dr. Housewright explained further in personal correspondence:

> My conclusion that the fourth act is set in Florida is based on the geographical setting. "In a forest in America, bordering on the French and Spanish colonies" The only colonies I knew about that fit that description were those of St. Augustine and Fort Caroline (San Mateo); so I accepted that perception.  

However, a close examination of the habits of the Timucuan Indians, resident in northeast Florida at the time of the French settlement of Fort Caroline (1564-1565), do not coincide with those in the libretto. The use of tobacco is not mentioned in the detailed accounts of the Timucuan culture and ceremonies by Jacques Le Moyne official mapmaker of the French settlement.  

French author Lionel de la Laurencie, author of *Rameau* (published Paris, 1908), stated that Rameau would "write a musical interlude for the exhibition of Carib Indians at the Theatre Italien, and this would become the famous 'Air des Savages'."  This geographic attribution was repeated by Yvonne Tienot, author of *J.-Ph. Rameau*.

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45 Wiley L. Housewright to Kyle Siebrecht, May 13, 2000 (personal correspondence).
Early descriptions of Carib/Taino Arawak Indians on the island of Hispanola (the only Caribbean island with a French/Spanish border) did describe smoking of tobacco. However, there were only a very few Caribs remaining high up in the mountainous regions by Rameau's time. It is highly unlikely that they were the Indians he composed for at the Theatre Italien.

Rameau himself wrote to the librettist Houdar de la Motte in 1727, "You have only to come and hear how I have characterized the song and the dance of the savages who appeared at the Theatre Italien two years ago." This is corroborated in the *Annales du Theatre Italien* by Antoine d'Origny, eighteenth-century chronicler of the events at the venue.

The tenth of September [1724], two savages from Louisiana, tall, well made and twenty-five years of age, danced three kinds of dances together and separately.

In the first one, called the dance of peace, the first dancer, dressed more modestly than he would be in his own country, wore on his head a kind of crown, very large and decorated with feathers of different colors; the other one had the dress of a simple warrior…

The description of the performance does conform closely with eyewitness accounts of the Natchez in Louisiana from Antoine Simon le Page de Prat's *Histoire de la Louisiane*, published in Paris in 1758. Since French Louisiana did have a border with Spanish

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Florida in the early eighteenth century, there is ample evidence to support the claim that the Louisiana Natchez were Les Sauvages.

The allemande from Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s intermède Le devin du village (1753), is the suggested musical composition to open the quadroon ball (a social event for French men and free ladies of color that was popular in the French Caribbean colonies and New Orleans) in a lively, festive, albeit rather light, fashion. It is worth noting that Le devin du village which, as previously mentioned, was presented on June 6, 1764 becoming the first substantiated piece performed for the public in Cap Français, continued to be produced up through December 30, 1790 less than a year before the Salle went up in flames.53 And remarkably, its popularity continued even after the Haitian revolution. On January 1, 1805, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, Haiti's first president sponsored a national celebration on the first anniversary of Haiti's independence. A special song was composed for the occasion, "Ode to the Emperor", sung to an air from Le devin du village.54

The allemande's 2/4 meter melds quite wonderfully with the accompaniment of Haitian percussion, the rhythms of which are almost exclusively in duple rhythms. Perhaps it is also the "folklike simplicity of tone [that] pervades the whole" 55 which lends itself well to island interpretations. Nevertheless, not much is known about the music that was played at the quadroon balls. None of the Saint-Domingue primary or

53 Information regarding works which were presented at the theaters in Saint-Domingue has been obtained from the performance schedules listed in two sources: Fouchard, Artistes et Repertoire des Scènes de Saint-Domingue and Cale, “French Secular Music in Saint-Domingue (1750-1795) viewed as a Factor in America’s Musical Growth”)  
secondary sources listed in the bibliography describe the music at these balls. Even in the scholarship examining the quadroon balls of the early nineteenth century in New Orleans (Henry Arnold Kmen’s *Singing and Dancing in New Orleans: a social history of the birth and growth of balls and opera, 1791-1841*, and Monique Guillory's *Some Enchanted Evening on the Auction Block: The Cultural Legacy of the New Orleans Quadroon Balls*) the style of music is not specifically discussed. It would appear that the music would have been French since the French colonial men were dancing, and the ladies of color did their best to imitate and outdo the French women in manners as well as opulence of dress and jewelry. The dancing of the women of color may have evidenced varying levels of Afro-Haitian influence from very little influence to a moderate amount.

It was my intention when writing the script to allow the music director a good deal of leeway for his/her own creativity (and similarly for the choreographers). The intention was to establish only the musical pieces that were necessary (the Grétry opera, the "Dance of the Peace Pipe" from *Les Sauvages*) and then see what these other creative artists brought to the table. However, there were a number of practical considerations that made this approach less than ideal. First, when working with music directors (and choreographers) I found that it saved time and effort if I could be as specific as possible, so they clearly understood the author's intent, and we could work from that starting point. Second was the problem of making the music "cohere." It is very important in a "musical" for the score to be all of a piece, not a grab bag of bits and parts. It became evident that working with a composer/arranger would be the ideal situation, so they could give the score a "sound" and a style, make it a whole. However, funds were not available to engage a composer. Therefore, I set out to choose eighteenth-century pieces by
composers whose works had been performed on Saint-Domingue, that have the theatrical feel I wanted. These would serve as the score, or as examples to the music director of they type of music the author had in mind for that particular scene. Thus, several pieces of French music, although indicated in the script, are not “set.” These are in general the mixed influence pieces: for the Congo minuet (the Couperin “Les barricades mystereuses”), for the quadroon ball (the Rameau gavotte from “Le Ture genereux” in Les Indes galantes), and the "to be composed" pieces: the First Act overture, and the second aria for Minette accompanied by the Chevalier. Fortunately, it is working out that the ideal situation has arrived. Montreal Baroque Music Festival has commissioned, through a composition grant from the Canada Arts Council, music director and composer Matthias Maute to create an original score for Prince of Haiti/King of Paris, some of which will use themes from the musical compositions already discussed in this section.

Music: Afro-Haitian Drumming and Voodoo rituals

Noted Anthropologist Katherine Dunham’s Island Possessed was helpful in putting voodoo in a cultural context and in understanding Saint-Domingue. Also valuable was The Serpent and the Rainbow by Harvard ethnobotanist Wade Davis, whose research on “zombies” uncovered the physiological cause of this phenomena. Drums of Vodou by Lois Wilcken describes the instruments and rhythms, as well as the social and historical context. Donald J. Cosentino’s beautiful and thorough Sacred Arts of Haitian Voudou, published by the UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History, is an important source. The archival recordings of Harold Courlander on the Smithsonian Folkways label, Drums of Haiti/Songs and Dances of Haiti, taped in Haiti during the 1930s and 1940s, are useful, as is the video (and the book of the same name) Divine Horsemen:
Living Gods of Haiti by Maya Deren that recorded the music and dance of Haitian voudou in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Michael Largey’s article: “Composing a Haitian Cultural Identity: Haitian Elites, African Ancestry, and Musical Discourse”, analyzes the social, political and racial influences on the development of music in Haiti, and makes some important observations about eighteenth-century Saint-Domingue in this regard.

Moreau de Saint-Méry wrote one of the earliest descriptions of “vaudoux” and the dances which are an integral part of the ritual. He cautions, “But it is not as a dance alone that voodoo is to be considered, for it is set in circumstances which assign it a place among institutions in which superstition and some bizarre practices have a great part.” 56 He describes the central place in the ritual and voodoo pantheon of the snake (known in voodoo as Damballah) and describes the ceremony, with its “King” and “Queen.” Spirit possession is related in this way:

For each of these invocations he receives, the Voodoo King meditates. The Spirit acts in him. Suddenly he takes the chest containing the adder, places it on the ground, and makes the Voodoo Queen stand on it. Once the sacred refuge is under her feet this new pythoness that she is, is possessed by God. She shakes, her whole body is convulsed and the oracle speaks through her mouth. Sometimes she flatters and promises happiness, sometimes she thunders and utters reproaches. 57

He continues:

After that comes the dance of the Voodoo. If there is an initiate-to-be, the King traces a circle with some black substance and places the recruit in it. In the novice’s hand is put a packet made up of herbs, animal hair, bits of horn and other things just as disgusting. Striking the candidate lightly on the head with a little wooden blade he intones an African song which all those around the circle take up in chorus. Then the member-elect starts to tremble and to do a dance which is called “Come up, Voodoo.” If unluckily the excess of his trance makes him leave the

56 Moreau de Saint-Méry, A Civilization That Perished, 1.
57 Ibid, 3.
circle, the chant stops at once and the King and Queen turn their backs in order to dispel the ill omen. The dancer recovers, goes into the circle again, renews his trembling, limps and has such convulsions that the King orders him to stop. The King taps him gently on the head with the blade or wand, or even with a cow’s neck tendon, if he considers that right. He is led to the altar to take the oath and from this moment belongs to the sect. 58

He finishes with a scene in which “faintings and raptures” and “a sort of fury” overtake the dancers and “for all a nervous trembling which they cannot master.” The dancers “spin around ceaselessly” while some “tear their hair and even bite their flesh.” 59 He does add that in order to quell the French colonial official’s fears about the ritual it was sometimes performed in public to “the sound of drums and rhythmic handclapping.” 60

In Dance, Saint-Méry comments on the “Don Pedro” believed to refer to the Petro cult, still in existence today and sometimes referred to as the dark side of voodoo. Twentieth-century anthropologist Katherine Dunham describes the Petro cult of voodoo in this manner:

Priests of Petro have . . . submerged the purely religious function of the cult and emphasized the working of magic, often "black", or of a destructive nature. In general the cult is known for its violence and as a cult of blood. 61

Moreau de Saint-Méry states:

The dance of this name [Don Pedro], like the Vaudoux, is based on extremely vigorous movements of the head and shoulders, but to increase their violence the performers drink eau-de-vie which is mixed with finely pulverized gun powder. The effect of this drink combined with the vigorous movements has a great influence on the dancers, who enter into a kind of madness, with real convulsions. They dance with contorted motions, falling into a kind of epilepsy which knocks them out and they seem near death.

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58 Ibid, 4.
59 Ibid., 3-5.
60 Ibid., 6.
It was necessary to prohibit the Don Pedro, because it caused great trouble and awakened ideas of violence contrary to public interest. The spectators, forming a kind of chorus, participate in the intoxication, and instead of becoming silent when the frenzy develops, they redouble the volume of their songs, increase the tempo, and aggravate the crisis in which they participate.62

No further musical description of the “Don Pedro” songs or accompaniment is offered by Moreau de Saint-Méry, but it is interesting to note the similarity in description to the observations of Dunham during the twentieth century:

The atmosphere of a Petro ceremony is hostile, negative. The possessions are apt to resemble frenzy rather than ecstasy. At the Petro baptismal ceremony witnessed vielle noel in the plains near Croix-de-Bouquets, the ignition of flares and gunpowder at a given time caused such pandemonium that the impulse of an outsider was to seek shelter until the various Petro loa [spirits] had vented their emotions and departed.

There are fewer "possessions" by gods at a Petro ceremony; the form of the dance apparently leads to uncontrolled motor activity; hysteria, rather than ecstasy of hypnotism.63

For purposes of the play, the Haitian drummers and choreographer have been requested to recreate as closely as possible the voodoo ceremony described by Moreau de Saint-Méry, while recognizing and respecting the privacy of the religion of voodoo.

Dance: Eighteenth-Century Dance of French Heritage

In preparation for working with the French period choreographer, and in order to understand the dances of mixed origin, a thorough knowledge of eighteenth-century French dance was essential. The following sources were consulted: books and periodicals; dance manuals and costume and decor sketches in the Opera Garnier, Paris; and technique workshops. A review of these sources is discussed in more detail below.


63 Dunham, 51.
Books

The pre-eminent secondary source in English on the subject of French ballet in the eighteenth century is *Ballet of the Enlightenment* by Ivor Guest. As mentioned in the footnote in the script, I was able to speak with him at the New Orleans International Ballet Conference, where I inquired of him whether he thought Minette might ever have appeared on the stage in Paris. He responded that he had not seen any reference to such a thing in any of the many papers in Paris at the time, and that her appearance on the French stage would not have gone unremarked upon.64

Another classic work that is invaluable in researching eighteenth century French theatrical dance is *The Pre-Romantic Ballet* by Marian Hannah Winter. Both of the aforementioned texts are an excellent aid in tracing the careers of dancers who appeared on the Saint-Domingue stage back to their French roots. In other words, the French colonists made it well worth performers while to come to the colonies for a season or two then return to France. Some stayed in the colony.

*Dance in the Shadow of the Guillotine* by Judith Chazin-Bennahum was also reviewed for any sign of participation on the part of people of color on the French stage during this period. The dissertation *Ballet Comes to America* by Maureen Needham Costonis is essential for anyone studying French theatrical dance in the New World. The chapter on “The French Connection” traces dance in Saint-Domingue to its connections in New Orleans. Many colonists, as well as people of color, departed Saint-Domingue for New Orleans when the slave uprisings began in the 1790s. I also had the privilege of meeting Ms. Needham at the New Orleans conference. She advised me to search among

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the cemetery headstones in New Orleans for evidence of Minette. Unfortunately I did not have the opportunity to make that search before hurricane Katrina devastated the city.

**Articles**

The article “Moreau de Saint-Méry and Danse” by Lillian Moore in the 1946 issue of the journal *Dance Index* is the most complete source for a careful analysis of Moreau’s *Danse* in light of what is known about eighteenth-century Caribbean dance. It also offers a useful biography of Moreau.

**Archives of the Opera Garnier, Paris**

During the previously mentioned 2001 research trip to French archives supported by the Presser Award (see p. 19) I was able to locate the dance notations with scores for three ball contredanses, performed in Saint-Domingue as noted in their newspaper, the *Affiche Americaine* on December 12, 1780. These are: *Les Graces Allemandes* and *Les Graces: contradanse nouvelle par Mr. Blanchard*, as well as *La Fitz-James, contredanse française*. The dance notations were individually printed mostly by dancing masters, in the manner of the day, and later bound together, probably at the archives. Unfortunately the music and dances for these notations did not prove interesting enough theatrically in the final analysis.

**Workshops**

I had the honor to meet and study with Wendy Hilton at her *Stanford University Workshop in Baroque Dance and its Music* before Ms. Hilton’s passing. Dr. Linda Tomko, Ms. Hilton’s protégé taught the dance classes, and Bronwen Pugh, music director from New Zealand and protégé of Sigiswald Kuijken at the Royal Conservatory in the

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Hague, taught informative classes in authentic music performance. It was one of the most intense, most difficult workshops I have ever experienced, but it enabled me to learn and understand the movement vocabulary and period practice of the baroque style of dance in a visual and visceral way. This shaped the manner in which I was able to plan the dances for the play, and communicate with the choreographers (as discussed in the Creative Process section of this thesis, p. 50-51).

I was also fortunate in summer of 2000, to attend the workshop at the Marin (CA) Ballet conducted by renowned expert in eighteenth century dance, Catherine Turocy, Ms. Turocy’s more theatrical approach to the period, as opposed to the Stanford faculty’s more academic approach, greatly appealed to me for the play, and she eventually became a creative team member for *Prince of Haiti/King of Paris*. The theatrical studies within Ms. Turocy's workshop allowed me to see the period dramatic context around dance performance in the eighteenth century, which was utilized in the dramatic settings of the play, and how the dances became part an integral part of the drama.

Conference

Again, thanks to the Presser Music Award, it was my good fortune to attend the New Orleans International Ballet Conference: *Dancing Through History France, Spain, the Caribbean, Canada: The Roots of Dance in Early Louisiana History 1750-1830*. This was the first ever gathering of New World dance scholars. I was able to hear lectures by such outstanding authors and scholars as Ivor Guest (London), Dr. Maureen Needham Costonis (Blair School of Music, Vanderbilt University), Dr. Dominique Cyrille (University of Paris Sorbonne, and Martinique), Dr. Frederick Starr (John Hopkins University), Dr. Marie Françoise Christout (Bibliothèque National de l’Arsenal,
Paris, Dr. Charles Sens (Senior Music Specialist, Music Division, the Library of
Congress, Washington, DC), Dr. Michael White (Tulane), and Debra Anne Jackson
(Metropolitan Museum of Art, NYC). Masterclasses included: French Baroque Dancing
by Prof. Genevieve Massé (France), Reconstruction of Fanny Elssler’s famous “La
Cachucha” by Professor Ann Hutchinson Guest (London), and Variations from “La Fille
Mal Gardée” by Prof. Magali Suarez (Ballet Nacional de Cuba), among others. One of
France’s premiere Baroque Ballet companies, L’Eventail, performed the Western
Hemisphere premiere of Gluck’s Don Juan, a ballet in three acts. The Conference was an
illuminating experience. This Conference allowed me the opportunity to see my research
and the play within the context of the work being done by other scholars of period dance
looking into early New World dance in other colonies. It also allowed me the
opportunity to speak about the research for the play one-on-one with noted authors such
as Mr. Guest, Dr. Costonis and Dr. Cyrille. Conversations with the first two have been
cited in this thesis (see p. 12-13, 31-32).

Dance: Eighteenth-Century Saint-Domingue Dance of African Heritage

Books

The late Madame Katherine Dunham laid the foundation for the field of
anthropological dance research with her dissertation from the University of Chicago,
Dances of Haiti. Prince of Haiti/King of Paris owes her an inestimable debt. Her
impeccable scholarship and highly tuned cultural sensitivity, as well as her ability to
translate the academic into theatre, are legendary. She offered to serve on the advisory
board for Prince of Haiti. The early chapters of Dances of Haiti, comparing Moreau’s
writings with her observations in Haiti during the 1930s, were extremely valuable.
Another important pioneer of folkloric dance in Haiti was Lavinia Williams, and her book *Haiti-Dance* contains clear descriptions of the terminology used in this genre. *Les Danses Folkloriques Haittiennes*, by Michel Lamartinière Honorat, published by the Bureau d’Ethnologie de la République d’Haiti, begins with comparisons of Moreau’s writing and several other eighteenth-century sources, thus providing significant insights. Also helpful is *Black Dance from 1619 to Today* by Lynne Fauley Emery.

It can be difficult to re-create from primary sources the folkloric, or secular, dances enjoyed by the people of color, including both free blacks and slaves, on the island. These sources can present confusing or conflicting descriptions of the dances. One such challenge is the descriptions of the calenda as described by both Père Jean-Baptiste Labat, a Dominican missionary on the French islands of Guadaloupe and Martinique in the early eighteenth century, and Moreau de Saint-Méry. Here Saint-Méry, observing in the second half of the eighteenth century, notes the music and instrumentation in his work describing Saint-Domingue:

> When they are ready to dance, the negroes take two drums, that is two barrels of unequal length; one end of each remains open the other is covered by a tightly stretched lamb skin. These drums (the shorter of which is called the Bamboula because often it is fashioned from a large bamboo which has been dug out) sound out as they are given fist and finger knocks by each player bent over his drum. The larger drum is struck slowly, while the smaller is used for very fast rhythms. These monotonous and low notes are accompanied by a number of Callebasses, containing gravel which is agitated by means of a long handle. The Banzas, a sort of primitive guitar with four strings, joins the concert, the timing being controlled by hand-clapping negresses, standing in a large circle; the group forms a kind of chorus, replying to one or two principal singers whose remarkable voices repeat or improvise on a song.  

In *Dance* he describes further:

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A dancer and his partner, or a number of pairs of dancers, advance to the center and begin to dance, always as couples. This precise dance is based on a single step in which the performer advances successively each foot, then several times, tapping heel and toe, as in the Anglaise. One sees evolutions and turns around the partner, who also turns and moves with the lady; while the partner moves his arms with the elbows rather near the body and the hands practically closed, the lady holds the ends of a handkerchief which waves. Until one has seen this dance he can hardly realize how vivacious it is – animated, metrical, and graceful. The danseuses and dancers spell each other and the negroes enjoy the dances so thoroughly it is hard to bring them to a conclusion. These dances occur in open air fields where the land is smoothed out to spare the feet of the performers. They are named Kalendas.\textsuperscript{68}

Père Labat, observing in the early seventeenth century, also describes the drums as two wooden instruments, the larger being 15-16 inches in diameter, and the smaller one of 8-9 inches, calling it the “baboula.” Both are described as four or five feet high, with skin stretched over one end and played with the hands. The larger drum beats a slow, steady tempo, while the smaller beats faster and more complex rhythms.\textsuperscript{69} Here is how he describes the dance:

The dance in which they take the greatest pleasure is the Calenda. It came from the Guinea Coast, and to all appearances from Ardra. The Spaniards have learned it from the negroes and throughout America dance it in the same way as do the negroes.

As the postures and movements of this dance are most indecent the masters, who live in an orderly way, forbid it to their slaves, and take care that they do not dance it, and this is no small matter; for it is so much to their taste, that even little children who are as yet scarcely strong enough to stand, strive to imitate their fathers and mothers whom they see dancing, and will spend entire days at this exercise...

The dancers are drawn up in two lines, one before the other, the men on one side, and women on the other. Those who are tired of dancing and the spectators make a circle around the dancers and drums. The more adept chants a song which he composes on the spur of the moment, on

\textsuperscript{68} Médéric Louis Elie Moreau de Saint-Méry, \textit{Dance}, trans. Lily and Baird Hastings 54-55.
some subject which he thinks appropriate, the refrain of which, chanted by all the spectators, is accompanied by a great clapping of hands. As for the dancers, they hold their arms almost in the manner of those who dance while playing castanets. They jump, make some turns, approach within two or three feet of each other, draw back in cadence until the sound of the drums directs them to draw together, striking the thighs one against the other, that is to say the men against the women. To all appearances it seems that the stomachs are hitting, while as a matter of fact it is the thighs that receive the blows. They retire at once, turning around to begin the same movement again, with absolutely lascivious gestures, as often as the drum gives the signal, as it often does several times in succession. From time to time they interlace arms and make two or three turns always striking the thighs and kissing. One easily sees from this abbreviated description how indecent this dance is. . . .

These are two quite different descriptions of the calenda. Moreau de Saint-Méry’s calenda is “vivacious”, “animated” and “graceful.” Père Labat’s is “indecent” and “lascivious.” One is done in couples, the other in two lines. One is done tapping the heel and toe, the other striking the thighs of the woman and man together, one has arms held close to the body for the man and the woman waves a handkerchief, while the other is performed with arms extended. In the first description the partners circle each other, in the second they interlace arms and turn together. There are similarities in the instrumentation, the chanting and the handclapping.

The issue is further complicated, or perhaps simplified, by Moreau de Saint-Méry’s description of a dance done in eighteenth-century Saint-Domingue called the Chica:

The Creoles have adopted another exotic production which, also coming from Africa, had an even greater influence than any of the negro dances of which I have spoken. This dance is known generally in the American colonies by the name of Chica, which name it has in the Windward Islands and Saint Domingue.

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When a Chica is to be danced several instruments will play a certain melody, which is devoted uniquely to this kind of dance, and in which the rhythm is strictly observed. For the danseuse, who holds the corners of a handkerchief or the two ends of her apron, the art of this dance consists mainly in moving the lower part of the torso, while keeping the rest of the body almost motionless. To speed up the movement of the Chica, a dancer will approach his danseuse, throwing himself forward, almost touching her, withdrawing, then advancing again, while seeming to implore her to yield to the desires which invade them.

There is nothing lascivious or voluptuous which this tableau does not depict. It offers a kind of contest in which every trick of love and every means of triumph are displayed: fear, hope, disdain, tenderness, caprice, pleasure, denial, delirium, flight, intoxication, despair. . . .

One notes more similarities with Père Labat’s calenda: the approach and withdrawal of the male partner, the “lascivious” nature of the dance. Here is how we would grapple with this conundrum for the production. First, it seems that there is most likely a problem with nomenclature. That the dance Père Labat is calling the Calenda, is a probable precursor of the same dance Moreau de Saint-Méry calls the Chica. Second, this production’s mission is to illustrate the music, dance, theatre and ritual as described by Moreau de Saint-Méry. Therefore, we would make the choice to use his descriptions as definitive for Prince of Haiti/King of Paris. Other sources would be used to complement Moreau’s documentation.

One further note about Moreau de Saint-Méry’s description of the Chica. He states:

Not long ago the Chica was danced by beautiful young ladies whose simple graces embellished it and made it even more seductive. It is true they danced it alone or with members of their own sex who would take the role of the partner, without of course being quite as spectacular. Today, however, our customs are no longer pure enough for such and experiment. The Chica is no longer danced at the balls of the white ladies,

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and only occasionally it is performed on the spur of the moment at certain parties where the small and select society reassures the ladies.\textsuperscript{72}

Please note here the statement, “The Chica is no longer danced at the balls of the white ladies.” I take this as the rare clue indicating what dances might have been performed at the balls for ladies of color and white men. Thus I have indicated the Ballroom Chica to be created for the quadroon ball scene in \textit{Prince of Haiti/King of Paris}.

\textbf{Workshops}

In the summer of 2000, I was able to attend the Latin American and Caribbean Summer Dance Institute under the leadership of Andrea Mantell-Seidel, Ph.D. Dr. Seidel is the founder of the Intercultural Dance and Music Institute (INDAMI) at Florida International University. INDAMI presented the Summer Dance Institute at New World School of the Arts. At this Institute I was able to take Haitian dance classes and begin working with the renowned Haitian dance teacher and choreographer, Louines Louinis, who had recently retired from New York to Miami. Mr. Louinis was to become a member of the creative team and consultant to \textit{Prince of Haiti/King of Paris}. Mr. Louinis, an elder statesman of Haitian dance, is a specialist in the historical and folkloric dances of Haiti, having danced with both Lavinia Williams and Katherine Dunham. He is also a classical flutist, so he has been able to answer questions both about the history and practice of the folkloric and ceremonial dances, and clarify historical research questions, but he has also been able to assist in working with the drummers to translate Haitian rhythms into the Baroque repertoire.

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 63-64.
Playwriting

As a bridge from all the research done prior to playwriting, it was necessary to research the subject of playwriting itself. This was accomplished by consultation with authorities in the field and via the study of books on the subject. The first stage director I worked with, Keith Baker the artistic director of Bristol Riverside theatre outside Philadelphia, had agreed to participate in the scriptwriting process, but he just did not have the time. The advice he was able to give that was helpful, although I first found it appalling, was: “More conflict!” Always “More conflict!” I approached Vincent Cardinal, the head of the Theatre Department at the University of Miami, regarding “directed studies” proposing to write the script under his guidance, but he also did not have the time. So I went to Richter library and checked out every book I could find on playwriting. Thus I immersed myself one hurricane season in the likes of: *How Plays are Made: the fundamental elements of play construction* by Stuart Griffiths, *The Elements of Playwriting* by Louis E. Catron, *The Dramatist’s Toolkit: the craft of the working playwright* by Jeffrey Sweet, *The Art and Craft of Playwriting* by Jeffrey Hatcher, *The Playwright’s Handbook* by Frank Pike and Thomas G. Dunn, *Playwrighting from Formula to Form: a guide to writing a play* by William Missouri Downs, *The Playwright’s Workbook* by Jean-Claude van Itallie, *A Story is a Promise: good things to know before you write that screenplay, novel or play* by Bill Johnson, *Solving Your Script: tools and techniques for the playwright* by Jeffrey Sweet, *The Playwright’s Guidebook* by Stuart Spencer, *Characters in Action: a guide to playwriting* by Marshall Cassady, and *The Art of Dramatic Writing* by Lajos Egri. The works of Mr.
Egri, Mr. Sweet and Mr. Catron, were especially helpful. From these research sources I derived the principles which informed my creative work on the play.
CHAPTER 3
CREATIVE PROCESS/COMPOSITIONAL METHODS

General Comments

The most difficult thing about the composition of this project has been striking the right balance among the script, music and dance. At first it was difficult to bring the script to a level of excitement, interest and authenticity to stand alongside the Baroque and African music which I envisioned as eventually shaping the score. Then when the script finally was exciting enough and it was clear from producers’ responses that the piece was meriting attention as a “musical” both nationally and internationally, the dance and music had to undergo a thorough revision in order to rise to a new level of theatricality. In other words, there has been a continual evolution from the “academic” to the “theatrical.”

Also in the theatrical genre it has evolved. As my entertainment attorney Tim DeBaets in New York City stated: “Like it or not, for better or worse, we are no longer in the non-profit theatre world with this piece, but in the Broadway world.” This section discusses that evolutionary process.

The Script

The first draft of the script was a meandering tale with too many characters, was too confusing, and had no real structure and direction. (Not unlike the second draft!) When it was about three-quarters finished the creative team read the script in the first workshop at Bristol Riverside Theatre outside Philadelphia, where the stage director, Keith Baker, held the position of artistic director. After the reading, I was pretty appalled at how bad the script was. I was also becoming painfully aware that the director did not
have the time to do more than read the drafts of the script and offer vague comments that, while I am certain they were accurate, did not help me at all. I asked him if he could get in touch with the best playwright he knew and ask if that person would mentor me. Thankfully, he contacted Outer Critics Circle and Lucile Lortel award winning playwright Mark St. Germain, who offered to assist. St. Germain observed, “You’ve already done the hard part, which is all the research.”

St. Germain had me start with an exercise in which I wrote out in detail what each of the main characters “knew” in the play. Then we discussed this material and developed the structure or frame of the script as a murder mystery in which the son confronts the father about his mother’s death, and the father’s story is revealed through flashbacks. I worked on the second draft of the script, with St. Germain commenting on each scene as it was finished. His remarks were specific and “actionable” and helped me immensely in learning how to write a play. St. Germain’s gracious assistance, purely as a favor to his friend Susan Atkinson, the producing director at Bristol Riverside Theatre, will forever be appreciated. At this point, in Spring of 2004, we had the opportunity to do a workshop with music and dance at the University of Miami, and the second version of the script was able to be viewed. Again, it was too long, had too many characters, and was too confusing. But this time it did have better structure.

After the 2004 workshop, I decided to seek a stage director who would work with me on the script. I had a pretty good idea where it needed cutting, but wanted to find someone who would assist with the surgery that was needed and help find creative solutions. Choreographer Catherine Turocy referred me to Murray Ross, artistic director of Theatreworks at the University of Colorado. He had received glowing accolades from
the New York Times for his stage direction of a production of Molière’s and Lully’s *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* for the New York Baroque Dance Company and Concert Royal. Meeting with him in Colorado, we watched the video of the 2004 workshop and Mr. Ross’s comments synchronized with my thoughts on what needed to be excised. We revised the scenario, divided up the scenes that needed “fixing” and went to work writing, re-writing and editing each other’s work. Mr. Ross added wit and a sense of creative invention which were delightful. Unfortunately the project seemed to flag at this point for lack of funding.

Enter Broadway director Marion Caffey, creator of *Three Mo’ Tenors*, and *Three Mo’ Divas*. Mr. Caffey had heard about *Prince of Haiti/King of Paris* from associates in New York City, who put us in touch with each other. Mr. Caffey read the script and was very excited about the play. We had just received a grant from the City of Coral Gables, enough to do a reading of the third version of the script. So in May 2005, Mr. Caffey directed local actors in a scriptreading at the University of Miami. Finally, as I mentioned to leading man, actor and Florida International University acting instructor Stephen Neal, the script was “within shouting distance” of where it needed to be. A lively post-reading discussion group, lasting for two hours, helped me to see where some further work might be done.

Subsequent to the 2005 workshop, I made key changes in several scenes. These mainly consisted of fleshing out the characters and showing sides of their character not seen in the three previous versions. The rewriting of the final scene between Mrs.

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Moreau and Minette, where we clearly see that Mrs. Moreau is mad, was especially important and put the whole play in much sharper focus.

**Deviations from Fact**

Overall the script started out adhering strictly to “fact” (or we might say “documented sources”), which, theatrically speaking, was somewhat tedious. It progressed to a balance of “fact,” interpretation or inferences from the documented sources, invention consistent with the overall mores/practices of the period, and invention that does not contradict the sources. The latter is utilized either in places where the facts are not known (e.g., private lives), or where for one reason or another strict adherence is not permissible (e.g., it is not permissible in our society to offer animal sacrifices on stage in the voodoo ceremony). A copy of the script in English with footnotes where specific documentation substantiates the dialogue is included as Appendix Eight of this thesis.

In discussing the deviations from documented sources in the script alone (deviations from music scores and authentic practice, and dance authentic practice will be discussed in other sections) we can say in general that the private lives of the characters are a mixture of period sources and invention consistent with mores and practices of the day. There is little known, despite Moreau de Saint-Méry’s voluminous writings, about his family life and about his wife. There is documentation of an illegitimate child, a daughter, by a domestic slave prior to his marriage. Dr. David Geggus, professor of history at the University of Florida and expert on this period in Saint-Domingue, also described to me a cartoon of Moreau that appeared in the Paris newspapers in 1791. He

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was married at this time, nevertheless in the cartoon he is accompanied by a mistress of color. Unfortunately despite much effort on both our parts, neither Geggus nor myself was able to locate this cartoon. So while there is not any known substantiation of a son of color, it is not inconsistent with Moreau de Saint-Méry’s character. For Mrs. Moreau, we do not know that she poisoned anyone, or that she was mad. However, Moreau de Saint-Méry wrote about the extreme jealousy of white women and women of color towards each other in Saint-Domingue.\(^75\) He wrote that French colonial women were “ready, moreover to bear more easily the death of a loved one than the loss of his love.” As with Minette, exceedingly little is known about her life. We know that Moreau de Saint-Méry praised her performances.\(^76\) Given his love of the theatre,\(^77\) and her prominence in that arena, it is difficult to believe they did not know each other. Minette did “disappear” about the time that the slave uprisings began in Saint-Domingue, and it is not known whether she perished or escaped. So we do not know that she went to Philadelphia, although we know that there were women of color from Saint-Domingue in Philadelphia at this time,\(^78\) and they were thought to have been supported by the French men exiled there. Their extravagance in dress shocked the Philadelphians, who had heretofore encountered mainly slave blacks.\(^79\) As previously stated, Talleyrand was Moreau de Saint-Méry’s best friend in Philadelphia, and he did have a mistress of color in Philadelphia. Charton was indeed from manufacturing family, and served as an

\(^{76}\) Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description de l’isle Saint-Domingue*, II :989.
Elector of Paris. The tribunal scene is taken directly from the pamphlets that Charton and Moreau fired off at each other. We do not have documentation that Charton lived in Saint-Domingue, though he serves to represent the plantation owners’ ideological stance on that island. The Chevalier de St.-Georges and Moreau de Saint-Méry belonged to the same Masonic Lodge in Paris, the notorious Noef Soeurs, which scholars for some time believed to have instigated the French Revolution. There is no source documentation of which I am aware, that demonstrates they were acquainted. Likewise there is no indication that St.-Georges served as guardian for a young man of color, although there is evidence of his treating the young sang-mêlé Alexandre Dumas “like a son,” and that he “adored young people,” although he apparently had no children of his own.

Director Caffey commented that what he liked about the play was he learned a lot, and had so much fun, too. This was very much appreciated, as it is the style for which I had been striving: a meeting of the minds between Ken Burns and Cirque de Soleil.

French Translation

Two French speaking producers interested in presenting the play, Susie Napper of Montreal Baroque Music Festival and Elie Bankhalter in Paris, requested a translation of the script into French. This was funded through an international exchange grant from the State of Florida Division of Cultural Affairs. The grant funded a workshop in Montreal for which the script in French was necessary. I consulted with the Dramatists Guild in New York City, an organization that assists playwrights with artistic, legal, promotional, funding, and other needs. They offered on their website a transcription of a panel session

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80 Louis Charton, Observations sur la Conduite de M. Moreau, dit St.-Méry (n.p., 1790), 1.
81 Alain Guédé, Monsieur de Saint-George, 144-145; Moreau de Saint-Méry, Description de l’île Saint-Domingue, xv.
82 Guédé, 228.
with leading playwrights on the subject of translations. One piece of advice that stood out was the recommendation to have the translation done by an actor rather than a translator, because an actor knew how the translation would “read aloud” on stage. A translator would be more concerned with getting “just the right word.” I had had the good fortune to meet Parisian actress Héloïse Erignac through her friend Kathryn Gaubatz, executive director of the Miami Bach Society. Ms. Erignac had then introduced her friend, noted Parisian producer, and former artistic director of the Opéra de Marseilles, Elie Bankhalter to the play. Ms. Erignac first translated the promotional materials for the play into French. Then I approached her regarding translating the script for the Montreal workshop. She did a fine job, and we anticipate a production of the play in Montreal with a bilingual cast that will present the play in both French and English performances.

A copy of the script in French is included as Appendix Nine of this document. Please note that the French script is formatted in the French manner, that is divided into separate scenes. The English script is formatted in the contemporary American fashion, without separate scene divisions.

**Music**

The music for *Prince of Haiti* can be divided into three categories: eighteenth-century French, Afro-Haitian percussion, and pieces that are a mixture of the two. In order to take advantage of the vast experience and knowledge of the creative team that was gathering around the play, I requested that the music director and choreographers bring their suggested musical compositions to the workshops for the dances, overtures.

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and any place where the music was not integral to the drama. By that I mean that the Grétry opera, and the Dance of the Peace Pipe were part of the dramatic content and as such were not open to substitution. The Haitian master drummer Damas Fan-Fan Louis brought a thorough knowledge of traditional rhythms to the Haitian “folkloric” dances and the voodoo ceremony.

The workshops of 2003 and 2004 left much to be desired in the area of music. Script concerns and the funding and administrative aspects of the workshops directed attention away from musical choices. I relied on the music director, working with the choreographers, to select the music and come up with exciting mixtures of both cultures where required. (As mentioned previously funding for a composer was not available, see p. 26.) The first French music director, James Richman artistic director of Concert Royal, was quite accomplished, but his wonderful authentic period style just was not a good match for a project this theatrical and “out of the box” with its mélange of genres and combination of heritages. The Haitian percussionists were fabulous, but they needed more direction from the French music director in the pieces that were influenced by both the French and African styles. Subsequent music directors proved better matched to the project and provided some interesting and exciting options. It was not until the third workshop (May 2005) that I heard for the first time the two cultures blending together as the music director played a piece by Rameau with the master drummer weaving his rhythms into the composition. It was not until the script had reached its fourth version that I was able to take several months to go through many CDs of French Baroque and late eighteenth-century music and make choices that shaped the score the way I wanted it. These choices, discussed above in the Research section p.15-30, are noted in the script.
During the Christmas season of 2005, one of the choreographers saw the just-released film *Casanova* (by Disney’s Touchstone Films) which incorporated a Baroque score, albeit mostly Italian. She commented that we needed someone like these film composers. A New York Times article described in detail the creative process involved in putting together that score.84 I tracked the film composer down who worked on *Casanova*, Sonny Kompanek, and asked his advice. He recommended his protégé, Eric Hachikian, who also worked on the film. We applied for a composition grant from Meet the Composer, and in the meantime I personally commissioned one three minute piece, the Overture to the First Act, from him. It was a rewarding and educational experience to have worked with Mr. Hachikian even though we were not funded to work on the whole score. The score for the overture he composed is attached as Appendix Four. It skillfully weaves together the various compositions which had been chosen for the score (the *contredanse* from *Les Boreades*, selections from the Grétry opera, Haitian drumming, the "Dance of the Peace Pipe" from *Les Sauvages*) by the Spring of 2006.

As discussed in the Music: Research section of this thesis (see p. 15-30) work is commencing with Mr. Maute on a complete score for the play. See Appendix Five for the "Music Outline" for Prince of Haiti/King of Paris.

**Choreography**

The workshop of 2004 was the first time that choreographers were able to work with dancers on the choreography for the play. The Afro-Haitian dances were exciting, albeit too long. The challenge was bringing the French dances to a level of theatricality

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that could compete with the energy of the Afro-Caribbean dances, while maintaining the essence of the period.

Very little was done with the mixed influence dances, mainly the quadroon ball dances, until the September 2006 workshop in Montreal. That one week, when I was able to work closely with the choreographer and dancers, was very fruitful, and we began to see emerging the fascination of what these dances might have been like. As with the music there is little written about the actual quadroon ball dances. If one starts by making an informed conjecture about the musical choice, then one can proceed from that basis to construct a hypothetical choreography recreating the lost dance. Choreographers who are period experts from each style, the eighteenth-century French and the Afro-Haitian, work together to reconstruct what these mixed influence dances could have looked like.

A good example of this is the Congo minuet. Moreau de Saint-Méry mentions this dance being done at a French colonial ball.\textsuperscript{85} He does not describe this intriguingly monikered dance. There is not to my knowledge any other mention of the Congo minuet in the period sources. So, the French choreographer begins with the minuet, the Haitian choreographer incorporates some of the patterns of the Congo dances, and they build from there (adding some theatrically exciting touches).

Again, as with the music, it was not until the script had reached its fourth version, that I was able to take the time to create a detailed description for the choreographers of specifically what I wanted in each dance (See Appendix Six).

\textsuperscript{85} Moreau de Saint-Méry, \textit{Dance}, 39.
The first workshop for *Prince of Haiti/King of Paris* occurred in August 2003 at Bristol Riverside Theatre, outside Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This workshop was supported by a quarterly grant from the State of Florida Division of Cultural Affairs. In attendance were: Keith Baker, artistic director of Bristol Riverside Theatre and stage director for *Prince of Haiti/King of Paris*; James Richman, artistic director of Concert Royal and the Dallas Bach Society and French music director for *Prince of Haiti*; Catherine Turocy, artistic director of the New York Baroque Dance Company, and French baroque choreographer for *Prince of Haiti*; Marcea Daiter, Artistic Director Dance Kaleidoscope and Afro-Haitian choreographer for *Prince of Haiti*; Louines Louinis, artistic director of the Louines Louinis Haitian Dance Theatre and Haitian dance and music consultant to the project.

This three day workshop allowed the creative team working on the play to meet and read through the first version of the script and discuss their research on the project, including the music and dance of eighteenth-century Saint-Domingue. The script, as mentioned above, was far too complicated and unfocused, and playwright Mark St. Germain was solicited to assist in that area. What emerged at that workshop was the enthusiasm for the project expressed by this highly talented and experienced team. As Louines Louinis expressed at the end of the workshop, "I see that you have all done your research about Haitian history, and that you are serious about attempting to...

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accurately recreate an era in my country that is not widely known, even among Haitians.” One purpose of this workshop was to provide a background for the music director and choreographers to begin their creative processes. So discussions in these areas were limited to research and general directions. Although this was helpful, I now think that neither the stage director nor I provided sufficient direction to the music director and choreographers.

**Miami Workshop 2004**

The second workshop for *Prince of Haiti/King of Paris* took place in June 2004 in Miami. Rehearsals were held at the University of Miami. At the end of the one week workshop, two staged readings with music and dance were performed. One was presented at Gusman Concert Hall on the University of Miami campus, the other at Miami Edison Middle School auditorium in Little Haiti. This workshop was supported by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Phillip and Patricia Frost School of Music, the Miami Haitian Bicentennial Coordinating Committee of the City of Miami, American Airlines, Bank Atlantic Foundation, Publix Supermarket Charities, and the Hyatt Regency Coral Gables. The support of the project by Dr. Rudolph Moïse, Haitian community leader and member of the University of Miami Board of Trustees, was a crucial element in the viability of the workshop. The support of William Hipp, Dean of the Phillip and Patricia Frost School of Music, enabled this workshop to take place.

The creative team for this workshop remained the same as the one for the first workshop in Philadelphia. They were: Keith Baker, artistic director of Bristol Riverside Theatre and stage director for *Prince of Haiti/King of Paris*; James Richman, artistic director of Concert Royal and the Dallas Bach Society and French music director for
Prince of Haiti; Catherine Turocy, artistic director of the New York Baroque Dance Company, and French baroque choreographer for Prince of Haiti; Marcea Daiter, Artistic Director Dance Kaleidoscope and Afro-Haitian choreographer for Prince of Haiti; Louines Louinis, artistic director of the Louines Louinis Dance Theatre and Haitian dance and music consultant to the project.

Nineteen actors participated, along with four French baroque dancers from the New York Baroque Dance Company, and six Haitian and Afro-American dancers. Mr. Richman brought six French baroque musicians, and Damas Fan-Fan Louis, Haitian master drummer, lead four percussionists. Photos of this workshop are included in the promotional brochure included in this document as Appendix Seven.

Guests of honor were the Consuls General of Haiti, Olicier Pieriche, and France, Christophe Bouchard. The Haitian Minister of Culture, Magali Comeau Denis, flew in from Port-au-Prince especially to attend the event. Consul General Bouchard hosted the post-performance reception at his home.

Approximately 1,000 people attended the two staged readings. This response was generated without publicity or marketing as was required by Actor’s Equity staged reading guidelines.

The audiences consisted of approximately 75% Haitians and Haitian-Americans, 15% African-Americans and 10% European-Americans and Latin-Americans. The audiences gave the readings standing ovations.

This workshop and staged reading performances were an invaluable tool in moving the project to the next step. It gave me the opportunity to see the piece on stage, which was the only way to see how it was progressing. As noted previously, the script
was too long, included too many characters, and was too complicated. The French musical choices made by the original music director were for the most part, not ideally suited to the play, and almost no blending or fusion of the French music and the Afro-Haitian music took place. Also, the French dances were not exciting enough theatrically. The Afro-Haitian dances were thrilling, albeit too long. The Haitian drummers performed magnificently. The actors were, apart from Gamal Palmer as Louis, and Dan Diggles as Charton, miscast.

In short, I learned a lot about the piece and how much work there still was to accomplish. I also learned a lot throughout this process about authority, and trusting my own knowledge and experience. I improved as the project evolved and was better able to release people from the project whose talents were not an appropriate match for this piece, or for my workstyle and expectations.

Excerpts from the 2004 workshop, as well as the responses of the Haitian Consul General Pieriche; Carl Fombrun Haitian television and website host; Katherine Gaubatz executive director of the Miami Bach Society and Tropical Baroque Music Festival; and Rachel Denis, Haitian public relations professional, are included in the promotional DVD labeled Appendix Five in this document.

Association of Performing Arts Presenters Conference  
January 2005 New York City

Following the response to the 2004 workshop promotional materials were developed that included photographs of the workshop, and video recording of the performance. University of Miami Graphic Arts graduate student Jennifer Wood designed the brochure, and recent University of Miami film studies graduate Lorna Chen created the DVD with the in-kind donated support of Take 2 Productions. These
materials were used in grant applications, and foundation and corporate solicitations. Ms. Wood also created a website using the graphics she developed for the photo brochure.

In the fall of 2004, the non-profit corporation which had been incorporated with the State of Florida in April 2003 to handle the funding of the development of the project, was granted federal tax exempt status under section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code. The incorporation and application for the 501(c)3 was conducted pro bono by attorney John C. Maine, who was referred to me through the Arts and Business Council of Miami. Florida Historical Performance Co., Inc. operated under the fiscal sponsorship of the Dade Community Foundation from April 2003 through November 2004 (when the 501(c)3 exempt status was conferred). The Dade Community Foundation fiscal sponsorship allowed Florida Historical Performance Co., Inc. to apply for grants and solicit tax deductible donations from foundations, corporations and individuals. The funds received during this fiscal sponsorship were managed and held by Dade Community Foundation.

Also in the fall of 2004, a grant application to the Florida Division Cultural Affairs in the Challenge Grant category was recommended by the review panel for funding in the amount of $100,000. This grant was written to support a production of *Prince of Haiti/King of Paris* that would be presented in Palm Beach, Broward, Miami-Dade, and Munroe counties. After this grant received approval for funding from the panel, and while matching funds were being sought, I decided to attend the Association of Performing Arts Presenters annual conference in New York City in January 2005. The goal in participating in the conference was to attract other organizations around the country that might be interested in presenting the Florida Historical Performance Co.
production of the play. In addition, it was an excellent place to speak with performing arts representatives, otherwise known as agents, to represent the production. I had already been approached by one New York agent, Celia Novo of NovoArts, to represent the production, and I felt that I should speak to others.

The Association of Performing Arts Presenters conference hosts more than 350 exhibitors in its Resource Room. These include artists, performing arts organizations and artist representatives. The conference also includes over 1,000 showcase performances and 36 workshops. A booth was set up by Florida Historical Performance Company that displayed the DVD non-stop on a large television and offered Haitian espresso and pastries. Haitian public relations professional Rachel Denis hosted the booth and welcomed visitors. Sixteen presenters from community Performing Arts Centers and colleges and universities around the country expressed interest in bringing the production to their venues. These performing arts presenting organizations were based geographically from Utah to Florida, Michigan to Louisiana, California to Maryland. I also spoke with several artists representatives including Joanne Rile out of Philadelphia, ICM in New York City, and Columbia Artists Management. However, the one that I had the most interesting conversation with was John Luckacovich of 2 Luck Productions. He told me that he felt I was wasting my time in the non-profit sector, that the production belonged in the commercial theatre realm. He referred me to Marion Caffey who had created *Three Mo' Tenors* and worked on Broadway as well as at major regional theatres across the country. In addition to attracting interested presenters and being able to discuss the project with artists representatives, I was able to attend excellent seminars and panel discussions on marketing and producing the arts.
Unfortunately, in the spring of 2005 the governor and state legislature did not approve funding for the challenge grant, despite the lobbying efforts of the Florida Arts Alliance, headed by Sherron Long. The organizations around the state that had applied in the Challenge Grant category banded together to send e-mails to our state representatives from our Board of Directors members, and friends and supporters of the organizations. But this did not succeed, and the grant for the Florida Historical Performance Company production was not funded. It was decided that without this funding self-producing would not be possible.

Another avenue opened up, however, with the appearance of stage director Marion Caffey on the scene. He had been referred by John Luckacovic at the APAP conference, as mentioned above. Caffey and I spoke on the phone after the conference and he requested a copy of the script be delivered to him as soon as possible. I sent the script overnight and Caffey called the next day saying he loved the script and wanted to be involved. I met with Caffey in Toronto where he was directing for CanStage, the largest non-profit theatre in Toronto. During these discussions it became evident that I needed an attorney.

Choreographer Catherine Turocy referred me to Tim DeBaets, an entertainment attorney with offices in New York City and Los Angeles. DeBaets has represented me since early 2005. His law firm is Cowan, DeBaets, Abrahams & Sheppard LLP. Once interest in the play reached the level where it was being considered by major regional theatres as well as individuals in commercial theater, it became essential to have the representation of a knowledgeable and experienced entertainment attorney. DeBaets has
advised me in numerous instances with regard to directors, composers, translators, and creative team members.

Miami Script Workshop  2005

After a couple months of negotiations with Caffey, he was able to direct a workshop in May 2005 in Miami. This workshop took place at the University of Miami, resulting in a reading of the third version of the script in Clark Recital Hall. Participating as creative team members were: Marion Caffey, stage director; Catherine Turocy, French baroque choreographer; Marcea Daiter, Afro-Haitian choreographer; Jay Bernfeld, artistic director Tropical Baroque Music Festival in Miami and Fuoco e Cenere in Paris joined as French music director; and Damas Fan-Fan Louis, Haitian master drummer. Eight local actors participated in the script reading. This workshop did not include any music or dance rehearsals. It was supported, as mentioned above, by a grant from the City of Coral Gables.

This workshop provided the opportunity to hear the much revised third version of the script. It was finally very close to satisfactory. It also provided the opportunity to see other actors, whom I had cast this time, in the roles. Stephen Neal, professor of acting at Florida International University, reading the role of Moreau de Saint-Méry and John Archie as the Chevalier de St.-Georges, stood out as extraordinary. I was also able to hear Jay Bernfeld, viola de gamba, and Damas Fan-Fan Louis, Haitian master drummer, experiment and improvise with the interaction between the French baroque and Afro-Haitian styles. It was remarkable. Everyone enjoyed working with director Caffey.

We were also able to discuss with him what the next steps toward getting the play produced might be. Caffey was supportive of the idea of approaching regional theatres
around the country to produce the play. This is no easy feat, as they are approached by every playwright across the country and numerous agents representing playwrights. Nevertheless, Caffey offered the list of theatres he has worked with over the last several years, as a starting place. Choreographer Turocy offered the list of music directors of period orchestras with whom she has worked. Attorney DeBaets contributed to the roster of contacts. I started with these lists. Contacting the organizations' directors and forwarding promotional packets and scripts. The orchestra directors, all without fail excited by the project, were able to get in touch with their regional theatres to try to interest them in partnerships. Six months of 100 hour work weeks ensued. The original lists expanded to include many more targeted regional theatres. Approximately 120 packets were sent out during the June through December period of 2005 when regional theatres were making their selections for their 2006/2007 seasons. Out of all of this effort, several interested parties emerged.

Antoine Plante, music director of Houston’s Mercury Baroque orchestra liked the play very much and contacted Rob Bundy, artistic director of Houston’s second largest theatre, Stages Company. Bundy contacted the African-American theatre in Houston, Ensemble Theatre, and although their artistic director had just left, they gave provisional approval to their participation as a co-producing partner.

Producer Zannie Voss at Duke University’s Theatre Previews at Duke, also contacted me in response to a packet I sent to her at attorney DeBaets’ suggestion. Duke only produces with a co-producing partner. At first Bundy at Houston’s Stages Theatre was interested, but then he decided to form partnerships within his own community. A number of other theatres were explored as possible partners: Tulane Shakespeare
Festival was interested until Hurricane Katrina proved an insurmountable barrier, Voss approached the Goodman Theatre in Chicago and Broadway producer Randall Wreghitt, but they declined. Susie Napper, artistic and executive director of the Montreal Baroque Music Festival spoke with Voss about a partnership. But Montreal decided, like Houston to pursue their own production within their own community. So Duke University has not yet found a co-producer.

In Houston, however, the Ensemble Theatre has not fared well, and had to decline participation in the partnership, putting the Houston production in abeyance.

The Montreal group had become interested because Stephen Stubbs, co-artistic director of the Boston Early Music Festival, and Jay Bernfeld, artistic director of the Tropical Baroque Music Festival, spoke with Napper, and urged her to get in touch with me about the play. She did, and after receiving the information and script, we began the long trek towards production.

**Montreal Workshop 2006**

Napper was interested in *Prince of Haiti* as the centerpiece of her 2008 Festival, the theme for that Festival being the immigrants to Montreal.

In the meantime, I had received an international exchange grant from the Florida Division of Cultural Affairs in 2005 that was supposed to have been utilized in conjunction with the Challenge Grant. Combined with the succession of hurricanes in 2005, I had not been able to use the funds. When I called the Division I asked if I should return the funds. They urged me to propose another project for the funds. It seems many other arts organizations were in the same situation due to the hurricanes. I proposed using the funds for a workshop in Montreal with the Montreal Baroque Music Festival.
That project was accepted by the Division of Cultural Affairs, and thus began a series of very productive trips.

In May 2005 I traveled to Montreal for initial meetings with Napper and her artistic team, to lay plans for the workshop and scout out rehearsal venues. The Montreal production required a Montreal creative team and cast in order to obtain funding from the city of Montreal, the province of Quebec, and the nation of Canada. Thus everyone was new to the play.

In September 2005 we held the one week Montreal Workshop. Participating creative team members were: Stage director and French baroque choreographer Marie-Nathalie Lacoursière; co-director Jean-François Gagnon; and music director Matthias Maute. Also participating were: four actors, the Haitian dance company Ekspresyon from Montreal, six French period musicians, and two Haitian drummers.

The workshop served well as a first step to a Montreal production. Some minor changes were made in the French script. The French musicians were fabulous, but one of the musical choices needs to be re-selected. The Haitian dancers worked very well under the talented direction of choreographer Lacoursière. The missing link in the workshop was locating a Haitian choreographer who could re-create historic folkloric dances, and who was Canadian. Although Lacoursière and I drove to Toronto and interviewed two Caribbean-Canadian choreographers, neither of them was Haitian. However, they referred us to Haitian choreographer Jeanguy Saintus in Port-au-Prince. Napper did approve of this choice and thought it might enhance funding opportunities. But locating Saintus was difficult, and could not be accomplished in time for the workshop. The workshop took place at the Montreal Arts Council, the Black Theatre Workshop, the
Centre Pierre Peladeau, and Montreal Arts Interculturel Center. The Montreal artists proved themselves exceedingly talented, remarkably versatile and possessed of exceptional and sophisticated creativity.

In our wrap up meetings, Napper queried me about the possibility of bringing the Montreal production to Florida, and we resolved to investigate that possibility.

Since all of the funds from the International Exchange Grant from the Florida Division of Cultural Affairs had not been expended, I requested permission from the Division to hold follow-up meetings in December 2006 in South Florida for the Montreal team and me to meet with prospective Florida presenters. Permission was granted, and meetings were arranged. The most important one was held at Broward Community College in Davie, Florida.

Winston Thompson, Associate Dean of Sociology and Political Science at Broward Community College hosted that meeting. Thompson had been in contact with me following the 2004 workshop in Miami. He had heard about the workshop and wanted to bring the play to Broward Community College. But the play was too expensive to mount a full production for the College. When the Challenge Grant production fell through, there were not any appropriate opportunities until the Montreal production. Present at the meeting at Broward Community College were: Thompson, Napper, Lacoursière, Katherine Gaubatz, Savannah Savary author and scholar from Port-au-Prince, and Haitian choreographer Saintus who had finally been located and was able to join us in Miami to meet the Montreal team. Thompson and Gaubatz agreed to partner their respective organizations with the Montreal Baroque Music Festival, and to bring the Montreal production to South Florida. They have since been joined by the Broward
Center for the Performing Arts, and the Broward County Library, including the African-American Research Library and Cultural Center in Fort Lauderdale, FL.

The full production world premiere of *Prince of Haiti/King of Paris* is scheduled for May 2008 at Broward Center for the Performing Arts, with the Canadian premiere to follow in the third week of June 2008 at the Montreal Baroque Music Festival.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Chaos, conflict, idealism, hypocrisy, affluence, slavery, liberty, and cruelty - all describe eighteenth century Saint-Domingue and revolutionary France. It was a terrifyingly difficult time to survive, let alone succeed. Political alliances shifted daily. One day you were a popular favorite, the next, running for your life, if you were lucky, or slipping your neck under a guillotine if you were not. No matter how powerful the plantation owners appeared, always the drums of 500,000 slaves threatened slaughter. These were the sands upon which came Moreau de Saint-Méry to build his life and career. This was a man whose watch bore the engraving, “There is always time to do good.”87 This was a man who at the age of sixteen, upon the death of his grandfather who had left everything to Moreau, called the family together and divided up the estate among his relatives.88 This was an ambitious man, of remarkable energy who only slept one night out of three during his law studies so he could finish ahead of schedule.89 But this was a man who was born in colonial Saint-Domingue. How could a man of his sensitivity, his sense of justice, his intellect awakening to the Enlightenment, succeed in the culture of slavery? This is a very tricky proposition. He was awestruck by Lafayette, ardent abolitionist, and the shockingly freethinking Talleyrand. He also adored Saint-Domingue, his homeland whose gloriously diverse culture he described in such attentive detail. He realized that immediate abolition would mean the massacre of the colonists on

87 Elicona, Moreau de Saint-Méry, 10.
88 Ibid., 10.
89 Ibid., 11.
Saint-Domingue, and the probable loss of the colony to France. He dared to oppose abolition, to plea for a slow and careful healing to this problem.\textsuperscript{90}

He had his glorious moment at the helm of the early days of the French Revolution. His leadership was praised and honored with a medal by his fellow Electors of Paris for his steadfast nature and evenhanded fairness, coupled with farsighted courage.\textsuperscript{91} Then he reached for the brass ring, the governorship of Saint-Domingue. As Taillemite states, there must have been some reason the French colonists believed the Charton pamphlet, believed that Moreau de Saint-Méry would propose a law freeing the slaves,\textsuperscript{92} believed it enough to riot against Moreau de Saint-Méry, beat his brother-in-law lifeless, chase his relatives out of Cap Français, and threaten to hang him if he approached the island.\textsuperscript{93} We may never quite grasp what that reason was. Perhaps they thought he was too influenced by, too chummy with, the French revolutionaries. But the French colonists made quick order of his career. He was ruined, reduced to backpedaling and supporting the plantation owners in the General Assembly.

Then he was beaten unconscious, and left for dead, outside a French café by Robespierre’s minions, because he was not radical enough. He fled for his very life with his family in tow, escaping with only minutes to spare onto a ship bound for the United States. He worked on the docks, ruining his health, until he opened a small bookstore in Philadelphia. He never saw Saint-Domingue again. It is the story of this man that I have tried to reveal, the story of his time, his island. He was basically a good man struggling

\textsuperscript{91} Médéric Louis Elie Moreau de Saint-Méry, Memoire Justicatif, 86-87.
\textsuperscript{92} Etienne Taillemite, biography of Moreau de Saint-Méry, Description de l’île Saint-Domingue, xxi.
\textsuperscript{93} Moreau de Saint-Méry, Memoire Justicatif, 31-32.
with chaos, conflict, idealism, hypocrisy, affluence, slavery, liberty, and cruelty amidst the surprising, colorful, and rich multi-layered culture of eighteenth-century Saint-Domingue in all the splendor of its music and dance, that he so carefully and lovingly described for posterity.
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________. Observations sur la Conduite de M. Moreau, dit St.-Méry. n.p., 1790.


_______ . Moreau de Saint-Méry, M. L. E., and J. Vallance. *Description topographique et politique de la partie espagnole de l'isle Saint-Domingue avec des observations générales sur le climat, la population, les productions, le caractère & les moeurs des habitans de cette colonie, & un tableau raisonné des différentes parties de son administration : accompanée d'une nouvelle carte de la totalité de l'isle.* Philadelphie: Imprimé & se trouve chez l'auteur, imprimeur-libraire, 1796.


_______ . *Loix et constitutions des colonies francaises de l'Amérique sous le vent; suivies. 1. D'un tableau raisonné des différentes parties de l'administration actuelle de ces colonies: 2. d'observations générales sur le climat, la population, la culture, le caractere et les mœurs des habitans de la partie francoise de Saint-Domingue: 3. d'une description physique, politique et topographique des différents quartiers de cette même partie; le tout terminé par l'histoire de cette isle et de ses dépendances, depuis leur découverte jusqu'à nos jours.* Paris: Chez l'auteur, 1784.


Appendix 1

French Text of M. le Comte de Ségur

Arrivé à Saint-Domingue . . . je me trouvais . . . Cette île cultivée par tout avec soin, ressemblait à un magnifique jardin...on voyait sous des formes variées, les maisons élégantes des riches possesseurs de ces plantations. Les routes étaient sans cesse couvertes de voitures qui portaient leurs denrées dans les ports, et d'une foule de chars légers qui promenaient les colons voluptueux d'habitation en habitations. Tous se visitaient, se réunissaient continuellement; ce n'étaient sans cesse que festins, danses, concerts et jeux . . . Ces riches plaines de la colonie offraient en quelque sort l’image, par leur luxe et par leur mouvement, de ces grandes capitales divisées en nombreux quartiers, où le commerce, les affaires, les intrigues et les plaisirs entretiennent un perpétuelle agitation et un mouvement sans repos . . . Peu de nos grandes cités égalaient le Cap en prospérité et magnificence.
## Appendix 2

### Dates Operas were Produced in Saint-Domingue Compared to Dates They were Produced at the Theatre Italien in Paris

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Opera</th>
<th># Performances in St.-D.</th>
<th>Yr. Premiered (Paris)</th>
<th>Yrs. at Theatre-Italien</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Salle de Spectacle St. Domingue: 1764</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Monsigny</td>
<td><em>Le cadi dupé</em></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1761</td>
<td>1762-1790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td><em>Bastien et Bastienne</em></td>
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<td>1753-1790</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1762</td>
<td>1762-1793</td>
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<td>1762-1785</td>
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<td><em>Le soldat magicien</em></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1760</td>
<td>1762-1791</td>
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<tr>
<td>Duni</td>
<td><em>La fille mal gardée</em></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1758</td>
<td>1758-1774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duni</td>
<td><em>Le deux chasseurs</em></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1763</td>
<td>1763-1792</td>
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<td><em>On ne s'avise jamais</em></td>
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<td>1764-1792</td>
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<td>Yrs. at Theatre-Italien</td>
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<td></td>
<td>La servante maitresse</td>
<td>2</td>
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**Salle de Spectacle St. Domingue: 1768**

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<th>Composer</th>
<th>Opera</th>
<th># Performances</th>
<th>Yr. Premiered (Paris)</th>
<th>Yrs. at Theatre-Italien</th>
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<td>Philidor</td>
<td>Le marechal ferrant</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1762-1793</td>
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<td>Sancho Panca</td>
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<td>Le sorcier</td>
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<td>Duni</td>
<td>Mazet</td>
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<td></td>
<td>La fée Urgèle</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1765</td>
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**Salle de Spectacle St. Domingue: 1769**

<table>
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<td>Les deux chasseurs</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1765</td>
<td>1765-1782</td>
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<td></td>
<td>La fête du chateau</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1766-1789</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grétry</td>
<td>Le Huron</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Gossec</td>
<td>Toinon et Toinette</td>
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**Salle de Spectacle St. Domingue: 1770**

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<td>Le Tableau Parlant</td>
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<td>Silvain</td>
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<td>Monsigny</td>
<td>Rose et Colas</td>
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<td>Le deserteur</td>
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The following sources were used to compile Appendix 2:


Grove Dictionary of Music (database on line) entries under each of the composer's names, accessed 3/16-18/01.
# Appendix 3

## Recordings of the Works of the Chevalier de St.-Georges

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<th>Conductor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <em>Chevalier de St.-Georges Symphonies and Violin Concertos</em></td>
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<td>Radio Symphony Orchestra</td>
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<tr>
<td>CD # 1</td>
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<td>Ouverture of <em>L’Amant anonyme</em></td>
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### Appendix 3 - Continued

**Recordings of the Works of the Chevalier de St.-Georges**

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<td>Symphone Concertante in A major, Opus IX, No. 2</td>
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<td>6. Le Chevalier de Saint-Georges <em>Concertos et Symphonies</em></td>
<td>Assai</td>
<td>Stéphanie-Marie Degand, violin</td>
<td>Martin Gester</td>
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<td>Le Parlement de Musique</td>
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<td>Symphonie Opus XI, No. 1 en sol majeur</td>
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<td>Cologne Chamber Orchestra</td>
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<td>Concerto in G major, Op. 8</td>
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<td>8. Monsieur de Saint-Georges, le négre des Lumières <em>Four Violin Concertos</em></td>
<td>Forlane</td>
<td>Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana</td>
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Recordings of the Works of the Chevalier de St.-Georges

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<td> L’amant anonyme – Ouverture</td>
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<td> L’amant anonyme Excerpts from ballet</td>
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<td>10. <em>Le Chevalier de Saint-Georges</em></td>
<td>Arion</td>
<td>Quatuor a cordes Jean-Noel Molard</td>
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<td> Six Quatuors à deux violons, alto et violoncelle</td>
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<td> Quatuor No. 6 en ré majeur</td>
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<td> Quatuor No. 4 en do mineur</td>
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<td> Quatuor No. 3 en sol mineur</td>
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<td> Quatuor No. 2 en mi bémol majeur</td>
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<td> Quatuor No. 1 en ut majeur</td>
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<td> Quatuor No. 5 en sol mineur</td>
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<td>Coleridge String Quartet</td>
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Appendix 4
Musical Score for Hachikian Overture

Overture
Prince of Haiti / King of Paris

Arranged and Orchestrated by
Eric V. Hachikian
Appendix 4 - continued
Musical Score for Hachikian Overture

ACT I: OVERTURE

Fl.

ff

Vln. I

ff

Vln. II

ff

Vla.

ff

Vc.

ff

Hpschd.

ff

Perc.

ENTER HAITIAN PERCUSSION (LIGHT)
Appendix 4 - continued
Musical Score for Hachikian Overture

ACT I. OVERTURE

Fl.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Harp.
Perc.
Appendix 4 - continued
Musical Score for Hachikian Overture

ACT 1: OVERTURE

Fl.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Hspct.

Perc.

ENTER HAITIAN PERCUSSION (MEDIUM)
Appendix 4 - continued
Musical Score for Hachikian Overture

ACT I: OVERTURE

Fl.

Horns.

Perc.

NO PERCUSSION

Fl.

Horns.

Perc.

Fl.

Horns.

Perc.
Appendix 4 - continued
Musical Score for Hachikian Overture

ACT I: OVERTURE

Vln I

Vln II

Vla.

Vc.

Hpshkl.

Perc.

ENTER HAITIAN PERCUSSION (L.G.B.T)
Appendix 4 - continued
Musical Score for Hachikian Overture

ACT I: OVERTURE

Fl.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Hpschd.

Perc.

ENTER HAITIAN PERCUSSION (MEDIUM)
Appendix 4 - continued
Musical Score for Hachikian Overture

ACT I: OVERTURE

Fl.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Hpscd.

Perc.

ENTER HAITIAN PERCUSSION (CALENDA)

CONTINUE HAITIAN PERCUSSION (MEDIUM)
Appendix 4 - continued
Musical Score for Hachikian Overture

ACT I: OVERTURE
Appendix 4 - continued
Musical Score for Hachikian Overture

ACT I: OVERTURE
Appendix 4 - continued
Musical Score for Hachikian Overture
Appendix 4 - continued
Musical Score for Hachikian Overture

ACT I: OVERTURE

INTO EXCERPTED VOUDOU CEREMONY
<table>
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<th>Scene Description</th>
<th>Music/Dances</th>
<th>Composition</th>
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<td>I-1</td>
<td>Louis meets Moreau</td>
<td>Yankee Doodle or some underscoring indicating Philadelphia?</td>
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<td>I-2</td>
<td>French Ball Scene</td>
<td>Big Contredanse</td>
<td>Contredanse en rondeau from <em>Les Boreades</em></td>
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<td>Congo Minuet</td>
<td>To be selected/composed</td>
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<td>Male Exhibition Solo</td>
<td><em>Les Sauvages</em>/Rameau</td>
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<td>I-3</td>
<td>Louis/Moreau/Bookstore</td>
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<td>I-4</td>
<td>Quadroon Ball Scene</td>
<td>Carabinier</td>
<td>Devin du Village/Rousseau</td>
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<td>Ballroom Chica</td>
<td>To be selected/composed</td>
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<td>I-5</td>
<td>Moreau Walks Minette Home</td>
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<td>Slaves Dancing</td>
<td>Calenda with violin</td>
<td><em>Lisette quitté la plaine</em></td>
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<td>Chica</td>
<td>Pergolesi</td>
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<td>Traditional/percussion</td>
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<td>I-7</td>
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<td>Pantomime: Procession with Arch</td>
<td><em>Zemire et Azor</em>/Gretry</td>
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<td>Minette’s Aria: La Fauvette</td>
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<td>Moreau/Minette Backstage</td>
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<td>I-9</td>
<td>Louis/Moreau</td>
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<td>I-10</td>
<td>Moreau takes baby Louis</td>
<td>Duet for Minette/Louis</td>
<td><em>La Fauvette</em> in English/Gretry</td>
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<td>Louis Accuses Moreau</td>
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<td>Tableau Charton/Minette</td>
<td>La Fauvette</td>
<td>Gretry</td>
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# Appendix 5 - Continued

**PRINCE OF HAITI/KING OF PARIS MUSIC OUTLINE  8.30.06**  
Page Two

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<td>Overture to Act II: <em>L’Amant Anonyme</em></td>
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<td>Louis/Moreau</td>
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<td>Fencing underscoring</td>
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<td>Moreau/Louis</td>
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<td>Aria for Minette</td>
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<td>Moreau/Louis</td>
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<td>Voodoo Ceremony</td>
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<td>Mrs. Moreau/Charton</td>
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<td>II-7</td>
<td>Mrs. Moreau/Minette</td>
<td>Mad Scene</td>
<td><em>La Fauvette</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II-8</td>
<td>Moreau/Louis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II-9</td>
<td>Dance Finale</td>
<td>Excerpts from throughout the play</td>
<td>To be composed/arranged</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 6
Notes for Choreographers

1. **Rameau: Contredanse en Rondeau** from *Les Boreades* (French Ball Scene)

   This needs to be sweeping. We need to be swept up into the play. This is such a great opening piece with its promise of adventures. This dance should just be a whirl of breathtaking, exhilarating excitement. The softer section can be used as an intro to the scene behind the dialogue of Moreau & Louis, and then again with Mrs. Moreau’s solo, while Moreau & Charton are talking.

   Time: 1+ minute

2. **Couperin: Les Barricades Mysterieuses** (French Ball Scene)

   I know this is in 2s but I like the snake like feeling, the feeling of being led inevitably into something deeper and deeper, wound tighter and tighter, all the while seeming to be just a light little dance. Could we use it in eights with a minuet followed by some Afro-Haitian flourish for two counts: a kick, hop or port de bras? I am thinking that the dancers could start the minuet in a “conga line”, holding hands, possibly up high, and winding in a circular or spiral pattern.

   Time: 1 minute max

3. **Rameau: Dance of the Peace Pipe** from *Les Sauvages* (French Ball Scene)

   This should be astounding all the way around. From his almost frightening entrance with the flowing feather cape that he flourishes menacingly while sweeping around the edge of the dance floor so the ballgoers have to move out of his way, to his possibly blowing smoke in the faces of the ballgoers, he might even brandish a weapon threateningly at the guests (maybe that he dances with in a dangerous way) that he then ceremoniously lays down in peace. The dancing has to be spectacular in its virtuosity: petit allegro, beats, jumps, pirouettes. This is our first brush with another culture: exotic and irresistible and frightening at the same time.

   Time: 1+ minute
Appendix 6 - Continued
Notes for Choreographers

4. **Rousseau: allemande from *Le devin du village* (Quadroon Ball Scene)**

I would like to suggest that this carabinier be about upper body movement (shoulders, head, upper torso twisting) and the use of the fan. I’m thinking flirty flashing of the fans open and closed, patterns and turns where the ladies are looking over their shoulders, eyes over the fans, etc. Dazzling fan work. The men are “inspecting” the ladies of color.

Time: 1+ minute  
Number of measures to pattern:

5. **To be determined** *(Quadroon Ball Scene)*

We have the opening carabinier, then dialogue while the men go to their seats and the ladies perhaps leaning over them, then this “ballroom chica”. This should be a very elegant, tantalizing little striptease-ish section, very sexy. Now here we have the hip movements. Possibly: in the first part the men remain seated and the ladies dance for them. Ladies could be removing their fichus and teasing the men wafting it around them sashaying around in front of them, around them, back and forth so they get a good look front and back, if you know what I mean (maybe grabbing at their dress from behind as they move away). Maybe removing something else?

Time: 1+ minute  
Number of measures for pattern:

At the end of the chica is a percussive section which is more choreographed movement than dance: all heck breaks loose as the men chase the women around the dance floor, with the ladies « running away » and swirling just out of their grasp until they finally fall into each others arms, etc. I’ve tried to make this ballroom chica relate to the Afro-Haitian chica in the slave scene below. By using the hip movement, the advance/retreat, the emotions of “caprice, hope, pleasure, denial, delirium, flight”.

Time: 30+ seconds
Appendix 6 - Continued
Notes for Choreographers

Slave Dancing Scene Notes from Moreau
Here is a table I made up from Moreau’s section in “Description of ...” St.-Domingue in the chapter on “Creole slaves”:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calenda</th>
<th>Chica</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis: Footwork (like Anglaise)</td>
<td>Lower part of torso (hips)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formation: M turns around F, while F turns too</td>
<td>M advances/retreats from F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armwork: Waves hankie, raises arms up &amp; down</td>
<td>Holds apron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruments: Drums, violin or banza, maracas, clapping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotions: Vivacious &amp; animated</td>
<td>Fear, hope, disdain, tenderness, caprice, pleasure, denial, delirium, flight, intoxication &amp; despair</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Pergolesi: Lisette quitté la plaine (Slave Dancing Scene)

First verse can be heard in the distance (then closer and closer) being sung by the slaves who are approaching as Minette and Moreau talk. The second verse is sung as they start doing a dance mocking their masters’ contredanses or minuets. In the third verse the movement becomes more Haitian, as the music does too. And the fourth verse is the calenda, without singing, but percussion with violin or flute. Vivacious and animated. Footwork. Hankies?

Time: 30 secs each verse Number of measures to pattern: n/a?

7. Chica with percussion (Slave Dancing Scene)

See table above. Emphasizing the emotions. This should be as sexual as it gets. Men and women may throw off articles of clothing as it gets hotter, if you wish. My urging here would be to identify the emotions and stay with them, and let the technique follow. What I would like to avoid is any sense that we are at an Alvin Ailey concert.

Time: 1+ minute Number of measures to pattern?
Appendix 6 - Continued
Notes for Choreographers

8. **Grétry: Pantomime Processional Entrance** *(Zemire et Azor)*

Let’s make this really special. I continue to have the feeling that Minette should not stroll out onto the stage, she should be in a carriage of some sort. Drawn by? I don’t know, cupids? Guys dressed in a horse costume? Let’s keep it really short, but stunning.

9. **Grétry: Passepieds Cupids from Zemire et Azor**

Trademark of this pas de deux for two female “cupids”: sassy, sexy, witty, humorous. These should be the sassiest cupids anyone has ever seen. Low cut bodices and lace ruffles galore. Birds on strings, or streamers, or both! Fake fog clouds, special effects. They can go out in the audience and kiss perfect strangers. They can shoot little arrows hither and yon. They can shoot an arrow into the behind of the beast. They can blow kisses, and wink or strew rose petals. They can flutter and fawn over Minette. They can have a “wardrobe malfunction”, à la folies bergères.

They are trying to cheer Minette up, so she can fall in love with the Beast as she is not too happy about being a “hostage”. This also gives Minette something to respond to: she can be amused, then sad, amused again, despondent, and can interact with them, and makes her aria make more sense, too, as it goes from happy to tragic.

Time: 2 minutes (incl. procession) Number of measures to pattern?

10. **Voudou ceremony**

There are three sections here, with a frieze at the end of each one. Only advice: please make it “real”, avoid “Alvin Ailey-ism”, and put an exclamation point on those dramatic freeze-holds at the end of each section.

Time: 1+ min. each section Number of measures to pattern?
Appendix 6 - Continued
Notes for Choreographers

11. Finale

As Moreau’s and Louis’ lines in the script describe the dances (e.g., (“beauty”, “grace”, “transformation”, “dance of the gods”, etc.) we see 20 - 30 secs. of each dance in turn, as each one morphs into the next, maybe coming downstage? Maybe coming in from everywhere, even through the audience, or converging on center stage from the four corners of the wings. Louis is saying he has learned these things about life, and we see them reflected in the dances.

1. Contredanse en rondeau       Dr. D’Angerville & Mrs. D’Angerville       « order »
   Charton & Mrs. Moreau
2. Carabinier                    Dr. D’Angerville & Minette            “beauty”
   Charton & Haitian Woman Dancer #1
3. Cherubs                      Two Women Baroque Dancers            “grace”
4. Pergolesi (imitating French) Haitian Man #1 & Haitian Woman #3 “freedom”
   Haitian Man #2 & Haitian Woman #2
5. Congo Minuet                  Dr. D’Angerville & Mrs. D’Angerville
   Charton & Mrs. Moreau
   Chevalier de St.-Georges & Minette
6. Calenda                      Same as #4                             “freedom”
7. Tambourin Ballroom Chica     Same as #2
8. Dance of the Peace Pipe      Baroque Male Soloist (to drums) “transformation”
9. Voodoo                       Five Haitian Dancers (all exc. #1) “dance of the gods”

Time:  4.5 mins.

This is a total of 18 minutes of dance. Plus the fencing scene, choreographed probably to “Le Marseillaise”, and some fudging where the “+”s are. We should be at twenty minutes.

With the music: two overtures of three plus minutes each, and two arias and intermittent bits of the arias for nine minutes. For music that’s a total of 20mins.

Script is at 30 and 25 mins. so hopefully we are in the ballpark of 90 -100 mins. total.
PRINCE OF HAITI
King of Paris

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“Congratulations! It was a fabulous and unbelievable event. The dancing and singing were tremendous.”

Barbara Wosinsky, Ph.D., Professor of French, Department of Foreign Languages, University of Miami
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Observe the bewigged and ruffled French colonial gentlemen, and the ladies in brocade and lace, dancing the Congo minuet. Witness the balls for ladies of color and white men where these mistresses, laden with jewels and tropical flowers, beguiled their oppressors. And watch the slaves on the outskirts of town imitating their masters’ dances, as well as enjoying their own calendas and chicas.

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It is a mystery that has baffled scholars for half a century. "What happened to Minette?" is the question posed by this murder mystery. Was the opera diva's tragic accident just that, or something more sinister?

In this play some of the most important historical figures of late 18th century Haiti and France come together, as suspicion falls on each one. Minette's son travels from Paris to the French exile community in Philadelphia, where he confronts the father he never knew: Moreau de St.-Méry (1750 Martinique - 1819 Paris). Did the noted author and political figure from Haiti, who rose to become the self-proclaimed "King of Paris" during the French Revolution, do away with her? The white father and mulatto son challenge each other, as the son comes to understand his island heritage, and the complexity and sacrifices of the fight for freedom.

The shadow of doubt also falls upon Moreau's friend, Talleyrand, the future prime minister of France with the dubious reputation, who flaunted his affair with the Haitian diva before the outraged citizens of Philadelphia.

And then again, it could have been Charton, of the Haitian plantation family, instigator of the scandalous "Charton Affair" which rocked Paris. His accusation that Moreau de St.-Méry supported the abolition of slavery caused Moreau's political ruin and the lynching of his family in Haiti.

As the end of the play draws near we find out if father and son will resolve their differences, and with a surprise twist at the very last moment the question is answered: "What happened to Minette?"
“In a word... it is brilliant!”

Kathryn Gaubatz, Executive Director,
Miami Bach Society Tropical Baroque Music Festival
“You have invited me to relive the history of my country. I want to thank you for this gift. I strongly encourage you to present this inspiring and illuminating play everywhere.”

Me Olicier Pieriche
Consul Général de la République d’Haiti à Miami
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**King of Paris**

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PRINCE OF HAITI/KING OF PARIS

A Two-Act Play

By

Kyle Siebrecht
PRINCE OF HAITI/KING OF PARIS

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Women

TWO FRENCH BAROQUE DANCERS (including MARIE D'ANGERVILLE)
THREE AFRO-HAITIAN DANCERS (including EUGENIE, NICOLETTE)

MINETTE, (soprano, mulatto), plays 18-30
MRS. MOREAU DE ST.-MERY, (white), plays 28-40
MRS. D'ANGERVILLE (white), 30s-40s

Men

TWO FRENCH BAROQUE DANCERS
THREE AFRO-HAITIAN DANCERS

MOREAU DE ST.-MERY, (white), plays 35-45, (mostly 39-45)
LOUIS, (Illegitimate son of Minette and Moreau, mulatto), 17 yrs. old
PHILIPPE CHARTON, (white), 30s-40s, plantation owner
CHEVALIER DE ST.-GEORGES (mulatto), 50, composer/swordsman
DR. D'ANGERVILLE/TRIBUNAL JUDGE, (white), 30s-40s, physician

Musicians

AFRO-HAITIAN: 4 drums/percussion
FRENCH: Harpsichord, String Quartet + flute

Optional

AZOR, (white) 20s-40s, baroque tenor, the Beast in Zemire et Azor
PRINCE OF HAITI/KING OF PARIS

OVERTURE
(Contains excerpts from the music in the play:
French baroque, and Haitian percussion, refer to “Overture” in score)

ACT ONE

SETTING: Across the stage, painted flats of a Philadelphia street of 1798. A sign outside reads: “Moreau de St. Mery and Co. Bookseller, Printer and Stationer, No. 84 First Street”. It’s not a fancy establishment, but quite comfortable.

Behind this façade is a small French chamber ensemble upstage right; upstage left the Haitian drums.

Lights go to black, and in the dark there are shouts from boys yelling offstage.

BOY ONE
Hey look at Blackie! Blackie!

BOY TWO
Those are some clothes he’s got on.

BOY THREE
Too fancy for a black boy.

BOY TWO
Stolen, probably.

BOY THREE
Let’s get him!

BOY ONE
Off with that jacket, darky! Off, I said!

BOY THREE
Hey, Blackie doesn’t want to play, does he?

BOY TWO
Get him! Get that jacket off!


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Get him!

BOY ONE

Take that, Blackie! Yeah!2

BOY THREE

Again—hit him again!

BOY ONE

Hold him!

BOY TWO

*Sounds of struggle offstage,* then LOUIS staggers in as MOREAU comes out of his bookstore, yelling at the boys offstage.

MOREAU

Get out of here—go on! If you ever come around here again, I'll call the constable! Hooligans! Young ruffians! Are you all right, young man?

Louis is dazed, holding his head, and makes no answer. Moreau takes a handkerchief from his pocket and begins to wipe the blood from Louis’ face.

You took quite a beating.

LOUIS

Leave me alone . .

Moreau ignores him, and continues to tend the beaten young man.

Where am I?

MOREAU

Philadelphia—outside my bookstore.

Still trying to wipe the blood off.

Leave me alone, I said!

LOUIS

I was only trying to help.

MOREAU

I don’t need your help.

LOUIS

2 Ibid., 303,309

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MOREAU
I don’t think you understand the situation.

LOUIS
Oh, I understand the situation all right.

MOREAU
They would have hurt you.

LOUIS
Why did you interfere?

MOREAU
So they wouldn’t hurt you even more.

LOUIS
Very touching. Quite the hero.

MOREAU
What ever are you talking about? I was only trying to help, as one man to another. One citizen to another.

LOUIS
Well it’s a little late for that, isn’t it?

MOREAU
You’re not making any sense—are you sure you are all right? Perhaps I should find the doctor.

LOUIS
And what are you going to tell the doctor? That you couldn’t even recognize your own son? 

MOREAU
Dear God! Louis? Is it true?

LOUIS
You don’t know, do you?

MOREAU
I’ve waited so long for this day. To see you. And almost a man. (He approaches LOUIS.)

---

3 "Comptes Rendus de Lecture - Revue de la Société haïtienne d'Histoire et de Géographie No. 162, mars 1989, " Généalogie et Histoire de la Caraïbe 12 (Janvier 1990), 98. Genealogical record verifying that Moreau de St.-Méry fathered an illigitimate mulatto daughter. For the purposes of this play, a son was substituted.

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LOUIS
Keep your hands off me. I haven’t come to see you. I don’t know you. I’ve only come because of my mother.

MOREAU
She had an accident. Louis.

LOUIS
An accident, you say?

MOREAU
Yes, I wrote the Chevalier. He must have told you.

LOUIS
I left Paris as soon as I heard.

MOREAU
I’m so glad you’re here.

LOUIS
All the years I wished that were true. You never visited me, never even wrote to me.

MOREAU
It was a difficult situation.

LOUIS
I hate hypocrisy. I hate cowardice. I hate pretence.

MOREAU
What are you talking about?

LOUIS
If you cared so much about the plight of blacks, why did you abandon your own Negro son?4 For convenience? For your reputation? You never really cared about any of us.

MOREAU
You couldn’t be more mistaken. I fought for liberty! At the beginning of the Revolution, they called me the King of Paris.5

---


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LOUIS
Oh yes, I know all about your majesty. I saw a play about you when I arrived in New York.\(^6\)

MOREAU
You did? Really?

LOUIS
Yes, it was called *The Bastille—or Liberty Triumphant*. You were the leading man.

MOREAU
What did I do?

LOUIS
Oh, everything.

MOREAU
Tell me about it.

LOUIS
Act one. Much talk by white people of misery, oppression, equality and the rights of man. Someone proposes they take the Bastille and free the prisoners. “Glorious idea!” you say—“We will take it, by God!” And off you all go singing the *Marseillaise*.\(^7\)

MOREAU
A thrilling start!

LOUIS
Act Two. In the Bastille. De Launay and the officers lower the drawbridge and lure the citizens into the courtyard and begin to massacre them. When you hear the sounds of the slaughter, you lead the charge on the fort sword in hand. Act Three. You fight De Launay and force him to surrender with your sword at his throat. Then you take the keys and free the prisoners. De Launay and the officers are marched off to their executions. At the end you give a wonderful speech about winning liberty for France and all the nations of the world. You champion the rights of man, and everyone sings the *Marseillaise* again.\(^8\)

MOREAU
Marvelous!

LOUIS
And all true I suppose.

---

\(^6\) Moreau de Saint-Méry, *American Journey*, 186
\(^7\) Ibid., 187.
\(^8\) Ibid., 188,189

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Well, not entirely.

MORÉAU

But you did capture the Bastille, didn’t you?

LOUIS

Actually, I wasn’t there.⁹

MORÉAU

So you didn’t draw your sword and fight De Launay?

LOUIS

Never met the gentleman.

MORÉAU

Or make that great speech about the rights of man? White men of course.

LOUIS

No.

MORÉAU

I see. The Chevalier never gave me the details, but he did say my father was once the King of Paris.

LOUIS

Yes, that’s true enough. And as I told you, in my own way I did fight for liberty.

MORÉAU


LOUIS

You know nothing of French Haiti. You were raised in the lap of Parisian luxury.

MORÉAU

I’ve heard what it was like from my mother. I’ve seen the brand on my grandmother’s breast.

LOUIS

We hear the sound of the Haitian drums.

---

⁹ Guy Chaussinand-Nogaret and Jean Dusaulx, *La Bastille est Prise : la Révolution française commence* (Brussels : Editions Complexe, 1988) 140-169. An account of the activities of the leaders of the Electors of Paris in the Hotel de Ville (city hall) during the week of the taking of the Bastille, written by a friend and political colleague of Moreau de St.-Méry, who witnessed the events.

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Moreau

Yes, but you weren’t there.

Louis

Do you deny it was a decadent society, made rich beyond imagining on the backs of slaves, with French balls, rococo opera houses, and marriages in name only?

Moreau

Louis, these are half-truths.

Louis

Do you deny the whites stuck together to make sure mulattos and blacks had no rights, that blacks were treated worse than livestock! Wasn’t that your Haiti?

Moreau

That’s enough! Things were much more complicated ... Yes, there were great opera houses, yes, there were lavish balls.

Louis pulls a small book from his pocket

And dance, I believe, *La Danse*. ¹⁰

The drumming fades, as it is replaced and overlapped by the chamber orchestra.

Ah, my little brown book.

Louis opens the book and reads

Louis

"One does not find vivid motions in the dance of northern America--the Laplander will never be noted as a lover of the dance ..." ¹¹

Moreau

Or the Eskimo, shivering in his fur coat. ¹²

As Louis reads the following lines, the music of the dance begins.


¹¹ Ibid., 16.

¹² Ibid., 16.
LOUIS

"Above all it would seem the dance was created for sunny lands. In a warm blooded climate there is a passion for the dance, a longing to satisfy this passion, and a fear of missing even one opportunity of indulging in this voluptuous pleasure."\(^{13}\)

MOREAU

So very true, my son.

The bookstore façade now parts and we are at a formal dress ball in the Salle de Spectacle, 1781. Blacks look on from their third tier loge. MOREAU steps into the scene and joins the sweeping dance (see Rameau’s “Contredanse en rondeau” from Les Boreades in the score). LOUIS watches for a moment, then reads:

LOUIS

"At a ball, the Creoles lose all that languorous bearing which gives them a reputation for indolence. Their movements are animated, gracefully naive and touching, while they send darts of excitement from their eyes . . ."\(^{14}\)

At the ball: The three French Baroque dancers (one of whom plays MARIE D’ANGERVILLE), CHARTON, DOCTOR and MME. D’ANGERVILLE, MOREAU and MME. MOREAU, the following conversation takes place during one of the quieter sections of the dance music, while MME. MOREAU is doing a charmingly elegant little solo turn. LOUIS may move freely in the dance, unseen by any except MOREAU.

CHARTON

So, Moreau, you've captured one of the beautiful Milhet sisters from Louisiana.\(^{15}\) Congratulations!

MOREAU

Well, now the Spanish have absconded with New Orleans, I considered this rescue a matter of duty.

\(^{13}\) Ibid., 14, 15, 24.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., 21.

\(^{15}\) Médéric Louis Elie Moreau de Saint-Méry, Memoire Justicatif (Paris : Chez Baudouin Imprimeur, 1790), 6-8.
CHARTON
As MME. MOREAU returns to Moreau’s side
You were quite right to offer asylum to such a ravishing exile!

MME. MOREAU
Thank you, Monsieur Charton-- I assure you I am the happiest exile in the world!

The dance freezes in graceful tableaux as Louis speaks.

LOUIS
The happy bride, I presume.

MOREAU
Yes, my wife Catherine.

LOUIS
Very pretty. So gracefully naïve. And within a year you betrayed her.

MOREAU
Yes.

The sweeping section of the dance begins again, as Louis watches; when it concludes the conversation continues. On occasion during this festive ball scene the Haitian drums may be heard in the background, as they would have in Haiti, "signaling in code" to each other, menacing and threatening the white colonists, who react accordingly.

MME. D’ANGERVILLE
And are you learning our island ways, Madame, voodoo and all?

MME MOREAU
I am beginning to, Mme. D’Angerville. But you know we have our hexes and potions in New Orleans, too.

MME. D’ANGERVILLE
Really?

MME. MOREAU
Indeed. My grandmother was once engaged to a man who flirted with another woman. After one sip of grandmother’s sapodilla tea he never did that again. I don’t believe he ever did anything again, except recline under the fragrant frangipanis in the sweet bye and bye.
CHARTON
A subtle and savage place, New Orleans. Take heed, Moreau.

MOREAU
Catherine knows I only have eyes for her. And fortunately, I'm not fond of tea.

The music and dance begin again.

MME. D'ANGERVILLE
Ah, The Congo Minuet!\(^\text{16}\) I just adore the Congo Minuet!

MME. MOREAU
A native dance? Surely not.

MME. D'ANGERVILLE
No, be assured it's more minuet than Congo. The day has not yet arrived when French women seduce their mates with undulating hips.

MME. MOREAU
(Giggling with MME. D'ANGERVILLE)
Oh, my!

MME. D'ANGERVILLE
Though I'm sorry to say there are many Frenchmen, and some of excellent families, who insist on squandering their wealth on women of color.

MME. MOREAU
We are a very long way from Paris, aren't we?

MME DANGERVILLE
Exactly, Madame. Fortunately there are still some men who have not sullied themselves and their families. Some even manage to avoid those appalling quadroon balls, where our minuets are completely swallowed by the Congo.\(^\text{17}\)

MME. MOREAU
That sounds rather alarming.

---

\(^{16}\) Moreau de St.-Méry, Danse, 33.


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MME. D'ANGERVILLE

It casts a dreadful shadow over us all.\textsuperscript{18}

\textit{(To MOREAU, who has rejoined the group)}

You'll be abandoning us again to return to France?

MOREAU

Not for some months now. But I have further research to do at Versailles.

DR. D'ANGERVILLE\textsuperscript{19}

We've heard you might accept a prominent position here at Cap Français.

MOREAU

It has always been my only ambition to serve our islands---as, I might add, did my father and grandfather before me.\textsuperscript{20}

MME. D'ANGERVILLE

That sounds like the voice of our future governor.

\textit{The DOCTOR has noticed his daughter signaling her mother for help changing her dress}

Madame.

MME. D'ANGERVILLE

Yes, as soon as the minuet is finished.

MME. MOREAU

Monsieur Charton, did you hear the latest from the Opera? The play was so slow last night someone in the audience yelled, "When will it ever end?" And Minette replied from the stage, "I agree, Monsieur, let's end it right now!"--and then she left the stage--just like that!\textsuperscript{21}

CHARTON

Wonderful woman! I heard the theatre manager scold LeGrand for not knowing his lines, and without missing a beat, Legrand said, "If I knew my lines, you couldn't afford me!"\textsuperscript{22} Really, these artistes are the only free people on the island!

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., I:108.
\textsuperscript{20} Moreau de St.-Méry, \textit{Memoire Justicatif}, 2-3.
\textsuperscript{21} Moreau de St.-Méry, \textit{Description de l'isle Saint-Domingue}, I:361.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., I:362.

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The dance ends.

MME. D'ANGERVILLE (to MOREAU)
If you will excuse me, I must attend to Marie.

MME D'ANGERVILLE goes to the screen, behind which MARIE is changing her dress again.

DR. D'ANGERVILLE
Be thankful you don't have a daughter, Moreau. They change their dresses five times in a single ball.23

MME. MOREAU
They are competing for husbands, Monsieur.

DR. D'ANGERVILLE
They are ruining their fathers, Madame. At this rate Marie will be left with a dowry of used dresses--not one worn more than an hour.

MOREAU
But surely any reasonable man would be put off by such a show of extravagance.

MME. MOREAU
Ah, but the whole point of such a show is to keep men from thinking reasonably--

Marie reenters, looking absolutely ravishing--her parents rejoin the Moreaus.

You see what I mean.

MOREAU
Point is taken, my dear. Of course no matter how many times these young coquettes refresh themselves, poor things, they can never rival you. Yet haven't I seen that dress at least once before?

MME MOREAU
Vile creature! You betray all my secrets.

MOREAU
Rare queen, I am your most faithful subject--in my eyes your virtuous thrift only compliments your prodigal beauty.

MME D'ANGERVILLE
This gentleman has spent some time in Paris.

23 Moreau de St.-Méry, Danse, 28-30.

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MME MOREAU
No more of this, monsieur, or else I will think you are still courting me, and then I must and will have a dozen new gowns.

The music begins again.

MME D'ANGERVILLE
I can help you there. But look, an exotic sauvage! Thank God he comes with peace pipe and not his hatchet!

The “Dance of the peace pipe” from Rameau's Les Sauvages is now performed for entertainment at the ball, the Sauvage in dazzling plumed headress, sweeps in menacingly, flashing his long feathered cape, brushing the couples moving to the side to watch, blowing smoke and executing a virtuosic solo of turns, beats and stamping. (1 min.)

Towards the end of the dance a black female slave wanders into the ballroom dazed and bloody--the music suddenly stops and the Sauvage retires, leaving the battered woman in the center of the ballroom.

CHARTON
What is this creature doing here?

FEMALE SLAVE
Ladies and gentlemen, forgive me, but I must see Monsieur Moreau.

The woman staggers and is about to lose her balance.

Forgive me, sir. I wish to make a complaint.

In a sudden impulse, MARIE runs to help her.

MME. D'ANGERVILLE
Marie!!!

MOREAU
Doctor, please help this woman--she needs treatment.
DR. D'ANGERVILLE

Yes, of course.

The doctor goes to the woman, and begins to lead her off.

This way--come with me now. Ladies and Gentlemen, this evening's entertainment has regrettably come to a premature close.

FEMALE SLAVE

But I must speak with Monsieur Moreau.

MOREAU

I will be with you in a moment--go with the doctor now.

MME D'ANGERVILLE

Marie, your dress! Really!

MARIE looks down at her dress, now bloodied, and with a cry of horror runs off, with her mother following.

Catherine, will you help us?

MME. MOREAU goes off with MME. D'ANGERVILLE, The musicians, dancers and guests leave the room--the party is over.

CHARTON

I've seen that woman--she belongs to Le Jeune.

MOREAU

Yes, she certainly looks like it. There have been a dozen complaints against him already.

CHARTON

I've heard the stories--LeJeune has been mistreating his women slaves--burning them at the stake, then leaving them to rot and die in irons. But he says they tried to commit suicide.²⁴ It's most unfortunate.

MOREAU

Unfortunate? It's an atrocity!

CHARTON
It is indeed regrettable. We can only hope any overreactions...

Pointing an accusing finger at Moreau

... will not lead to much greater atrocities. I understand, Moreau, you believe that slaves should have the right to make their complaints in court.25

MOREAU
Yes, it's only fair.

CHARTON
And I gather you also are proposing a law allowing slaves to change masters.26

MOREAU
In certain instances, yes---you've just seen a case in point.

CHARTON
A noble sentiment. Perhaps we ought to ask all our household goods if they would like to change homes.

MOREAU
I am talking about human beings.

CHARTON
And I am talking about slaves. About property--our property. I believe we have obligations to take good care of our property--but not to give legal rights to our tables, chairs, teapots, field hands and washerwomen.

MOREAU
But as you can see, we are not treating them well. Why are there so many slave suicides? Why are slave mothers killing their slave babies?

CHARTON
I agree that mistreatment is reprehensible--and besides it's very bad business. But if France starts giving slaves their "rights" you know very well what will happen here. There are 30,000 French here in Haiti and a half million slaves. We can take care of them well enough---so long as they don't have their "rights."

MOREAU
Until they have their rights, they won't be taken care of.

26 Ibid.
CHARTON
You speak like a Parisian, Moreau. That won't work here in Haiti.

MOREAU
I'm not speaking of liberty or equality, simply of fundamental rights.

CHARTON
You are a fool, Moreau. When you give slaves their rights, you give them courage, you give them hope and you take away the one thing which keeps them in their place— the consciousness of our absolute power. Remove that, and life as we know it here in Haiti is finished. You are more than a fool; you are a traitor, sir!

He exits.

LOUIS
There's only one answer for him: revolution!

MOREAU
Yes—that's everyone's answer these days.

LOUIS
You saw that woman. He condones her torture. You heard what he called you. He slaps you in the face, and you take it.

MOREAU
A slap in the face is nothing.

LOUIS
To a man with no honor, perhaps. To an adulterer. A slap is what he deserves.

MOREAU
Perhaps you are right. But I loved Haiti and I loved my wife.

LOUIS
And yet you betrayed them both.

MOREAU
Your mother was quite irresistible. We met at a ball.

LOUIS
Of course—blame it on la danse.

MOREAU
Yes, why not. Everyone in Haiti was dancing. Even the slaves who had been beaten all day got up in the evening to dance.27

---

LOUIS

My mother was not a slave.

MOREAU

Of course not. She was a free woman. That first night I met your mother... it was at a ball for French men and ladies of color... I can smell the flowers on the women... the band was playing the carabinier...

_During this exchange, the dancers have assembled at the back of the stage, and are arranged in a backlit silhouette. Now the music begins (see the “Allemande” from Rousseau’s Le devin du village in the score), the light changes, and we are at the quadroon ball with the white men and women of color dancing with them._

_The first dance, the carabinier has a degree more African influence in the movement. It is characterized by upper body flirtatiousness and fancy flirty fanwork, while the men are “inspecting” the women. This dance that the lights come up on only lasts 30 seconds or so. Then the couples retreat to the side of the dance floor. MOREAU and his partner are on one side of the stage and MINETTE and CHARTON are on the other; CHARTON has been drinking. The men are mostly seated, and the women are leaning over them, fanning them and flirting._

MOREAU

Thank you, that was a pleasure.

NICOLETTE

The pleasure was all mine. We don’t see enough of you any more, Monsieur. You are depriving us of your company, which we so thoroughly enjoy.

MOREAU

But I can’t be here when I’m not in town, can I?

NICOLETTE

Or perhaps you cannot be here now that you are married. And I have seen your wife—she’s quite a beauty. From Louisiana, I hear. But don’t you miss our island ways...

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She is fanning Moreau and blowing in his ear.

CHARTON

Mademoiselle, you dance as seductively as you sing. There is no one like you on this island.

MINETTE

You are very kind, Monsieur.

CHARTON

I’ve always loved music. I’ve got the ears of an aristocrat. My other features are much more . . . robust. I heard Sophie Arnould at the Paris Opera. But compared to you, my songbird, my angel, Sophie sounds like the rattle of old pans.

He laughs, and puts his arm around her.

And if you will allow a more intimate compliment

He is whispering in her ear. The music for the ballroom chica begins, and each woman moves to face her partner who is still seated. She then dances in a very seductive, and teasing, but elegant manner, the first part of the ballroom chica with hip movement and removal of the fichu (the tissue garment that covers the décolleté) with which they tease the men. (See Rameau’s “Gavotte” from Les Boreades with Haitian percussion, in the Score). The music abruptly changes (see Rameau’s “Tambourin” from Le Turc Généreux with Haitian percussion in the Score) as the men can’t resist jumping up to embrace their partners who playfully pull away and a brief “pursuit and capture” ensues.

MINETTE

Freeing herself

I’m longing for something to drink.

CHARTON

Something cool, perhaps. . champagne for my angel.

MINETTE

Yes, lovely.

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CHARTON is fetching the drink.
NICOlette is taking a flower from her décolleté.

NICOlette
A reminder, Monsieur, of the beautiful flowers native to this island. Just waiting to be plucked.

She pins the flower on MOREAU'S coat while CHARTON hands MINETTE her glass

CHARTON
Did I tell you that when I am in Paris I close my eyes and see you dancing, and when I am in Haiti, riding through my fields, I can hear you singing?

MINETTE
And when you see me and hear me standing in front of you? What then, Monsieur.

CHARTON
Ah, then, Mademoiselle I am at heaven's gate, and I wish only for my angel to sing for me.

MINETTE
If I see you in heaven, I will sing, monsieur—but this is neither the time nor the place.

CHARTON
Of course it is, my angel—you may sing in my ear. Sing just for me. Come here, my little songbird, and warble.

CHARTON is pulling MINETTE to him; NICOlette is smelling the flower she has pinned on MOREAU, and murmuring seductively.

MINETTE
Please! Stop it!

She slaps CHARTON. He grabs her by the shoulder and rips her dress. MOREAU comes to the rescue.

CHARTON
Little songbird has got her feathers ruffled—naughty angel has torn her little wing.

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MOREAU runs to the scene and pulls CHARTON off MINETTE, and as CHARTON lets go she falls back. The other men hold CHARTON, who struggles with them, and perhaps pulls a knife—MOREAU disarms him.

MOREAU
Leave her alone, Charton. What's the matter with you?!

CHARTON
With me? You mean what's the matter with her?

MOREAU
Are you all right, Mademoiselle?

He helps MINETTE get up; she's limping a little; and she examines her ankle and the rip in the shoulder of her dress.

MINETTE
I think so.

D'ANGERVILLE
Charton! This is too much.

MOREAU (to the Doctor)
I'll escort the lady home.

CHARTON (realizing his transgression, but still drunk)
Let go of me! My apologies, Mademoiselle. An excess of enthusiasm. Please send me your dressmaker's bill. And remember I am waiting at heaven's gate if you should ever need my assistance. Remember that, my adorable naughty little angel.

He kisses her hand, and leaves.

MOREAU (to MINETTE)
Shall we go?

MINETTE
Yes, please.
Lights change as the scene dissolves into the street outside the Salle de Spectacle. MINETTE & MOREAU leave the theatre and start walking down the street. He is holding her up, his arm around her waist, her arm around his shoulder.

MINETTE

Thank you, M. Moreau.

MOREAU

You know who I am, then?

MINETTE

Of course, everyone knows who you are.

MOREAU

And the same could be said of you, young lady. Now where are we going? Where do you live?

MINETTE

Not too far. In the free colored section near the outskirts of town. That way. You will see me all the way home?

MOREAU

Of course, Mademoiselle, if you will permit me.

MINETTE

I will permit you, Monsieur. Though I am afraid my ankle will not.

MOREAU

Does it hurt very much?

MINETTE

Only when I walk.

MOREAU

Well, then, you must not walk.

He lifts her into his arms. She laughs.

MINETTE

Oh, Monsieur Moreau, you are so gallant! You are going to carry me home?

MOREAU

It will be an honor, Mademoiselle.
MINETTE
Are you so very strong? Am I so very light?

MOREAU
Light as an angel.

MINETTE
I think I have had enough talk of angels tonight, Monsieur.

MOREAU
A feather, then. Light as a feather.

MINETTE
Not original, but tres gallant.

MOREAU
Light as the feather of a bird of paradise.

MINETTE
Plucked from where, Monsieur? Not the tail, I hope.

She laughs, and he is laughing with her. He is walking now, and carrying her in his arms. But MINETTE is no mere wisp of a thing, and MOREAU has already begun to breathe heavily.

MINETTE
You are magnifique, my champion, merveilleux.

MOREAU
Is it very much farther?

MINETTE
No, not at all. A hundred yards . . . or perhaps two. Certainly no more than a mile.

MOREAU
A mile!

MINETTE
No more.

MOREAU
You know, I'm afraid I am not as strong as I should be.

MINETTE
And perhaps I am not as light as tail feather should be. Would you like to rest a minute?
MOREAU
I believe I would, if you don't mind.

MINETTE
Then put me down, and very carefully, if you please. I think I can stand.

MOREAU puts MINETTE down very gently. She is standing, and he collapses, sitting and breathing very heavily. They look at each other and laugh. In the distance, the sound of singing: an 18th century Creole popular song, "Lisette quitté la plaine" sur l'air "Que ne suis-je la fougère" by Pergolesi, see the score.

MINETTE
The slaves are singing. They're coming our way. They're going to dance the calenda. My mama taught it to me when I was a little girl.

The first verse is heard in the distance as the slaves approach, the slaves dance and sing the second verse imitating and mocking the French dance style, in the third verse the style of the music and dance morphs into half French/half African, and in the fourth verse it morphs into the Haitian calenda. (2 mins.)

28 Moreau de St.-Méry, Description de l’isle Saint-Domingue, I :63-64 ; Moreau de St.-Méry, Danse, 44-47.
SLAVES
(First verse may be sung in Creole or English)

I
Lisette, you fled the plain  Lisette quitté la plaine,
My happiness has flown away;  Mon perdi bonher à moué;
My tears in double fountain,  Gié à moin semblé fontaine,
Have wept, on your every step. Dipi mon pas miré toué.
By day cutting down the cane,  La jour quand mon coupé canne,
I dream of your sweet charms;  Mon fongé zamour à moué;
A dream in my cabin,   La nuit quand mon dans cabane,
When night puts you in my arms. Dans dromi mon quimbé toué.

II
If you go to the town
You’ll find many a fop, a fellow
Whose mouth distills with cunning
A sugar-sweet kind of honey.
You’ll think his heart is true;
He really wants to subdue.
The serpent is full of deceit
For the rat he plans to eat.

MINETTE moves in place to the music.
The musicians, percussion and violin
(fiddle), flute enter with the dancers—they
sing, play and dance without seeing
MINETTE and MOREAU. The song &
dance end, and the musicians and dancers
begin to seque into another dance..

MOREAU
What are they doing?

MINETTE
Oh, it’s going to be the chica! Have you ever seen the chica?

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30 Moreau de St.-Méry, Description de l’île Saint-Domingue, I :64; Moreau de St.-Méry, Danse, 50-59.

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MOREAU
Weren't we doing the chica at the quadroon ball?

MINETTE
That was the white man's chica. This is the true chica—you'll see!

A male dancer approaches MINETTE and takes her hand, asking her to dance, and she dances with him.

The chica is about pursuit and capture. MOREAU describes it thus: the man approaches and "provokes her to a most seductive struggle...the true quality of the Chica cannot be described and I limit myself to saying that the impression it makes is so powerful that the African or the Creole male of no matter what shade of skin cannot watch it without being stirred-unless he has lost his very final sparks of emotion."

After about 15 seconds of dancing with the black man, MINETTE approaches MOREAU.

MINETTE
Will you dance with me, Monsieur?

MOREAU
You seem to have recovered!

MINETTE
The chica will always cure a sore ankle, Monsieur—or a tired stallion. Come on, let me show you.

She dances the female part, and he mostly observes, but gradually the dance works its hypnotic spell and he finds himself moving in response, so that he becomes the pursuer. The other dancers notice them, and they defer to this new couple. When the dance ends, MOREAU kisses MINETTE passionately—the dancers laugh and applaud and slip away into the dark.

MOREAU
That was wonderful! I'm amazed you could dance so well.

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MINETTE
Shall I tell you a little secret? My ankle never really hurt at all.

MOREAU
You mean you could have walked home?

MINETTE
Oh quite easily—I could have flown. But I had an idea I would like to be carried there by the next governor of Haiti.

MOREAU
You are a very wicked young woman.

MINETTE
And you are a most gallant gentleman—but now I really must go. My mother will be worried. I am singing next week—for you, if you will come.

MOREAU
I will come.

MINETTE
Good night, my stallion.

MOREAU
Good night, my precious tail feather.

She slips away in the dark along with the other musicians and dancers. LOUIS has been watching too.

LOUIS
So this is how you met.

MOREAU
This is what I remember, yes.

LOUIS
You rescued her from a brute, you carried her in your arms, you danced the chica, you kissed in the moonlight.

MOREAU
I told you your mother was irresistible.

LOUIS
Did she keep a monkey in a gilded cage? Was her bed covered in chintz and jewels? Did she brush her teeth with root so she could smile like Aphrodite's priestess?

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MOREAU

When I met your mother, it was a bit after the beginning of her career. But at first, there were ladies, and some gentlemen, who would not go to the theatre if the papers announced that your mother was singing. Such a young thing, she was, but undaunted. And well, it is an exaggeration to say that the papers announced her. Indeed they would only call her "a certain young person".

Louise

Intolerable!

MOREAU

So I marched over to the editor's office and demanded, "Politics must bow to art!" And so it did... And so did I...

The scene has shifted to the Salle de Spectacle, Cap Français, Haiti, 1781, with a group seated on the side of the stage watching the opera: MOREAU joins his wife and DR. & MME. D'ANGERVILLE in a box, CHARTON is seated in a box nearby.

D'ANGERVILLE

Tonight we have...

MME D'ANGERVILLE (looking at a program card)

Beauty and the Beast, with M. Durand and... Minette

MME MOREAU

Oh, isn't that the colored diva?

MME. D'ANGERVILLE

Yes, her mother was a slave. You know who her father was?

(she whispers to MME. MOREAU)

MME. MOREAU

I'm not surprised! But since when are ladies of color allowed on stage?

Ladies, please, shhhhh...

31 Moreau de St.-Méry, Description de l'isle Saint-Domingue,II :989.

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Condensed Act III: Scene 4 from Gretry's Zemire et Azor (Beauty & the Beast), see score. MINETTE is flirting with MOREAU from on stage; he tries to keep from smiling. MRS. MOREAU notices what is going on between her husband and MINETTE. CHARTON also notices, and then gives MRS. MOREAU a look that says he notices, too. The opera scene is followed by applause.

**ZEMIRE ET AZOR**  
Comédie ballet  
by M. Andrè-Ernest-Modest Grétry

**ACT III**

Scene IV

ZEMIRE enters with the two sassy lady's maids.

ZEMIRE

Well, what brilliant court hastens around me?  
Is this aimed at me?  
Upon this throne of flowers you would like to raise me?  
In truth, I believe I am dreaming.

The sassy, witty, sexy lady's maids dance for ZEMIRE.

Scene V

AZOR enters.  
ZEMIRE, falls fainting in the arms of the lady's maids.

Oh Heaven!

AZOR

Of my ugliness, the inevitable effect!  
Zémire! Ah! Come back from your mortal terror.  
I appear to your eyes a dreadful monster:  
That is the unjust law of an enemy power;  
But alas! Under this visage if it were possible  
To read my heart! It is tender and loving.  
Don't look at me, Zémire, listen to me.

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AZOR
AIR (optional)

From the moment when one loves
One becomes so sweet!
And I myself am
Trembling more than you.
Eh, What! You fear
The timid slave
Over whom you reign!
Don't fear any longer:
Murderous hatred
Is far from my heart.
From the moment, etc.

ZEMIRE

But...you soften me, to the greatest extent.

AZOR

Ah Zémire!

ZEMIRE

My eyes are getting accustomed to seeing you.

AZOR

Well, begin then to be happy in this place.
You sing, I know, you sing wonderfully,
In speech, your voice arouses my senses,
Ah! What music for my ears
To hear, your intonations emanating!

ZEMIRE

If you want me to sing, I will sing.

AZOR

What a touching kindness!
ZEMIRE
AIR

The little bird with its babies
Believes itself queen of the hedges
by their waking song in the branches
All the echoes are informed

Her new family around her hopping
Fluttering and taking off
Gathered under her wing
Full of their love for her
She is joyful again

But unfortunately
Comes the bird hunter
Who dashes her hopes
The poor mother, she thinks only
Of her misfortune
Everything echoes to her suffering.

(APPLAUSE)

MOREAU

Please go ahead and I'll meet you outside. I need to have a word with the theatre manager.

MME. D'ANGERVILLE

Certainly. (to her husband). That panting beast has made me thirsty--let's stop on the way out and get something. How about you, Catherine?

MME. MOREAU

I see someone I need to speak with--I'll catch up.

The D'ANGERVILLES leave the box.
CHARTON enters after they exit.

CHARTON
(with feigned sincerity)

Good evening Madame Moreau, you're looking quite lovely. How did you enjoy the opera this evening?

MME. MOREAU

This was not one of my favorite operas, M. Charton, I enjoyed last week's presentation so much more.
CHARTON
(getting more daring, taking advantage of her vulnerability)
I thought the performances were fascinating--especially Minette's, which had a certain je ne sais quoi.

MME. MOREAU
Perhaps, M. Charton, do you think so?

CHARTON
(Circling for the kill)
I do. She was positively spellbinding tonight. And your husband is quite the opera lover, isn't he?

MME. MOREAU
Yes, apparently so. One is always discovering something new about one's husband.

CHARTON
(the kill)
Indeed-and your husband is a complex and popular man, with many interests that lay claim to him.

MME. MOREAU
(Rising to leave.)
Yes, I know. Excuse me, Mr. Charton, I would love to chat but, I need to catch up with my friends, if you don't mind.

CHARTON
Of course not, delightful to see you, and I hope we will meet again soon.

MME. MOREAU
Thank you, quite so. Good evening.

They exit separately, and Mme MOREAU withdraws as MOREAU enters with MINETTE.

MOREAU
You truly are a bird of paradise, and you have flown straight into my soul.

On wings of song?

MINETTE

MOREAU
I'm not much of a poet, am I?

MINETTE
No, but you are certainly a man. I have been dreaming of you, too, my champion. You are my champion still?

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MOREAU
Your faithful stallion, always.

MINETTE
And how far will you carry me, my stallion?

MOREAU
Not so very far, beauty. Close your eyes and open your hands.

MINETTE
What is it, beast, what?

MOREAU
Here.

MINETTE
A key?

MOREAU
Your own place.

MINETTE
She is astounded.

MINETTE
Our place!

MOREAU
You know I can’t carry you all the way home. So I’ve found a house not far from the theatre. The corner of Rue Royale and Rue Notre Dame. With a little garden. Bird hunters strictly prohibited.

MINETTE
What a swift and clever beast you are! Do you love me?

MOREAU
I am under your spell.

MINETTE (singing)
If you want me to sing, I will sing.

MOREAU
I do want you to sing--but I must go now.

MINETTE
When can we meet?

MOREAU
Tomorrow at noon. Au revoir, my beauty

They kiss.

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MINETTE

A bientot, my beautiful dear beast.

MINETTE withdraws; MME MOREAU, who has been watching, withdraws too. LOUIS has been watching from the theatre box and steps forward.

LOUIS

So you loved your wife---I suppose you loved my mother too.

MOREAU

Do you think your mother loved me?

LOUIS

I asked if you loved my mother!

MOREAU

I was captivated by your mother...so was every man in Haiti. Her dressing room was so full of flowers she could hardly turn around to change her costume. When she walked on the boulevard in Cap Français, if she went into a shop, women, even white ladies would follow to see what she was purchasing so they could imitate her.

LOUIS

I take that to mean that you did not love my mother.

MOREAU

I made a mistake, Louis, and I have suffered the consequences.

LOUIS

What are you talking about?

MOREAU

I lost my wife.

LOUIS

But you're still married, aren't you?

MOREAU

She didn't leave me, because of our children. But she...changed after that.

LOUIS

Are you certain she knew?

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MOREAU
Oh, yes... although she never confronted me. Louis, my wife’s father was a hero to the French in New Orleans. He was thrown into prison by the Spanish, and he died there. She fled to Haiti. She counted on me to be a safe harbor. I counted on myself to be her protector.

LOUIS
Well, imagine what it was like for my mother all these years.

MOREAU
Imagine? Do you see all these books? What kind of man writes all of these volumes?

LOUIS
I’m not following you...

MOREAU
A man who can’t sleep! “Imagine?” What options did your mother have? And, yes, your mother also lost the one she loved.

LOUIS
Do you mean yourself?

MOREAU
Oh, no, not me!

LOUIS
Well, who then?

MOREAU
You, of course. You were the only love of your mother’s life.

In the dark, a baby cries. Lights up on the residence of MINETTE & EUGENIE (her mother) Cap Français, Haiti, 1781. MINETTE is in bed. EUGENIE brings her the baby.

MINETTE
Thank you, mama!

Knock on door. EUGENIE admits MOREAU.

Oh, my son, what are we going to do, little one?

33 John Preston Moore, Revolt in Louisiana: The Spanish Occupation 1766-1770 (Baton Rouge:Louisiana State University,1976), 209.

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MOREAU

Good day, Eugenie. How are they doing?

EUGENIE

Good Morning, Monsieur.

*She shakes her head and goes out.*

MINETTE

Thank you, mama.

MOREAU

He’s already got quite a voice.

MINETTE

I think he’s a baritone, like his father.

MOREAU

Have you decided what to name him?

MINETTE

How about Louis, your middle name?

MOREAU

All right.

MINETTE

Here, Moreau, hold your son.

*She hands the infant to Moreau.*

MOREAU

Minette, we’ve talked about this, I’ve come to take the child.

MINETTE

He’s not “the child”, he’s our son!

MOREAU

Minette, we’ve been over and over this. What kind of life would he have here? Hanging around backstage at the Opera.

MINETTE

My mother would help.

MOREAU

Your mother was a slave, you did not attend school. He will have every advantage, and the best education in Paris.

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MINETTE
Every advantage except his own family!

MOREAU
The Chevalier de St.-George has offered to raise him as his own son.
And the Chevalier is a mulatto, so he understands the boy's situation.

MINETTE
I don't care! A child needs a mother's love!

MOREAU
Most French children would envy this child's upbringing.

MINETTE
His name is Louis! He is our son, Louis!

MOREAU
We must do what is in the best interests of our son--of Louis! You must see that! You can visit the child in Paris.

MINETTE
You will arrange for that, will you?

MOREAU
I'll try—at the moment I must put my resources into Louis' education.

MINETTE
There was a time when you put your resources at my disposal.

MOREAU
Circumstances have changed, as you know.

MINETTE
Yes, our chica is finished. And my champion is no more. You can't afford to send me to Paris. You, the man they call the prince of Haiti?

MOREAU
I'm not an aristocrat, Minette.

MINETTE
Not even a gentleman.

MOREAU
It's true I must work for a living. But haven't I done the honorable thing for this child?

MINETTE
White honor for a colored child.
MOREAU
Many white children don’t have as much!

MINETTE
Then would you take your own son away from your wife, never let her see him again?

MOREAU
I am not preventing you from seeing your son. Besides I will not see him myself.

MINETTE
So he will never know his father or his mother?

MOREAU
You are welcome at the Chevalier’s whenever you visit. But for the time being, it’s best for me not to see him or acknowledge him. Later, perhaps.

MINETTE
Later will be too late, Moreau.

MOREAU
It’s just that in this situation...

MINETTE
What about “liberty and equality” Moreau? I thought you stood with Jefferson and Lafayette? Or is that only on Tuesdays and Thursdays?

MOREAU
Minette, you’re losing your temper... now let me take the boy.

MINETTE
No, I won’t. I can’t. (She breaks down in tears) I beg of you, Moreau, please don’t do this. I can’t let him go.

MOREAU
You’ll visit him soon.

MINETTE
No!

MOREAU
Minette, we are done discussing this. (He takes the baby.)

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Lights fade to a spot on each side of the stage: MINETTE in one, LOUIS in the other. MINETTE sings the last verse of her aria from Zemire et Azor acapella in French, LOUIS recites the words in English to her.

MINETTE
Mais par malheur
Vient l'oiseleur,
Qui lui ravit son esperance

LOUIS
But unfortunately
 Comes the bird hunter
 Who dashes her hopes

MINETTE
La pauvre mère! Elle ne pense
Qu’à son malheur.

LOUIS
The poor mother, she thinks only
Of her misfortune

MINETTE
Tout retient de sa douleur.

LOUIS
Everything echoes to her suffering.

Lights back up.

MINETTE
You will live to regret this day, Moreau!

MOREAU
You are wrong! The boy will thank us one day for the opportunities we are giving him! I wish I’d had as much! (He turns to leave with the baby, and calls for EUGENIE). Eugenie? (She appears in the doorway.) Please take care of Minette. (He puts some money in her hand).

MOREAU walks out to meet LOUIS.

LOUIS
So I’m supposed to be grateful, is that it?

MOREAU
Can you honestly tell me the Chevalier hasn’t loved you as his own son?
LOUIS

I am not the Chevalier’s son. I am your son!

MOREAU

All right, then, I was wrong. You aren’t thankful for the life you were given.

LOUIS

I didn’t say that.

MOREAU

Would you have wanted to grow up with your mother in Haiti? No education. And how do you think you would have been treated by the men in your mother’s life?

LOUIS

It should have been my mother’s choice.

MOREAU

Or would you have preferred to have one of the finest men of our time as your guardian? Growing up under the roof of the Finance Minister of France, the Chevalier’s father...with every opportunity. And I know that the Chevalier loved you.

LOUIS

(Pause.)

Did my mother tell you that I want to go with the Chevalier to Haiti? He’s being sent by the Republic to meet with Toussaint L’Ouverture. 34

MOREAU

No, she didn’t.

LOUIS

The Chevalier said if I received your approval, I could go with him.

MOREAU

Very wise of the Chevalier. It’s an exceedingly dangerous situation.

LOUIS

How could you be opposed, a leader of the French Revolution?

MOREAU

Did your mother approve?

LOUIS

Didn’t you fight over it on the day she died?


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MOREAU
I told you I didn't even know.

LOUIS
You did know! She came to see you in Philadelphia that day. You were the last person who saw her!

MOREAU
I didn’t speak with her! I just saw her in the street. She stumbled... there was a carriage coming fast...she slid under the horses... I ran to her... it was too late.

LOUIS
You’re lying!

MOREAU
That’s exactly what happened.

LOUIS
She came to see you. You fought. She died in front of your bookstore. You were the last person who saw her! You got rid of her, like you got rid of me!

MOREAU
That’s absurd. It was an accident!

LOUIS
She was killed and you know it. The police found evidence of poison.

MOREAU
Who told you such a thing?

LOUIS
My grandmother.

MOREAU
She’s speculating. The police report is sealed.

LOUIS
So why is it sealed if there's nothing to hide? And who would have influenced the police to seal the report, if not you?

MOREAU
I didn’t do it.

LOUIS
Who then? Was it your friend Talleyrand? She had lunch with him before she saw you on the day she died.
Talleyrand was her lover, not her murderer.\textsuperscript{35} You don’t know him.

Did she love Talleyrand?

I don’t think so.

Then why?

Because he’s an aristocrat, powerful, unmarried... she hoped he would make a home for her and you, that she would get you back.

What happened?

Robespierre happened. We all had to flee France, and Talleyrand brought your mother with him to Philadelphia. But he is not the marrying kind.

He doesn’t sound like an honorable man---

Did your grandmother say if there was anyone else your mother met with on the day she died?

Why, yes, grandmama said my mother gave her a letter to deliver to a man... who replied he would await my mother’s visit.

What was his name, do you remember?

Yes, it was from your fellow colonist---Charton... Philippe Charton...

Charton! Of course.

\textsuperscript{35}Charles Albert de Moré de Pontgibaud, \textit{Mémoires du Comte de Moré}, 155-156, 158-159. The Comte de Moré describes Talleyrand’s affair with a “femme de couleur!” in Philadelphia, during the time that Talleyrand and Moreau de St.-Méry were best friends.
LOUIS

What do you mean?

MOREAU

He was her lover too. Before Talleyrand.

LOUIS

Charton? That brute? My mother would never have him!

MOREAU

Your mother had only a singer's wages. She could barely make ends meet for herself and your grandmother. Furthermore she wanted money to visit you in Paris as frequently as possible.

LOUIS

Charton was a monster!

MOREAU

No, just a man with one hundred thousand a year.

LOUIS

A monster!

MOREAU

No, just a patient, skillful hunter of birds.

Lights change, fading out on MOREAU and LOUIS, and coming up now on MINETTE, again in her Beauty costume and singing the last verse of her aria to CHARTON who is seated in front of her.

MINETTE (singing)

"But unfortunately
Comes the bold bird hunter
Who dashes her hopes--
The poor mother, she thinks only
Of her misfortune
Everything echoes to her suffering"

As she nears the end of her aria, CHARTON rises and comes behind her, and places a jeweled necklace around her neck. As MINETTE sings her last note, he bends and kisses her passionately on the neck. Brief tableau.

Blackout.

END ACT ONE.
PRINCE OF HAITI/KING OF PARIS

OVERTURE
Overture to L’Amant Anonyme by the Chevalier de St.-Georges

ACT TWO

SETTING: Lights up on a small ensemble of musicians conducted by the CHEVALIER de ST. GEORGES at his Paris residence, 1789. In the audience are MINETTE and some Parisians and a few free people of color. MOREAU and LOUIS to the side, again watching. After the music is well established, the conversation begins over the music.

MOREAU (to LOUIS)
The Chevalier St. Georges. music director at the Palais Royal, celebrated composer, virtuoso violinist, and champion swordsman...

CHARTON (to MINETTE)
They say he swam across across the Seine using only one arm.\(^{36}\)

MINETTE
I like the way he moves on land, too.

LOUIS
There is nothing he can't do better than anyone else.\(^{37}\)

MOREAU
An altogether improbable person.

LOUIS
And my godfather.

MOREAU
Yes.

LOUIS
That much I do thank you for.

The music ends and the CHEVALIER moves to MINETTE, kissing her hand.

---


\(^{37}\) Ibid., 132. John Adams’ description of Saint-Georges.

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ST.- GEORGES
Enchanté, madame.

MINETTE
The honor is mine, Monsieur.

ST.- GEORGES
Welcome to Paris. I hope you enjoy yourself here. There are wonderful sights, though I'm afraid you come at a turbulent time.

MINETTE
Thank you—and you know I haven't come to see Paris; I've come to see my son, and I cannot thank you enough for looking after him.

He is a fine young man.

MINETTE
Yes, thanks to you.

ST.- GEORGES
Louis and I are both fortunate—we each have had beautiful mothers.  

MINETTE
And Louis has the most accomplished of fathers.

ST.- GEORGES
Moreau is a remarkable man.

MINETTE
You are the remarkable man, Monsieur, and you are Louis' true father.

ST.- GEORGES
It's true I think of him as my own son. Moreau has had so much to do in Haiti and here in France.

MINETTE
And so little to do with his son.

ST.- GEORGES
He is in a delicate situation, as perhaps you know. But I am glad he arranged to have you visit your son.

MINETTE
I am afraid you are mistaken, Chevalier. This is the gentleman who made those arrangements.

38 Ibid., 3.
She introduces Charton.

Phillippe Charton.

CHARTON

ST.- GEORGES
Sizing up Charton and considering him unworthy of Minette, and a bigot to boot

A pleasure, monsieur. It was very kind of you.

CHARTON
With an air of superiority
Our family manufactures textiles in Paris and our cotton plantations are in Haiti, so I spend far too much of my time on boats. I was grateful for the companionship.

ST.- GEORGES
With just a tinge of sarcasm showing

Yes, I would think so.

CHARTON
Feint praise
Congratulations on your composition, Chevalier--most accomplished.

ST.- GEORGES
Acknowledging the slight
Though not quite worthy of Mozart, you might say.

CHARTON
Rubbing it in
"The Black Mozart"—that's what they call you here, I believe.

ST.- GEORGES
Rising above Charton with aristocratic grace

It's a title I never claimed. There is only one Mozart.

MAITRE D'
The balloon races are about to begin. Please repair to the balcony if you wish to observe the balloons lifting off.

CHARTON
St.-Georges may I leave Minette in your charge for a few minutes?

---

38 Louis Charton, Observations sur la Conduite de M. Moreau, dit St.-Méry (n.p., 1790), 23.
40 Alain Guédé, Monsieur de Saint-George, 262.

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By all means.

ST.-GEORGES

CHARTON moves to the side with the other partygoers. MINETTE drops her courtesan/diva demeanor and is less flirty, much more serious with ST.-GEORGES.

How is the situation in Haiti, Minette?

MINETTE
Increasingly dangerous, Monsieur. Vincent Ogé made the crossing on the same ship as we did.

ST.-GEORGES
Yes, I spoke with him this morning. He’s going to meet with a group of plantation owners here in Paris next week to try to get the right to vote for mulattoes.41

MINETTE
What do you think of his chances?

ST.-GEORGES
Not very good, my dear, which means he will then go to the Society for the Friends of Blacks.

MINETTE
Lafayette’s group?

ST.-GEORGES
Yes, they have some powerful members, but the planters will not like Ogé’s meeting with them.

MINETTE
Have you seen Moreau? Will he help us?

ST.-GEORGES
I’ve been hoping to catch up with him at our Masonic Lodge.42 He’s in a very precarious position. Aren’t we all?

MINETTE
If we ally ourselves with the whites, and there is a slave uprising, as there certainly will be one day, they will murder us as surely as if we were white. I fear for my life.

42 Alain Guédé, Monsieur de Saint-George, 144-145; Moreau de St.-Méry, Description de l’île Saint-Domingue, xv.

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ST.-GEOGRÈS
Are you thinking of leaving Haiti?

MINETTE
Where else would they allow me onstage? How would I survive?

ST.-GEOGRÈS
And this is why you must have a protector.

MINETTE
Unfortunately, yes. But tell me of my son, Monsieur.

ST.-GEOGRÈS
He has your courage, Madame, and he’s leaping about like a little toad he’s so excited to see his mama.

CHARTON
Rejoining MINETTE & ST.-GEOGRÈS. MINETTE once again becomes the courtesan/diva. Charton unable to contain his condescension.

What a thrill! St.-Georges, I wanted to say how sorry I was that you were not appointed director of the opera. I thought you were the most capable man.\textsuperscript{43}

ST.-GEORGE
Not everyone agreed with you.

CHARTON
Yes, our celebrated singers, Sophie Arnould and Rosalie Levasseur.

ST.-GEORGES
They would not have taken my direction.

CHARTON
It would have been awkward for them. But Minette, I hope will have no such difficulty.

MINETTE
Disgusted with Charton and sassing him

On the contrary. Taking direction from the most brilliant composer and conductor in Paris is not “awkward” for me.

ST.-GEORGES
Then there is no difficulty, but there is also no opportunity for Minette at the present time in Paris.\textsuperscript{44}

\textsuperscript{43}Alain Guédé, \textit{Monsieur de Saint-George}, 134-138.

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CHARTON
The city's loss will be my gain--our family will arrange a private concert with you both before we return.

MINETTE
*Even sassier and smacking him flirtatiously, but a little too hard, on the ear with her fan.*

Philippe, you are quite a different man when you're in France. It must be those aristocratic ears.

CHARTON
*Wondering what's gotten into her*
True, we are allowed to be more *civilized* here, and we play by different rules.

ST.-GEORGES
You make a most generous offer, monsieur, and for this occasion I will write something especially for you, Madame. But now, I believe, dinner is served. *(To Charton, with gracious contempt)* I think you will find our oysters worthy even of Mozart. This way, mesdames. messieurs.

*They all exit to dinner, with MINETTE on CHARTON's arm.*

LOUIS
Charton! How could she!

MOREAU
You heard why in her own words.

LOUIS
And you refused to help.

MOREAU
I couldn't help. I was a married man with a family to support, and I was paying your living expenses.

LOUIS
The Chevalier's father was a married man--and he brought his son to live with them in Paris. ⁴⁵

---

⁴⁵ Alain Guédé, *Monsieur de Saint-George*, 50-53

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MOREAU
Everything about the chevalier is remarkable, including his parents living arrangements. My circumstances were more ordinary, and my resources considerably smaller.

LOUIS
You might at least have given my mother money to go see me.

MOREAU
At the time, I needed a complete separation from you and your mother.

LOUIS
Was the association too humiliating? Your colored mistress? Your Negro son?

MOREAU
It presented certain problems.

LOUIS
Problems at home, problems for your career, we were nothing but problems.

MOREAU
There are times in a man's life when he must rise above his personal preferences, and address much larger issues.

LOUIS
We needed you.

MOREAU
And France needed me, and Haiti needed me. I thought I could make a contribution.

LOUIS
You could have made a contribution by your example, by taking responsibility for my mother and me. Maybe others would have followed suit. But that didn’t fit into your ambitions!

MOREAU
I was ambitious, it's true. Very ambitious. I knew I was a capable man.

LOUIS
Capable of cowardice to my people. Capable of passing on your lover to a brute. Capable of abandoning your own son. A most capable man.

MOREAU
Your accusations are just, Louis. But there is more to tell.

I've heard enough.

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No you haven't.

MOREAU

More than enough.

LOUIS

MOREAU

If you won't hear it from me, hear it from your godfather. Paris, September, 1789. The Chevalier is going mad, along with everyone else.

_The CHEVALIER enters, fencing with a partner. Early on in this scene he dismisses the partner, and motions to Moreau to take his place. Moreau picks up the mask and sword and fences with ST.-GEORGES. It is a dangerous “dance” between these two men. We see the underlying anger of ST.-GEORGES that MOREAU, the white man, is playing the hero and savior. The choreography of the fencing should reveal and emphasize this tension._

Notice the left foot—it never wanders. The right leg—perfectly straight. Unlike the mind at this moment.

MOREAU enters the scene while LOUIS watches.

MOREAU

St.-George, what is this preposterous news I hear?

ST.-GEORGES

Continues fencing

I can’t imagine.

MOREAU

You know very well what I mean—raising a regiment of free black men to fight for the revolution.⁴⁶

ST.-GEORGES

Continues to fence.

And why is that preposterous?

MOREAU

It’s foolhardy! The royalists and the plantation owners will make you a target. You’ll be killed inside a week.

⁴⁶ Alain Guédé, _Monsieur de Saint-George_, 215-220.
ST.-GEORGES

Angrily

As I remember, you had no problem risking your life for liberty!

MOREAU

I didn’t have a choice. I am the president of the electors of Paris. I didn’t know the Bastille would be stormed!

ST.-GEORGES

And when it was? You kept Paris from being burned to the ground!

MOREAU

It wasn’t heroic. I didn’t leave my desk.

ST.-GEORGES

So I heard. You gave 5,000 orders and didn’t leave your desk for a week. 47

MOREAU

That’s an exaggeration. And it’s not like fighting in battle!

ST.-GEORGE

Which is why Lafayette gave you that medal. I saw him put it on you at the Hotel de Ville. I heard the speech too, very grand: “I Gilbert de Motier, Marquis de Lafayette, offer you this medal struck in your honor. It is witness to our gratitude and our loyalty which will last as long as the existence of our city that you have preserved. We offer it to one who was not afraid to risk his life for the well being of his brothers.” 48

MOREAU

I see it is useless to try to dissuade you.

ST.-GEORGES

Infuriated

Who has more at stake in the cause of liberty than a man of color?

MOREAU

The cause of liberty is being almost too well served at the moment. What happens to Louis when you go off with your regiment?

ST.-GEORGES

I’ve made arrangements.

MOREAU

There isn’t a safe place in France.

47 Guy Chaussinand-Nogaret and Jean Dusaulx, La Bastille est Prise, 159.
48 Médéric Louis Elie Moreau de Saint-Méry, Memoire Justicatif, 86-87. This speech was given, and the medal presented, by J.J. Rousseau, President, District des Grands-Augustins, Paris. However, for the purposes of theatrical consistency it is attributed to Lafayette.

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ST.-GEORGES
He'll be safely in the countryside.

MOREAU
I have a better idea... Why don't you let me take him to Haiti?

ST.-GEORGES
What are you talking about? Surely you're not leaving Paris? You've just started a revolution. I'm sure Lafayette is counting on you!

MOREAU
He offered me the position as head of the militia. 49

ST.-GEORGES
Congratulations! That's the most powerful position in Paris!

I turned it down.

MOREAU
Mon dieu! This is inconceivable! Why?

ST.-GEORGE
And I could take Louis away from the danger here now. He could come with me. After all this time my wife would never suspect. Everyone thinks he is your child anyway.

MOREAU
He is my child now! I have raised that boy, Moreau. He is as much as a son to me. You can't change your mind now!

MOREAU
It's for his own good.

ST.-GEORGES
Furious
Did I tell you about the time that little rascal's pet snake got loose in the Palais Royal and was found the next morning when the Duc d'Orleans was putting on his boot? Oh no, Moreau, Louis stays in France.

49 Médéric Louis Elie Moreau de Saint-Méry, Memoire Justicatif, 21-23.
MOREAU
I see. *(But still trying to think of another way to get the boy.)*

ST.-GEORGES
*(Threatening, then laughing)*
Unless you want to duel over it.

MOREAU
With you? I may have risked my life on Bastille Day, but I’m not going to throw it away!

ST.-GEORGES
Well you better let me help you hone your dueling skills, my friend, because you’re going to need to be an expert.

MOREAU
Whatever are you talking about?

ST.-GEORGES
You mean you haven’t seen it?

MOREAU
Seen what?

ST.-GEORGES
The pamphlet! *(goes and gets it).* Here!

MOREAU
“Observations on the Motion Proposed by Moreau de St.-Méry” Hmmm… “If the article proposed by the illustrious member, Moreau de St.-Méry passes the General Assembly, then the nation of France gives full liberty to blacks to slit the throats of 30,000 whites…” What article?! 50

Read on.

MOREAU
“Complete freedom for blacks...” 51 I’ve proposed nothing of the kind!

Read on.


51 Ibid., 100.
MOREAU

“Oh, my fellow citizens! Let us not allow ourselves to be misled! Avoid with care the trap that Moreau de St.-Méry has set for us with trickery!”52

Who wrote this?

ST.-GEORGES

Look. (turns page and points.)

Charton!

MOREAU

ST.-GEORGES

Let me know when you are ready for that lesson!

ST-GEORGES exits, MOREAU watches him go.

LOUIS

So, you are a hero after all.

MOREAU (returning to Louis)

Well, I have a medal.

Places are set for the tribunal on one side of the stage.

LOUIS

You really were the King of Paris.

MOREAU

My reign lasted three whole days.

LOUIS

And I can see why you didn't choose to parade your Negro son and mistress around Paris.

MOREAU

It was a difficult time.

The judge enters and takes his place.

LOUIS

And perhaps you had not entirely abandoned your son.

MOREAU

Perhaps not--at least not by choice.

The judge bangs his gavel.

52 Ibid., 102

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JUDGE
Silence! This tribunal is called to order. The Paris General Assembly will hear the complaint of the president of the Electors of Paris, Moreau de St. Méry, against Elector Phillippe Charton. Gentlemen, take your places.

Moreau and Charton each stand at podiums on either side of the Judge. The CHEVALIER enters with MINETTE on the other side of the stage; the CHEVALIER has his violin, and he hands MINETTE her music.

ST.-GEORGES
Here is the song I promised you. Look it over---I’ll play whenever you are ready.

MINETTE
Thank you, monsieur—I am deeply honored.

JUDGE
The charge is calumny. Monsieur Moreau, please state your case.

MOREAU
On June 10, 1789 M. Charton published a pamphlet which asserts that during the meeting of the Paris General Assembly on May 9, I made a motion to free the slaves in the Colonies and abolish the Slave Trade. 53

JUDGE
Is this correct, M. Charton, so far?

CHARTON
It is.

Go ahead, M. Moreau.

JUDGE

MOREAU
I made no such motion to the General Assembly, on May 9 or any other day!

MINETTE
Go ahead, monsieur—I’ll give it a try.

ST.-GEORGES
First listen to the melody on the violin.

53 Médéric Louis Elie Moreau de Saint-Méry, Memoire Justicatif, 26,100-102.
He begins to play the melody of St-
George’s “O toi qui regnes dan mon âme”
changed to “Haiti qui regne dans mon
âme” (lyrics about her regrets/ her
courage/Haiti) -- and the tribunal continues.

JUDGE
M. Moreau, would you please recall your activities of May 9th?

MOREAU
On May 9th I presided over the Assembly as usual. I noted an item on the
Agenda relative to slavery, which I thought was inconsistent. I
commented to the Assembly that I thought this matter deserved further
study, taking into account the book I had just published which included
4,000 laws on the subject.

CHARTON
That’s not true! Moreau spoke forcefully and sympathetically about the
conditions of blacks in the colonies. Then there was such an uproar in
the Assembly... and he presented his Motion... and I went up to him and
said that freedom for slaves is an attack on the property rights of slave
owners and he said, “To each his own”! Why would he say “To each his
own” if he didn’t believe slaves should be freed?

The Chevalier has finished playing the
melody.

CHEVALIER
There it is---is it satisfactory?

MINETTE
It is beautiful.

CHEVALIER
Then whenever you are ready.

MINETTE returns to the score to read it
once more.

MOREAU
Charton has simply imagined I made a Motion to free the slaves so he
could ruin me!

54 Ibid., 20.
55 Louis Charton, Observations sur la Conduite de M. Moreau, 5.

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CHARTON
What reason would I have for publishing a response to a motion that had never been made in a public assembly? People would only think I had taken leave of my senses!56

MOREAU
You have! Look at this: “Ask the colonists and they will respond unanimously that the alleged abuses of slavery are fictitious. At the end of the day the slaves stroll in the sweet air, relax in the arms of love and in the morning they go gaily to work.”57 Are you mad?

CHARTON
Let’s ask some of the plantation owners here today.

MOREAU
Charton, didn’t you go to the Le Jeune plantation with the committee? Yes or no?

Yes. But...

MOREAU
And did you look into the eyes of those female slaves? Did you smell the rotting flesh that once was their legs? Did you see the shackles so tight they couldn’t drink or eat.58 How dare you write such rubbish as this!

TRIBUNAL
Gentlemen, please. We will have a brief recess while I review the evidence.

_The judge consults his papers, while MOREAU and CHARTON remain at their podiums_.

MINETTE nods to the CHEVALIER and they play and sing the first verse of their song. When this is finished, the JUDGE bangs his gavel.

---

56 Louis Charton, _Observations sur la Conduite de M. Moreau_, 21-22.
58 Pierre de Vaissière, _Saint Domingue_, 186-189.

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CHARTON
Your honor, you have seen a demonstration of Monsieur Moreau's eloquence. This is how he dominates the assembly. He makes full use of his impeccable education, in which I am at a disadvantage. I have only the truth on my side.59

TRIBUNAL
The facts, gentleman, the facts. M. Moreau do you have objections to any other matter in the publication of M. Charton?

MOREAU
Yes, your honor, I certainly do. If I may read from his pamphlet: “If Moreau's article passes: our plantations will fall, this uncouth and vindictive black race will slit the throats of 30,000 whites, the entire nation of France will be humiliated. No more commerce for us, no Navy. We will be ruled by England! Do not be tricked by the traitor Moreau!”60

CHARTON
You know every word of that is true. You would sacrifice France to your own ambition. Now you want to take back your motion because your private views have collided with your ambition!61

MOREAU
My private views?

CHARTON
Your honor, he presumes he is a friend of M. de Lafayette, who we all know is a founder of the Society for the Friends of Blacks.

MOREAU
I am not a member of Les Amis des noirs!62

CHARTON
You might as well be!

JUDGE
Silence, gentlemen! Let's return to the facts. M. Charton, do you have witnesses who will state that they heard the alleged motion being made by M. Moreau?

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59 Louis Charton, Observations sur la Conduite de M. Moreau, 4, 22-23.
62 Médéric Louis Elie Moreau de Saint-Méry, Memoire Justicatif, 35.

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CHARTON
I do, sir, I was standing next to Elector Garin, Elector de la Poize was nearby and several others.\textsuperscript{63} I gave a list to M. Moreau, here is a copy.

MOREAU
Your honor, I have a report from the Committee named by the General Assembly to interview these witnesses, I would like to submit it. They interviewed fifteen of the Electors M. Charton named. They have stated to a man that a motion to free the slaves had not been made on May 9\textsuperscript{th} or at any other time.\textsuperscript{64}

CHARTON
I heard Moreau make that motion, and so did my fellow electors.

JUDGE
Gentlemen, let me review your materials.

\textit{MOREAU and CHARTON submit their documents to the tribunal, and return to their podiums.}

The judge reviews these materials, as MINETTE and the CHEVALIER sing and play the second verse of the song.

ST.-GEORGES
It is a crime you will not be allowed to sing in public here in Paris. I'm afraid it is not in my power to correct this injustice.

MINETTE
There is nothing you can do, Monsieur.

ST.-GEORGES
Nothing about that. But perhaps I can be of assistance in another matter, one that concerns your domestic arrangements.

MINETTE
If you will pardon my candor, Monsieur, there are only two things that matter to me in this regard: to be able to spend as much time as possible with my son, and to have protection should I need to flee Haiti.

ST.-GEORGES
I know, and for this you rely on the assistance of Monsieur Charton, do you not? He is no friend to people of color, Minette.

\textsuperscript{63} Louis Charton, \textit{Observations sur la Conduite de M. Moreau}, 21.
\textsuperscript{64} Médéric Louis Elie Moreau de Saint-Méry, \textit{Memoire Justicatif}, 93-94.
MINETTE
I know, but can you offer a better choice?

ST.-GEORGES
Perhaps. Have you heard of Talleyrand?

MINETTE
I have heard the name.

ST.-GEORGES
A true aristocrat and one of the ablest men in France. He represents the clergy in the assembly, and has helped write the Declaration of the Rights of Man. He has a slightly lame foot.

MINETTE
I once was a little lame myself.

ST.-GEORGES
He is a lover of music and the arts, a friend to people of color, a man of considerable means, and currently without a mistress. I mean to invite him to our concert at Charton's. With your approval of course.

MINETTE
You have my blessing, Monsieur.

ST.-GEORGES
Then perhaps we should continue with our music. We wouldn't want you anything less than ravishing.

MINETTE
Play on, Monsieur.

*She sings a final chorus rousingly.* Lights out on MINETTE & ST.-GEORGES

JUDGE
I would like the secretary to note in the minutes that the esteemed Vice President of the National Assembly, M. de Lafayette, has just entered and is in attendance at these proceedings. Continue, M. Moreau.

MOREAU
I would like the tribunal to be aware of the injuries suffered by me and my family as a result of M. Charton's pamphlet.

JUDGE
Proceed.
MOREAU
M. de Lafayette informed me that I would be appointed Governor of Haiti. It was the happiest day of my life. I saw myself on the ship returning to Haiti, running to embrace my family, the crowds running to embrace me... oh yes, the crowds would have come, thanks to Charton they would have come to kill me!  

CHARTON
You're exaggerating!

MOREAU
When I saw Charton's pamphlet, I didn't think it was worthy of a reply. I never dreamed he would send it to Haiti!

CHARTON
I didn't! I had nothing to do with it going to Haiti!  

MOREAU
So the pamphlet swam to Haiti of its own accord! Mobs of whites gathered on the island to search out my relatives. My poor mother, widowed since I was a boy, was driven from her home. My mother-in-law, also a widow, was forced to leave Cap Français.  

CHARTON
More distortions!

MOREAU
My brother-in-law is dead because of you Charton! Have you no shame!

CHARTON
His blood is on your hands, not mine!

MOREAU
The mob pulled him from his home, his pregnant wife screaming, and put him on an ass and marched him to the cemetery, where they beat him unconscious! He was the royal physician for the Cap, your honor.

65 Ibid., 45.
66 Louis Charton, Observations sur la Conduite de M. Moreau, 25
67 Médéric Louis Elie Moreau de Saint-Méry, Memoire Justicatif, 32.
68 Ibid., 31.

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CHARTON
He became royal physician on the island because of Moreau’s influence and not because it was handed down father to son as usual. That’s why he wasn’t liked.  

MOREAU
If that lying, stinking filth hadn’t been published, my brother-in-law would be alive today!

CHARTON
If you hadn’t presented a motion to free the blacks then, yes, he would be alive today!

JUDGE
Cease! Do you hear me? Now... M. Moreau?

MOREAU
When the letter arrived at Cap Français naming me as the new Governor of the island, the mobs searched every one of the five hundred ships in the harbor looking to hang me. I’ve lost my homeland... And Haiti has lost the best friend it ever had. All because of a lie.

CHARTON
30,000 colonists are alive because they’ve learned the truth.

MOREAU
I know what would happen if blacks were freed tomorrow. Why would I propose something that would lead to the deaths of my family and friends?

CHARTON
So your glory could fill two worlds!

MOREAU
I did not propose a Motion to free blacks!

CHARTON
But you would support such a motion, wouldn’t you?

MOREAU
That is not relevant.

CHARTON
It most certainly is! We need to know, Moreau: Where do you stand?

MOREAU
I do not have to answer that question.

69 Louis Charton, Observations sur la Conduite de M. Moreau, 26.
70 Médéric Louis Elie Moreau de Saint-Méry, Memoire Justicatif, 32, 45.
71 Louis Charton, Observations sur la Conduite de M. Moreau, 11.

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CHARTON
You’re afraid to answer the question!

MOREAU
I am not! It will sidetrack the proceedings. Your libel is on trial here not my views on slavery!

CHARTON
Your honor?

JUDGE
M. Moreau, your views are relevant, please inform the tribunal.

MOREAU
I am not a fanatic. I am neither a political idealist, or philosopher, nor a plantation owner or merchant. But I know the West Indies at least as well as any man alive. Don’t I also know about revolutions? Is there a man here who can say that my course was not that of stability? I know what can happen even among so civilized a culture as the French. Mark my words: there will be chaos and slaughter now and for generations in Haiti if we do not follow a reasonable course—a course which must be pursued purposefully, gradually, over an indefinite period of time. The first step is improving the conditions of blacks, including the prevention of cruelty to slaves and the punishment, the severe punishment, of cruelty. When that is accomplished, the Slave Trade should be abolished. I believe we will see the United States and England following suit. The next priority should be education and training in the trades for blacks. And then, and only then, will we take the final step of freedom for blacks. Let France keep both its commerce and its honor!

The lights on the tribunal fade as MOREAU’S speech is greeted with gasps, boos, cheers and general chaos. In the dark we only hear the pounding of the gavel, which ends when lights come up on MOREAU. LOUIS joins him.

What happened after that?

LOUIS

MOREAU
My career was ruined. I was too radical for the colonists, too conservative for the zealots. I was a party of one.

LOUIS
Have you ever been back to Haiti?

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MOREAU
No: the uprisings started soon after.

LOUIS
But Lafayette named you governor!

MOREAU
I lost the support of the plantation owners. I had served them well—it took me years to codify French colonial law and the colonists were the beneficiaries, and they were grateful. Until the law no longer mattered.

LOUIS
And they thought you wanted to free the slaves, too.

MOREAU
I had only argued it was in the owners’ best interests to improve conditions for their blacks.

LOUIS
You really thought the planters would go along with you?

MOREAU
It was our only hope for stability. But then, thanks to Charton, that hope was lost.

LOUIS
And what happened to him?

MOREAU
He lost too. He lost his seat in the Assembly. And he lost Minette to Talleyrand, who brought your mother to Philadelphia when the Terror began. Charton fled to England, and that was the last I heard of him until . . .

LOUIS
Until he killed my mother. That’s what you think isn’t it?

MOREAU (hesitating, wanting to tell Louis the truth, but unable to . . ).

We would never be able to prove it.

LOUIS
Would he have had the poison? Grandmother says it might have been some special kind of Haitian root. . .

MOREAU
Yes, he had the poison. I saw it pass into his hands from a runaway slave. They made the handoff at a voudou ceremony.

LOUIS
What were you doing at a voudou ceremony?
Your grandmother Eugenie arranged for me to witness it, so that I could write an account of it for my book.72

Drumming starts.

Yes?

I was allowed to watch—from a concealed location, so I wouldn’t intrude into the ceremony.

The drums get louder, the voudou songs begin, and we see the whole voudou ceremony performed as it was recorded by MOREAU in the 1780s, the first written description of a voudou ritual. Early in the ritual dance, CHARTON enters, and enters into negotiations with one of the participants. They haggle in pantomime. Finally they agree, and at the moment CHARTON receives the bag of poison, and pays his money, the entire dance freezes for a moment in tableau.

So Charton got his poison.

They call it the blood of Macandal.73 Perfected by runaway slaves, and used everywhere. The blood of Macandal mixed into sugarcane syrup and stirred into a Frenchman's coffee.

So Charton killed my mother.

Wait, there is something more.

The tableau breaks, CHARTON leaves and the ceremony continues, gathering in intensity and power, forming into a wide circle, which freezes again. Lights up on CHARTON and MME. MOREAU in the bookstore.

72 Moreau de St.-Méry, Description de l’isle Saint-Domingue, 64-69 ; idem, Danse, 47-50.
73 Moreau de St.-Méry, Description de l’isle Saint-Domingue, II :629-631.
CHARTON
She has quarreled with Talleyrand, and left him for good—you could hear them screaming down the block.

MME. MOREAU
How very operatic!

CHARTON
She came to me then, and pleaded with me to make a home for her and her son. I had to tell her that her song had lost its charm. She was desperate – she said she’d go to Moreau, then, and throw herself on his mercy.

MME. MOREAU
Oh!

CHARTON
She’s on her way here right now. Take this. *(offering her his bag of poison).*

MME. MOREAU
What is it?

CHARTON
Poison—very potent. The blood of Macandal.

MME. MOREAU
How dreadful! Take it away, please. I don’t want it. And go out the back door—now! I see her coming.

*CHARTON exits and MINETTE knocks on the door.*

MME. MOREAU
Why it’s Minette, isn’t it? Quickly, come in! It’s chilly out there.

MINETTE
Madame Moreau, forgive me, but I urgently need to see your husband regarding a legal matter.

MME. MOREAU
My husband is out at the moment, but he will be returning shortly. Would you care to wait? I’ll fix you a cup of hot tea.

MINETTE
That is so kind of you.
MME. MOREAU

*Bringing the tea*

Here’s your tea, Minette, nice and warm. You know, I used to love that aria you sang about the mother bird, Minette. How did it go?

MINETTE

“The little bird with its babies believes itself queen of the hedges.” *(takes a sip of tea.)*

MME. MOREAU

Isn’t that the dearest thing? “Queen of the hedges...” Go on, please...

MINETTE

“Her new family around her, gathered under her wing, how joyful she is!” *(takes a sip of tea.)*

MME. MOREAU

*(MME. MOREAU becoming even more unhinged and MINETTE, sipping the tea, more uncomfortable)*

Oh, yes! How happy I felt with my little family. It’s a mother’s joy. I feel as if I’m in Cap Français, in our box at the opera right now. There’s the governor’s box with his beautiful wife in one of her extravagant hats, and next to it the Commandant’s box, and above — the loge for ladies of color. They’re opening all the shutters on each side of the theatre. It’s such a warm evening, the footlights are glowing... anything could happen. Oh! Finished? And then how did the song end, Minette?

MINETTE

“Unfortunately the bird hunter comes, and dashes the mother’s hopes. Poor mother, she thinks only of her misfortune, everything echoes to her suffering...”

MME. MOREAU

“Poor mother”, yes, it’s what happens to a mother’s hopes. Did you like the tea, Minette? It’s sapodilla tea, a family recipe from my grandmother. Very, very soothing. Just come with me. I’ll show you out.

MINETTE

*(nervously)*

Thank you, but I really must be going now. *(getting up)* Oh! *(a little dizzy).*

*They go off, and the Voudou ceremony resumes, reaches its climax and the singers/dancers leave.*

LOUIS

So this is how my mother met her “accident.”

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 MOREAU
Louis, I knew your mother was in danger. I did everything in my power to keep her away from me and my wife... to protect your mother and you. And I had to stay with my own family. Do you see why the police report was sealed?

I see that now.

LOUIS
There is a silence between the two men.

MOREAU
Now you have the details. I helped give Paris to its citizens, and I watched the guillotine take them away. I spent my life creating systems of stability in Haiti, and now I am an exile, a witness of chaos and slaughter. I am the governor who never governed, the prince who lost his kingdom, the rescuer who stumbled, and the father who lost his son. I own a bookstore. I sell paper and pencils.

A pause.

LOUIS
I have to leave tomorrow.

MOREAU
Tomorrow?

LOUIS
Yes, the boat leaves tomorrow. I have to get back to accompany the Chevalier to Haiti.

MOREAU
I see.

LOUIS
The Chevalier requires that I have your permission. Will you give me your blessing?

MOREAU
You're a man now. You don't need my blessing.

LOUIS
The Chevalier insists.

MOREAU
Well, if the Chevalier insists, then you have my blessing.

LOUIS
Thank you. It's getting late. I should get back to my grandmother's. I have quite a bit to pack and . . .

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MOREAU

Louis...

LOUIS

Yes.

MOREAU

I... be careful.

The two men embrace. *This is a full moment, followed by a mutual awkwardness.*

If you need anything...

LOUIS

I have what I need.

*LOUIS now begins to leave, and walks away. When he reaches the other side of the stage, MOREAU speaks.*

MOREAU

My regards to the Chevalier. Toussaint is a great man. I am sure he will do great things.

LOUIS

You don't approve.

MOREAU

I have seen enough of revolutions. I spent my life putting Haiti into order. Though I know that order also preserved injustice.

LOUIS

Your writing showed me order is necessary to civilization, and to dance.

*The baroque orchestra begins to play. In this « Finale », each of the dances in the play is reprised for 20-30 secs. Each dance and each set of dancers “morphs” into the next as dancers enter and leave the stage. Beginning with the Rameau “Contredanse en rondeau” from the French ball with French colonial dancers.*

Each part clear and articulate...

MOREAU

Each step in balance with every other step.

LOUIS

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The quadroon ball dancers in the carabinier to Rousseau’s “Allemande”.

Everything speaking together in beauty, refinement and grace.

MOREAU
The sassy handmaids dance to the Gretry “Passepied”.

Infinite grace.

The Haitian drums now begin to play. The slaves dance imitating the French to the Pergolesi song, followed by the French colonial dancers doing the “Congo Minuet” to the Couperin.

But there are other dances too.

LOUIS
The slaves pick up the calenda, followed by the quadroon ball dancers doing the ending of the ballroom chica.

The dance of freedom.

MOREAU
Rameau’s “Dance of the peace pipe” from Les Sauvages.

The dance of transformation.

LOUIS
Excerpt from the Voudou ceremony

The dance of the gods.

MOREAU

Remember, you are my son.

Remember, you are my father.

MOREAU and LOUIS move towards each other in the center of the stage. The baroque dancers surround them, still dancing, and they are surrounded in turn and overcome by the ecstatic Haitian dancers. The rhythm of the drums overwhelms the orchestra as the lights fade to black.

THE END.
PRINCE DE HAITI/ROI DE PARIS

Une pièce de théâtre
de
Kyle Siebrecht
Traduit de l'Anglais par
Héloïse Erignac-Ester

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PRINCE DE HAÏTI / ROI DE PARIS

LISTE DES PERSONNAGES

Femmes
Deux danseuses baroques (incluant Mme d'Angerville).
Trois danseuses afro-haïtiennes (incluant Eugénie et Nicolette).
Minette (soprano, mulâtre), de 18 à 30 ans.
Mme Moreau de St-Méry (blanche) de 28 à 40 ans.
Mme d'Angerville (blanche), dans les 30-40 ans.

Hommes
Un danseur baroques.
Trois danseurs afro-haïtiens.
Moreau de St-Méry (blanc), de 35 à 45 ans (principalement de 39 à 45 ans).
Louis (fils illégitime de Minette et de Moreau, mulâtre) 17 ans.
Philippe Charton (blanc) dans les 30-40 ans, propriétaire de plantation.
Chevalier de St Georges (mulâtre), 50 ans, compositeur et escrimeur.
Dr d'Angerville / Juge du tribunal, (blanc), dans les 30-40 ans, médecin.

Musiciens
Afro-Haïtiens : 4 tambours/percussions.
Orchestre de chambre baroque : clavecin, quartet de cordes, flûte.

Optionnel
AZOR, (blanc) entre 20 et 40 ans, ténor baroque, la Bête dans Zemire et Azor.
PRINCE DE HAÏTI / ROI DE PARIS

OUVERTURE
(Contient des extraits musicaux de la pièce: musique baroque française et percussions haïtiennes, cf. « Ouverture » dans la partition)

ACTE I
Scène 1

Installation : d’un côté à l’autre de la scène, des immeubles peints d’une rue du Philadelphie de 1798. Une enseigne annonce « Moreau de St Méry and Co. Bookseller, Printer and Stationner, No. 84 First Street » ou « Moreau de St Méry & Cie, Librairie, Imprimerie et Papeterie – 84 Première Rue ». La boutique n’est pas luxueuse, mais elle est confortable.

Derrière cette façade, à cour se trouve un ensemble de musique de chambre. À jardin, les percussions haïtiennes.

Les lumières s’éteignent et, dans l’obscurité, on entend les éclats de rire de garçons hurlant des coulisses.

PREMIER GARCON
Hey look at Blackie ! Blackie !

DEUXIÈME GARCON
Those are some clothes he’s got on.

TROISIÈME GARCON
Too fancy for a black boy

Stolen, probably.

DEUXIÈME GARCON

TROISIÈME GARCON
Let’s get him !

PREMIER GARCON
Off with that jacket, darky ! Off, I said !

TROISIÈME GARCON
Hey, Blackie doesn’t want to play, does he ?

DEUXIÈME GARCON
Get him ! Get that jacket off !

PREMIER GARCON

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Get him!

TROISIÈME GARCON
Take that, Blackie! Yeah!

PREMIER GARCON
Again – hit him again!

DEUXIÈME GARCON
Hold him!

Bruit de lutte dans les coulisses, puis LOUIS entre en scène titubant tandis que MOREAU sort de sa librairie en criant après les garçons, toujours en coulisse.

MOREAU
Get out of here – go on! If you ever come around here again, I’ll call the constable! Hooligans! Young ruffians! Are you all right, young man?

LOUIS est étourdi, se tient la tête et ne répond pas. MOREAU sort un mouchoir de sa poche et commence à essuyer le sang du visage de LOUIS.

You took quite a beating.

LOUIS

Laissez-moi.

MOREAU

Français?

MOREAU continue à soigner le jeune homme battu.

Où suis-je?

MOREAU

(toujours essayant d’essuyer le sang)
A Philadelphie, devant ma librairie.

LOUIS

Laissez-moi, ai-je dit!

MOREAU

J’essayais seulement de vous aider.

LOUIS

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Je n'ai pas besoin de votre aide.

MOREAU

Je pense que vous ne saisissez pas la situation.

LOUIS

Oh, je sais parfaitement la situation.

MOREAU

Ils vous auraient fait du mal.

LOUIS

Pourquoi êtes-vous intervenu ?

MOREAU

Pour qu'ils ne vous blessent pas davantage.

LOUIS

Très touchant. Un véritable héros.

MOREAU

Que diable voulez-vous dire ? J'essayais seulement de vous porter secours, comme un homme à un autre. Un citoyen à un autre.

LOUIS

Et bien, il est un peu tard pour cela, ne pensez-vous pas?

MOREAU


LOUIS

Et que direz-vous à ce médecin ? Que vous n'avez pas même été capable de reconnaître votre propre fils ?

MOREAU

Grand Dieu ! Louis ? Est-ce bien vrai ?

LOUIS

Vous n'en n'êtes pas sûr, n'est-ce pas ?

MOREAU

J'ai attendu ce jour si longtemps. Te voir. Presque un homme.

Il s'approche de Louis.

LOUIS

Ne me touchez pas. Je ne suis pas venu pour vous voir. Je ne vous connais pas. Je ne suis venu que pour ma mère.

MOREAU

Elle a eu un accident, Louis.

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LOUIS
Un accident, dîtes-vous ?
MOREAU

LOUIS
J’ai quitté Paris, dès que je l’ai appris.
MOREAU
Je suis si heureux que tu sois ici.

LOUIS
Toutes ces années. J’aurais souhaité que ce soit vrai. Vous ne m’avez jamais rendu visite, ni même écrit.
MOREAU
La situation était difficile.

LOUIS
MOREAU
De quoi parles-tu ?

LOUIS
Si vous vous souciez tant de la situation des noirs, pourquoi avez vous abandonné votre propre fils nègre. Pour votre confor ?. Pour votre réputation ? Vous ne vous êtes jamais réellement soucié d’aucun d’entre nous.
MOREAU
La, tu te trompes. Je me suis battu pour la liberté ! Au début de la Révolution, on m’a appelé « Le Roi de Paris ».

LOUIS
Oh ! Oui, je sais tout de Votre Majesté. J’ai assisté à une pièce de théâtre sur vous à mon arrivée à New York.
MOREAU
Vraiment ?

LOUIS
Oui, elle s’appelait « La Bastille, ou la liberté triomphante ». Vous en étiez le héros.
MOREAU
Ah !

LOUIS
chantant la Marseillaise.

MOREAU

Un début palpitant !

LOUIS


MOREAU

Merveilleux !

LOUIS

Et entièrement vrai, je suppose.

MOREAU

Et bien, pas tout à fait. On aime bien inventer des histoires à mon sujet.

LOUIS

Mais, vous avez pris la Bastille, n'est-ce pas ?

MOREAU

En vérité, je n'y étais pas.

LOUIS

Vous n'avez donc pas tiré votre épée et combattu de Launay ?

MOREAU

Je n'ai jamais rencontré ce gentilhomme.

LOUIS

Ni fait ce grand discours sur les Droits de l'Homme ? De l'homme blanc, bien entendu.

MOREAU

Non.

LOUIS

Je vois. Le Chevalier ne m'a jamais conté les détails, mais il m'a bien dit que mon père avait été Roi de Paris.

MOREAU

Oui. Cela est vrai. Et comme je te l'ai dit, à ma façon, je me suis battu pour la liberté.
LOUIS

MOREAU
Tu ne sais rien de la Haïti française. Tu as été élevé dans le giron du luxe parisien.

LOUIS
J'ai appris ce qu'il en était de ma mère. J'ai vu la marque du fer sur la poitrine de ma grand-mère.

On entend le son des percussions haïtiennes.

MOREAU
Mais tu n'y es jamais allé.

LOUIS
Niez-vous qu'il s'agissait d'une société décadente, qui s'est enrichie au delà de l'imaginable sur le dos des esclaves ; avec des bals somptueux, des opéras extravagants et des unions qui n'avaient de mariage que le nom ?

MOREAU
Louis, ce sont...

LOUIS
Niez-vous que les blancs se soient serré les coudes pour s'assurer que les mulâtres et les noirs n'obtiennent pas de droits, que les noirs étaient traités comme du bétail ! N'était-ce pas cela, votre Haïti ?

MOREAU
Il suffit ! Je ne nie pas. Mais, la situation était bien plus compliquée...nous n'avons pas toujours le pouvoir d'agir contre les injustices. Mon combat n'était pas vain. Oui, il y avait de grands opéras, ou, il y avait des bals somptueux.

LOUIS tire un petit livre de sa poche.

Et vous y étiez.

Les percussions s'effacent et sont chevauchées par la musique de l'orchestre de chambre.

MOREAU
Bien sûr, mon petit livre brun.

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LOUIS
Vous le décrivez si bien ces soirées.

(ouvre le livre et lit)
« Les peuples qui avoisinent le Nord sont les moins aptes à trouver le plaisir de la danse. Jamais le Lapon ne sera cité comme un amant de la danse ... L'esquimau, glacé malgré la fourrure qui le couvre ... »
(Rire.)

Tandis que LOUIS lit les lignes suivantes, la musique de danse commence.

LOUIS
« Mais c'est pour les climats que le soleil semble embraser, que la danse paraît avoir été créée. Partout, c'est un plaisir ; là c'est une passion. Le sang allumé par une chaleur presque continuelle, contient le germe de toutes les voluptés, et dans leur rapide existence, les peuples du Midi veulent combler tous leurs moments par des jouissances. »

MOREAU
C'est tellement vrai, mon fils.
ACTE I
Scène 2

La façade de la librairie s’ouvre et nous voici à un grand bal dans la Salle de Spectacle en 1781. Les noirs observent du haut du poulailler. (voir la « Contredanse en Rondeau » dans Les Boréades de Rameau, Acte 1 Scène 4, partitions) MOREAU entre dans la scène et rejoint la danse. LOUIS observe un instant puis lit.

LOUIS
« Ces créoles blancs à maintien langoureux, dont l’indolence semble être le goût dominant, prennent un nouvel être au bal. Dans tous leurs mouvements est une grâce naïve et touchante ; leurs regards sont animés, on y voit naître et briller la volupté... »

Au bal : trois danseurs baroques (l’une d’entre-elles joue Marie d’ANGERVILLE), CHARTON, le Dr et Mme d’ANGERVILLE. MOREAU et MOREAU. La conversation suivante a lieu durant la partie la plus calme de la musique, tandis que Mme MOREAU effectue en solo un tour sur elle-même de manière charmante et élégante. LOUIS peut se déplacer seul parmi les danseurs, invisible à tous sauf MOREAU.

CHARTON
Alors Moreau, vous avez capturé l’une des splendides sœurs Milhet de Louisiane. Toutes mes félicitations !

MOREAU
Et bien, les Espagnols ayant volé la Nouvelle-Orléans, je considérais ce sauvetage comme relevant de mon devoir.

CHARTON
Tandis que Mme MOREAU revient aux côtés de MOREAU.

Bien vous a pris d’offrir l’asile à une si ravissante exilée !

MME MOREAU
Je vous remercie, Monsieur CHARTON. Je puis vous assurer que je suis la plus heureuse exilée au monde !

La danse se fige en un gracieux tableau tandis que Louis parle.

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LOUIS
L'heureuse épouse, je présume.

MOREAU
Oui, mon épouse Catherine.

LOUIS
Très jolie. D'une « grâce naïve et touchante ». Et dans l'année vous l'aurez trahie.

MOREAU
Oui.

La danse repart, tandis que Louis observe. Quand elle s'achève, la conversation se poursuit.

MME D'ANGERVILLE
Vous familiarisez-vous avec les usages de notre île, vaudous et autres, Madame ?

MME MOREAU
Je débute, Madame d'Angerville. Mais, vous savez que nous avons également nos sorts et nos potions à la Nouvelle-Orléans ?

MME D'ANGERVILLE
Vraiment ?

MME MOREAU
Absolument. Ma grand-mère s'est un jour trouvée fiancée à un homme qui courtisait une autre femme. Après une gorgée de sa tisane de sapotille, il ne le refit jamais. Je crois même qu'il ne fit jamais plus rien d'autre, sauf peut-être se reposer à l'ombre des odorants frangipaniers du paradis. (Rire.)

CHARTON
Un endroit raffiné et sauvage, la Nouvelle-Orléans. Prenez garde Moreau.

MOREAU
Catherine sait que je n'ai d'yeux que pour elle. Et bienheureusement, je suis peu friand de tisanes. (Rire.)

La musique et la danse recommencent.

MME D'ANGERVILLE
Ah ! Le Menuet Congo ! J'adore le Menuet Congo !

MME MOREAU
Une danse indigène ? Sûrement pas.
MME D’ANGERVILLE
Non, soyez sûre qu’elle est plus menuet que Congo. Le jour n’est pas venu pour les Françaises de séduire leur cavalier par des ondulations de hanches.

MME MOREAU
(Petit rire avec MME D’ANGERVILLE)
Oh, Mon Dieu !

MME D’ANGERVILLE
Bien qu’à mon grand damne, de nombreux Français, certains issus des meilleures familles, s’entêtent à gaspiller leur fortune auprès de femmes de couleurs.

MME MOREAU
Nous sommes bien loin de Paris, n’est-ce pas ?

MME D’ANGERVILLE
Très exactement, Madame. Heureusement, il reste quelques hommes qui n’ont pas souillé leur honneur et celui de leur famille. Certains parviennent même à éviter ces attirantes salles de bals mixtes, où nos menuets se trouvent complètement avalés par le Congo.

MME MOREAU
Cela semble plutôt inquiétant.

MME D’ANGERVILLE
C’est une ombre redoutable qui plane sur nous toutes.

(À MOREAU, qui a rejoint le groupe)
Allez-vous encore nous abandonner pour retourner en France ?

MOREAU
Pas avant quelques mois. Mais il me reste des recherches à faire à Versailles.

Dr D’ANGERVILLE
On dit que vous pourriez accepter un poste important ici au Cap.

MOREAU
Je n’ai jamais eu d’autre ambition que de servir nos îles, ainsi que, je puis le dire, l’ont fait mon père et mon grand-père avant moi.

MME D’ANGERVILLE
Il me semble reconnaître la voix de notre futur Administrateur.

Le Dr a remarqué que sa fille appelait MME D’ANGERVILLE afin de l’aider à changer de robe.

Dr D’ANGERVILLE
Madame.

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MME D'ANGERVILLE
Oui, dès que le menuet se terminera.

MME MOREAU
Monsieur Charton, avez-vous entendu la dernière de l'Opéra ? La pièce était si lente hier soir qu'un spectateur s'est écrié : « Finissez !» et Minette a répondu « Je le veux bien, Monsieur». Et elle a quitté la scène, comme cela.

CHARTON
La merveilleuse femme ! J'ai entendu dire que le directeur du théâtre avait réprimandé Le Grand pour ne pas savoir ses répliques, et tout de go, Legrand lui aurait répondu : « Eh ! Monsieur, vous ne seriez pas en état de me payer, si je savais mes rôles ». Vraiment, ces artistes sont les seuls hommes libres sur l'île !

La danse se termine.

MME D'ANGERVILLE (à MOREAU)
Je vous prie de m’excuser, je dois aider Marie.

MME D'ANGERVILLE va a paravent derrière lequel MARIE change à nouveau de robe.

Dr D'ANGERVILLE
Remerciez Dieu de n’avoir pas de fille, Moreau. Elles changent de robe cinq fois en un seul bal.

MME MOREAU
Elles concourent pour un mari, Monsieur.

Dr D'ANGERVILLE
Elles ruinent leurs pères, Madame. À ce rythme, Marie finira avec une dot de robes d’occasion dont aucune n’aura été portée plus d’une heure.

MOREAU
Et il est certain que tout homme raisonnable serait inquiet à la vue d’une telle démonstration d’extravagance.

MME MOREAU
Ah, mais l’objectif d’une telle démonstration est justement d’empêcher les hommes de penser raisonnablement.

MARIE rentre, absolument ravissante. Ses parents rejoignent les MOREAU.

Voyez vous-même.

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MOREAU
Vous marquez un point, ma chère. Bien entendu, il importe peu combien de fois ces jeunes coquettes iront se rafraîchir, les pauvres ne sauront jamais rivaliser avec vous. Cependant, n'ai-je pas déjà vu cette toilette au moins une fois auparavant?

MME MOREAU
Vile créature ! Vous trahissez tous mes secrets.

MOREAU
Précieuse reine, je suis votre plus fidèle sujet. À mes yeux, votre épargne vertueuse ne peut que parfaire votre prodigue beauté.

MME D'ANGERVILLE
Ce gentilhomme a vécu quelque temps à Paris.

MME MOREAU
Assez de cela, Monsieur, sans quoi je vais penser que vous me faites encore la cour et il me faudra acquérir une douzaine de nouvelles toilettes.

La musique reprend.

MME D'ANGERVILLE
Je vous assisterais volontiers dans ce cas. Mais voyez, un sauvage exotique ! Dieu merci il vient avec un calumet de la paix et non une hachette !

La danse du calumet de la paix des Sauvages de Rameau est donnée en spectacle au bal, les couples se positionnant sur les côtés pour regarder. La danse du calumet continue. Vers la fin de la danse, une esclave noire étourdie et en sang entre dans la salle de bal en titubant. La musique s'arrête soudainement et le danseur se retire, laissant la femme blessée au centre de la salle de bal.

CHARTON
Que fait cette créature ici ?

LA FEMME ESCLAVE
Mesdames et Messieurs, pardonnez-moi, mais je dois voir Monsieur Moreau.

La femme chancelle et est sur le point de perdre l'équilibre.

Dans une impulsion soudaine, MARIE se précipite pour l’aider.

MME D’ANGERVILLE

Marie !!!

MOREAU

Docteur, je vous en prie, aidez cette femme, elle a besoin d’être soignée.

Dr D’ANGERVILLE

Oui, bien sûr.

Le médecin va vers la femme et commence à l’emmener.

Par ici, venez avec moi. Mesdames et Messieurs, les divertissements de ce soir doivent malheureusement prendre fin prématurément.

LA FEMME ESCLAVE

Mais je dois parler à M. Moreau.

MOREAU

Je vous rejoindrai sous peu. Allez avec le Docteur pour l’instant.

MME D’ANGERVILLE

Marie, votre robe ! Vraiment !

MARIE regarde sa robe, maintenant tachée de sang, et dans un cri d’horreur elle s’enfuit suivie de sa mère.

Catherine, voulez-vous bien nous aider ?

Mme MOREAU part avec MME D’ANGERVILLE. Les musiciens, danseurs et invités quittent la salle. La soirée est terminée.

CHARTON

J’ai déjà vu cette femme. Elle appartient à Le Jeune.

MOREAU

Oui, en tout cas elle en a l’apparence. Il y a déjà eu des dizaines de plaintes déposées contre lui.

CHARTON


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MOREAU
Fâcheux ? C’est une atrocité !

CHARTON
Cela est certainement regrettable. Nous pouvons seulement espérer qu’aucune réaction excessive...

Il pointe MOREAU d’un doigt accusateur.

CHARTON
... ne viendra provoquer de bien plus graves atrocités. Je crois comprendre, Moreau, que vous pensez que les esclaves devraient avoir le droit de porter leur plainte devant un tribunal.

MOREAU
Oui, ce ne serait que justice.

CHARTON
Et j’imagine que vous proposez également une loi autorisant les esclaves à changer de maître.

MOREAU
Dans certaines circonstances, oui. Vous venez d’en voir un cas d’espèce.

CHARTON
Un noble sentiment. Peut-être devrions-nous demander à tout notre mobilier s’il souhaite changer de maison.

MOREAU
Je parle d’êtres humains.

CHARTON
Et moi, je parle d’esclaves, de propriété, de notre propriété. Je crois que nous avons l’obligation de prendre soin de notre propriété, mais pas de donner des droits à nos tables, à nos chaises, à nos thésières, à notre main-d’œuvre et à nos blanchisseuses.

MOREAU
Cependant vous voyez bien que nous ne les traitons pas correctement. Pourquoi y a-t-il tant de suicides d’esclave ? Pourquoi les mères tuent-elles leurs bébés ?

CHARTON
Je m’accorde avec vous sur le fait que les mauvais traitements sont répréhensibles. Et ils sont par ailleurs très mauvais pour les affaires. Mais si la France commence à donner leurs « droits » aux esclaves, vous savez parfaitement ce qui arrivera ici. Il y a trente mille Français en Haïti, et un demi million d’esclaves. Nous prendrons bien assez soin d’eux, tant qu’ils n’auront pas leurs « droits ».
MOREAU
Tant qu'ils n'auront pas leurs droits, ils ne seront jamais bien traités.

CHARTON
Vous parlez comme un parisien, Moreau. Cela ne fonctionnera pas ici, en Haïti.

MOREAU
Je ne parle pas de liberté ou d'égalité, simplement de droits fondamentaux.

CHARTON
Vous êtes un imbécile, Moreau. En octroyant ces droits aux esclaves, vous leur donnez le courage, vous leur donnez l'espoir et vous perdez la seule chose qui les maintient à leur place : la conscience de notre pouvoir absolu. Retirez cela, et la vie telle que nous la connaissons en Haïti prendra fin. Vous êtes plus qu'un imbécile; vous êtes un traître, Monsieur.

Il sort.
ACTE I
Scène 3

LOUIS
Il n'y a qu'une réponse à lui faire : la révolution !

MOREAU
Oui. C'est la réponse de tout le monde de nos jours.

LOUIS
Vous avez vu cette femme. Il ferme les yeux sur sa torture. Vous avez vu comme il vous a traité. Il vous traîne dans la boue et vous le supportez.

MOREAU
La confrontation n'est pas toujours la solution.

LOUIS
Pour un homme sans honneur, peut-être. Pour un époux adultère. Etre traîné dans la boue est ce qu'il mérite.

MOREAU
Tu as sans doute raison. Mais, je voyais plus loin. J'aimais Haïti et j'aimais ma femme.

LOUIS
Et vous les avez pourtant toutes deux trahies.

MOREAU
Ta mère était tout à fait irrésistible. Nous nous sommes rencontrés à un bal.

LOUIS
Bien entendu. La faute en revient à « la danse ».

MOREAU
Oui, pourquoi pas. Tout le monde dansait en Haïti. Même les esclaves après avoir été battus toute la journée se relevaient le soir pour danser.

LOUIS
Ma mère n'était pas une esclave.

MOREAU
Non, bien sûr. C'était une femme libre. Le soir où j'ai rencontré ta mère ... c'était à un bal pour les hommes français et les femmes de couleur ... je peux encore sentir l'odeur des fleurs sur les femmes ... les musiciens jouaient un Carabinier ...
Au cours de cet échange, les danseurs se sont rassemblés à l'arrière de la scène et apparaissent en ombres chinoises (éclairés à contre jour). La musique commence, la lumière change et nous sommes désormais dans un « bal quarteron » où les hommes blancs dansent avec des femmes de couleur.

La première danse, « Le Carabinier » présente une plus grande influence africaine dans ses mouvements. Elle se caractérise par un jeu de séduction avec le haut du corps et des mouvements d’éventail, tandis que les hommes « passent les femmes en revue ». Cette danse, sur laquelle les lumières se font, ne dure qu'une trentaine de secondes après quoi les couples se retirent sur les côtés de la piste de danse. MOREAU et sa cavalière se trouvent d'un côté de la piste et MINETTE et CHARTON de l'autre ; CHARTON est ivre. Les hommes sont en majorité assis et les femmes, penchées vers eux, agitent leurs éventails, les séduisent.

MOREAU
Je vous remercie. Ce fut un plaisir.

NICOLETTE
Le plaisir était pour moi. On ne vous voit plus beaucoup, Monsieur. Vous nous privez d'une compagnie que nous apprécions énormément.

MOREAU
Mais je ne puis venir ici si je ne suis pas en ville, n'est-ce pas ?

NICOLETTE
Ou peut-être ne le pouvez vous plus maintenant que vous êtes marié. Et j'ai vu votre épouse, c'est une vraie beauté. De Louisiane, on m'a dit. Mais, les coutumes de notre île ne vous manquent-elle pas ...

Elle retire son fichu, une fine écharpe qui couvre son décolleté. Elle taquine MOREAU avec en lui murmurant à l'oreille.

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CHARTON
Mademoiselle, vous êtes aussi séduisante danseuse que chanteuse. Personne ne vous égale sur cette île.

MINETTE
Vous êtes très aimable, Monsieur.

CHARTON

Il rit et passe son bras autour d’elle.

Et si vous me permettez un compliment plus intime.

Il chuchote à son oreille. La musique du « Chica du Bal » commence et chaque femme se place face à son partenaire toujours assis. Elle danse ensuite de manière très séduisante et « attisante », bien que toujours élégante, la première partie du Chica du bal avec des mouvements de hanches et retire le fichu qui couvre son décolleté pour en taquiner son partenaire (cf. La « Gavotte » de Rameau dans « Les Boréades » avec des percussions haïtiennes, dans la partition). La musique change brusquement (cf. Le « Tambourin » de Rameau dans « Le Turc Généreux » avec des percussions haïtiennes dans la partition) tandis que les hommes ne résistent plus et sautent sur leurs pieds pour étreindre leurs partenaires qui jouent à les repousser. Une courte danse comme un jeu du chat et de la souris s’en suit.

MINETTE
Se libérant de lui.

Je rêve de boire quelque chose.

CHARTON
Quelque chose de frais, peut-être. Du champagne pour mon ange.

MINETTE
Oui, ce serait très agréable.

CHARTON va chercher une boisson.

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NICOLETTE détache une fleur de son décolleté.

NICOLETTE
Un petit souvenir, Monsieur, des belles fleurs originaires de cette île, qui n’attendent que d’être cueillies.

Elle épingle la fleur sur le manteau de MOREAU tandis que CHARTON tend un verre à MINETTE.

CHARTON
Vous ai-je dit que lorsque je suis à Paris, je ferme les yeux et vous vois danser et que lorsque je suis en Haïti, parcourant mes champs à cheval, je vous entends chanter?

MINETTE
Et lorsque vous m’entendez et me voyez face à vous ? Que se passe-t-il alors, Monsieur ?

CHARTON
Ah, alors, Mademoiselle, je suis aux portes du Paradis, et je ne souhaite qu’entendre mon ange chanter pour moi.

MINETTE
Si je vous voyais au Paradis, je chanterais, Monsieur. Mais ce n’est ni le moment, ni l’endroit.

CHARTON

CHARTON tire MINETTE à lui ; NICOLETTE sent la fleur qu’elle a épinglée sur MOREAU et murmure, séduisante.

MINETTE
Je vous en prie ! Arrêtez cela!

Elle gifle CHARTON. Il l’attrape par l’épaule et déchire sa robe. MOREAU vient à son secours.

CHARTON
Le petit oiseau chanteur a les plumes hérissées. Le vilain ange a déchiré sa petite aile.
MOREAU

Laissez-la, CHARTON.

CHARTON, qui se débat et sort un couteau.

Qu'est-ce qu'il vous prend ?

MOREAU le désarme.

CHARTON

Ce qu'il me prend ? Vous voulez dire, ce qu'il lui prend ?

MOREAU

Allez-vous bien, Mademoiselle ?

Il aide MINETTE à se lever ; elle boîte un peu ; elle examine sa hanche et la déchirure à l'épaule de sa robe.

MINETTE

Il me semble, oui.

D'ANGERVILLE

CHARTON ! C'en est trop.

MOREAU

(au Docteur)

Je vais escorter la jeune femme chez elle.

CHARTON

(prenant conscience de son geste, mais toujours ivre)


Il baise sa main et se retire.

MOREAU

(à MINETTE)

Souhaitez-vous partir ?

MINETTE

Oui, s'il vous plaît.
ACTE I
Scène 4

Les lumières changent tandis que la scène se fond dans la rue extérieure à la Salle de Spectacle. MINETTE et MOREAU quittent le théâtre et descendent la rue. Il la soutient, le bras autour de sa taille ; le bras de MINETTE est passé autour de son épaule.

MINETTE
Merci, Monsieur MOREAU.

MOREAU
Vous savez donc qui je suis ?

MINETTE
Bien sûr. Tout le monde sait qui vous êtes.

MOREAU
Je pourrais dire la même chose de vous, Mademoiselle. Sur ce, où allons-nous ? Où habitez-vous ?

MINETTE
Pas bien loin. Dans le quartier noir libre, vers les faubourgs de la ville. Par là. M'accompagnerez-vous sur tout le trajet.

MOREAU
Bien sûr, Mademoiselle, si vous le permettez.

MINETTE
Je vous le permets, Monsieur, mais ma hanche peut-être pas.

MOREAU
Vous fait-elle beaucoup souffrir ?

MINETTE
Seulement lorsque je marche.

MOREAU
Alors, vous ne devez pas marcher.

Il la soulève pour la porter dans ses bras. Elle rit.

MINETTE
Oh, Monsieur Moreau, vous êtes si galant ! Me porterez-vous jusque chez moi ?

MOREAU
Ce sera un honneur, Mademoiselle.

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MINETTE
Êtes-vous si fort ? Suis-je si légère ?

MOREAU
Légère comme un ange.

MINETTE
Je crois avoir assez entendu parler d'ange pour ce soir, Monsieur.

MOREAU
Une plume, alors. Légère comme une plume.

MINETTE
Peu original, mais très galant.

MOREAU
Légère comme une plume d'oiseau de paradis.

MINETTE
Tirée d'où, Monsieur ? Pas de la queue, j’espère.

Elle rit, et il rit avec elle. Il marche maintenant, la portant dans ses bras. Mais MINETTE n’est pas si menue, et MOREAU commence déjà à respirer difficilement...

MINETTE
Vous êtes magnifique, mon champion, merveilleux.

MOREAU
Est-ce encore très éloigné ?

MINETTE
Non point. Trois cents pieds … ou peut-être cinq cents. Certainement pas plus d'une demi lieue.

MOREAU
Une demi lieue !

MINETTE
Pas plus.

MOREAU
Vous savez, j'ai bien peur de ne pas être aussi fort que je devrais l'être.

MINETTE
Et peut-être ne suis-je pas aussi légère qu'une plume devrait l'être. Souhaitez-vous vous reposez une minute ?

MOREAU
Je crois que oui, si vous le permettez.
MINETTE
Alors posez-moi très doucement, je vous prie. Je pense tenir debout.
ACTE I
Scène 5

MOREAU pose MINETTE avec douceur. Elle est debout et il s'effondre, s'assied et respire très difficilement. Ils se regardent et rient. De loin, on entend le son d'une chanson populaire créole du 18ème siècle: « Lisette quitté la plaine » sur l'air de « Que ne suis-je la fougère » de Pergolès (cf. la partition).

MINETTE
Les esclaves chantent. Ils viennent vers nous. Ils vont danser le Calenda. Ma mère me l'a appris quand j'étais enfant.

Le premier couplet est chanté à distance tandis que les esclaves approchent. Les esclaves chantent et dansent le second couplet en imitant le style français pour s'en moquer. Pendant le troisième couplet le style de la musique et de la danse devient moitié français et moitié africain. Et le quatrième couplet se transforme en Calenda haïtien (2 min).
ESCLAVES
(Le premier couplet peut être chanté en français, le second en créole)

I
Lisette quitté la plaine,
mon perdi bonheur à moué;
Gié à moin semblé fontaine,
Dipi mon pas miré toué.
La jour quand mon coupé canne.
Mon songé z'amour à moué;
La nuit quans mon dans cabane,
Dans dromi mon quimbé toué.

II
Si to allé à la ville,
Ta trouvé geine Candio,
Qui gagné pour tromper fille,
Bouche doux passé sirop.
To va cré yon bin sincère,
Pendant quior yo coquin tro ;
C'est serpant qui contrefaire
Ciré Rat, pour tromper yo.

III
Depi mon perdi Lisette,
Mon pas souchié Calinda.
Mon quitté Bram-bram sonnette.
Mon pas batte Bamboula.
Quand mon contré laut' négresse,
Mon pas gagné gié pour li ;
Mon pas souchié travail piéce :
Tout qui chose a moin mouri.

MINETTE danse légèrement sur
place sur le rythme de la musique.
Les musiciens, percussion et violon,
entrent avec les danseurs, ils
chantent, jouent et dansent sans voir
MINETTE et MOREAU. La chanson
et la danse s'achèvent et les
musiciens et danseurs commencent
une autre danse.

MOREAU
Que font-ils ?

MINETTE
Oh, ils vont danser le Chica ! Avez-vous déjà assisté à un Chica ?

MOREAU
Ne dansions-nous pas le Chica au bal ?

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MINETTE
C'était le Chica des hommes blancs. Ceci est le vrai Chica. Vous allez voir !

Un danseur s'approche de MINETTE, prend sa main, l'invite à danser et elle danse avec lui.

Le Chica est un jeu de poursuite et de capture, MOREAU la décrit ainsi : « Un garçon s'approche d'elle [...] et la provoque à la lutte la plus séduisante [...] Il serait impossible de peindre le Chica avec son véritable caractère, et je me bornerai à dire que l'impression qu'il cause est si puissante que l'Africain ou le Créol, de n'importe quelle nuance, qui le verrait danser sans émotion passerait pour avoir perdu jusqu'aux dernières étincelles de la sensibilité ».

Après quinze secondes de danse avec l'homme noir, MINETTE s'approche de MOREAU.

MINETTE
Voudriez-vous danser avec moi, Monsieur?

MOREAU
Vous semblez guérie !

MINETTE
Le Chica guérit toujours une hanche douloureuse, Monsieur, ou un étalon fatigué. Venez, laissez-moi vous montrer.

Elle danse la partie féminine et lui l'observe surtout, mais progressivement agit le charme hypnotique de la danse et il se retrouve en train de bouger en réponse pour devenir le poursuivant. Les autres danseurs les remarquent et ils s'écartent devant le nouveau couple. Lorsque la danse s'achève, MOREAU embrasse MINETTE passionnément. Les danseurs rient, applaudissent et s'éloignent dans la nuit.
MOREAU
C'était merveilleux ! Je suis impressionné que vous ayez pu danser si bien.

MINETTE
Puis-je vous dire un secret ? Ma hanche ne m'a jamais vraiment fait souffrir.

MOREAU
Vous voulez dire que vous auriez pu marcher jusque chez vous ?

MINETTE
Oh très facilement, j'aurai pu voler. Cependant, j'avais dans l'idée que j'aimerais être portée chez moi par le prochain Administrateur d'Haiti.

MOREAU
Vous êtes fort malicieuse, jeune personne.

MINETTE

MOREAU
Je viendrai.

MINETTE
Bonne nuit, mon étalon.

MOREAU
Bonne nuit, ma précieuse plume de queue d'oiseau de paradis.

Elle s'éloigne dans la nuit avec les autres musiciens et danseurs.
LOUIS a assisté à la scène.
ACTE I
Scène 6

LOUIS
Donc, c'est ainsi que vous vous êtes rencontrés.

MOREAU
C'est ce dont je me souviens, oui.

LOUIS
Vous l'avez sauvée d'une brute, portée dans vos bras. Elle et vous avez dansé le Chica et vous êtes embrassés au clair de lune.

MOREAU
Ta mère était irrésistible.

LOUIS
Avait-elle un singe qu'elle gardait dans une cage dorée ? Son lit était-il couvert de chintz et de bijoux ? Se frottait-elle les dents avec des racines pour sourire comme une prêtresse d'Aphrodite ?

MOREAU
J'ai rencontré ta mère un peu après le début de sa carrière. Mais à ses débuts, certaines femmes et certains hommes refusaient d'aller au théâtre quand les journaux annonçaient que ta mère y chantait. Elle était très jeune, mais nullement découragée. D'ailleurs, il est exagéré de dire que les journaux l'annonçaient. En fait, ils la présentaient comme « une jeune personne » dans le rôle de Zémire...

Intolérable !

MOREAU
Donc, je me suis présenté au bureau du directeur du journal et j'ai revendiqué ainsi : « La politique doit s'incliner devant l'art! ». Et c'est ce qu'elle a fait... et c'est ce que j'ai fait...
ACTE I
Scène 7

La scène est devenue la Salle de Spectacle du Cap 1781, avec un groupe de spectateurs installé d'un côté de la scène assistant à un opéra : MOREAU rejoint son épouse et le Dr et Mme D’ANGERVILLE dans une loge à proximité. Charton est assis dans une loge à proximité.

Dr D’ANGERVILLE

Ce soir nous assistons à …

MME D’ANGERVILLE

(lisant le programme)

La Belle et la Bête, avec M.Durand et … Minette.

MME MOREAU

Oh, n'est-ce pas la diva de couleur ?

MME D’ANGERVILLE

Si, sa mère était une esclave. Et savez-vous qui était son père ?

(Elle chuchote à l'oreille de Mme MOREAU)

MME MOREAU

Cela ne m'étonne pas ! Mais depuis quand les femmes de couleur sont-elles autorisées sur scène ?

Dr d’ANGERVILLE

Mesdames, je vous en prie, chut !

Acte III condensé : scène 4 du Zemire et Azor de Grétry. MINETTE aguiche MOREAU de la scène; il se retient de sourire. MME MOREAU remarque ce qui se passe entre son époux et MINETTE. CHARTON le remarque aussi et lance un regard à MME MOREAU pour lui faire comprendre qu'il l'a remarqué aussi. La scène d'opéra est suivie d'applaudissements.
ZEMIRE ET AZOR
Opéra comique d’André Modeste Grétry
Acte III, Scènes 4,5
ZEMIRE entre avec deux domestiques farceuses.

ZEMIRE
Mais quelle Cour brillante autour de moi s’empresse ?
Est-ce à moi que cela s’adresse ?
Sur ce trône de fleurs voudrait-on m’éléver ?
En vérité, je crois rêver.

Danse des domestiques impertinentes, sensuelles, pleines d’esprit et d’humour.

AZOR ENTRE.
ZEMIRE, tombant évanouie dans les bras des domestiques. O ciel !

AZOR.
De ma laideur, effet inévitable !
Zemire ! ah ! Revenez de ce mortel effroi.
Je parois à vos yeux un monstre épouvantable :
D’un pouvoir ennemi telle est l’injuste loi ;
Mais hélas ! Sous ces traits, s’il vous était possible
De lire dans mon cœur ! Il est tendre & sensible.
Ne me regardez pas, Zemire ; écoutez-moi

AZOR.
AIR (optionnel)
Du moment qu’on aime,
L’on devient si doux !
Et je suis moi-même
Plus tremblant que vous.
Hé quoi ! Vous craignez
L’esclave timide
Sur qui vous régniez !
N’ayez plus de peur :
La haine homicide
Est loin de mon cœur
Du moment etc.

ZEMIRE.
Mais ... vous m’attendrissez on ne peut davantage.

AZOR.
Ah Zemire !

ZEMIRE.
A vous voir j’accoutume mes yeux.
AZOR.
Hé bien, commencez donc à vous plaire en ces lieux.
Vous chantez, je le sais, vous chantez à merveille,
En parlant votre voix touche, émeut tous mes sens ;
Ah ! quel charme pour mon oreille
D’entendre éclater vos accents !

ZEMIRE.
Si vous désirez que je chante,
Je chanterai.

AZOR.
Quelle bonté touchante !

ZEMIRE.
AIR
La fauvette avec ses petits,
Se croit la Reine du bocage :
De leur réveil par son ramage,
Tous les échos sont avertis.
Sa naissante famille
Autour d’elle sautille,
Voltige & prend l’essor ;
Rassemblés sous son aile,
De leur amour pour elle
Elle jouit encor.
Mais par malheur
Vient l’Oiseleur,
Qui lui ravit son espérance :
La pauvre mère ! elle ne pense
Qu’à son malheur.
Tout retentit de sa douleur.

(Applaudissements)

MOREAU
Je vous en prie, partez devant. Je vous rejoins dehors. Je dois dire
un mot au directeur du théâtre.

MME D’ANGERVILLE
Certes.

(à son époux)
Cette bête haletante m’a donné soif. Si nous prenions quelque chose à
boire sur le chemin. Qu’en dites-vous Catherine ?

MME MOREAU
Je vois là-bas quelqu’un avec qui je dois m’entretenir. Je vous
rattraperai.

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Les ANGERVILLE quittent la loge.
CHARTON entre après leur sortie.
ACTE I
Scène 8

CHARTON
(Avec une feinte sincérité)
Bonsoir Madame Moreau, vous êtes tout à fait charmante ce soir.
Avez-vous apprécié l'opéra ?

MME MOREAU
Ce n'est pas l'un de mes favoris, Monsieur Charton, j'ai de loin préféré
celui de la semaine dernière.

CHARTON
(devenant plus audacieux, prenant avantage de sa vulnérabilité)
J'ai trouvé les prestations des chanteurs fascinantes, tout
particulièrement celle de Minette, qui avait un certain je ne sais quoi.

MME MOREAU
Vraiment, Monsieur Charton, vous le pensez ?

CHARTON
Je le pense. Elle était réellement envoûtante ce soir. Et votre époux
est grand amateur d'opéra, n'est-ce pas ?

MME MOREAU
Oui, apparemment. On découvre tous les jours quelque chose de
nouveau chez son mari.

CHARTON
(Le coup de grâce)
Votre mari est un homme complexe, cela est vrai. Aimé de tous, et
solicite de toute part.

MME MOREAU
(se levant pour partir)
Oui, je le sais. Je vous prie de m'excuser, Monsieur Charton,
j'aimerais beaucoup discuter avec vous, cependant je dois rejoindre
mes amis, si cela ne vous dérange pas.

CHARTON
Bien sûr que non. Ce fut un plaisir de vous voir. J'espère que nous
aurons bientôt l'occasion de nous rencontrer à nouveau.

MME MOREAU

Ils sortent séparément, et Mme
MOREAU se retire alors que
MOREAU entre avec MINETTE.
ACTE I
Scène 9

MOREAU
Vous êtes réellement un oiseau de paradis, et vous avez volé droit sur
mon âme.

MINETTE
Sur les ailes d’une chanson ?

MOREAU
Je suis un piètre poète, n’est-ce pas ?

MINETTE
Oui. Mais vous n’en êtes pas moins un homme. J’ai rêvé de vous, mon
champion. Vous êtes toujours mon champion ?

MOREAU
Votre fidèle étalon, toujours.

MINETTE
Et jusqu’où me porterez-vous, mon étalon ?

MOREAU
Pas bien loin, Belle. Fermez vos yeux et donnez-moi votre main.

MINETTE
Qu’est-ce que c’est, la Bête, qu’est-ce que c’est ?

Tenez.

MOREAU

MINETTE
Une clef ?

MOREAU
Votre propre maison.

Elle est stupéfaite.

MINETTE
Notre maison.

MOREAU
Vous savez que je ne peux vous porter jusque chez vous. Alors j’ai
trouvé une maison proche du théâtre. A l’angle de la rue Royale et de
la rue Notre-Dame. Avec un petit jardin. Les oiseleurs y sont interdits.

MINETTE
Quelle Bête prompte et habile vous faites! M’aimez-vous ?

MOREAU
Vous m’avez ensorcelé.

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MINETTE
(Chantant)
Si vous voulez que je chante, je chanterai.

MOREAU
Je veux que vous chantiez, mais je dois partir maintenant.

MINETTE
Quand pouvons-nous nous voir ?

MOREAU
Demain, à midi. Au revoir, ma beauté.

MINETTE
A bientôt, ma chère et belle Bête.

MINETTE se retire ; MME MOREAU qui a observé la scène, se retire également. LOUIS y assisté depuis la loge. Il s’avance.
ACTE I
Scène 10

LOUIS
Donc vous aimiez votre épouse. Je suppose que vous aimiez ma mère également.

MOREAU
Pensez-vous que votre mère m'aimait?

LOUIS
Je vous ai demandé si vous aimiez ma mère !

MOREAU
J'étais captivé par ta mère ... comme tous les hommes d'Haïti. Tous les soirs sa loge était remplie de fleurs, elle pouvait à peine y changer de costume. Quand elle marchait sur le boulevard du Cap, si elle entrait dans une boutique, les femmes, même blanches, la suivaient pour voir ce qu'elle achetait afin de l'imiter.

LOUIS
J'en conclus que vous n'aimiez pas ma mère.

MOREAU
J'ai fait une erreur Louis, et j'en ai souffert les conséquences.

De quoi parlez-vous ?

LOUIS
J'ai perdu mon épouse.

MOREAU
Vous êtes pourtant toujours marié ?

LOUIS
Elle ne m'a pas quitté à cause des enfants. Mais elle ... n'est plus la même depuis.

MOREAU
Etes-vous sûr qu'elle a su ?

OH oui ... même si elle n'a jamais cherché la confrontation ... Louis, le père de ma femme était un héros pour les Français de la Nouvelle-Orléans. Il a été jeté en prison par les Espagnols et y est mort. Elle a fui en Haïti. Elle comptait sur moi pour être son havre de paix. Je comptais sur moi-même pour être son protecteur.

LOUIS
Et bien, imaginez ce qu'il en a été pour ma mère toutes ces années.
MOREAU
Imaginer? Vois-tu tous ces livres? Quel genre d'homme écrirait tous ces volumes?

LOUIS
Je ne vous suis pas...

MOREAU
Un homme qui ne dort pas! «Imaginer»? Quel choix ta mère avait-elle? Et, oui, ta mère a également perdu celui qu'elle aimait.

LOUIS
Vous parlez de vous-même?

MOREAU
Oh, non, pas de moi!

LOUIS
Et bien, de qui dans ce cas?

MOREAU
De toi, bien sûr. Tu as été l'unique amour de sa vie.

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ACTE I
Scène 11

Dans l'ombre, un bébé pleure. Les lumières montent sur la résidence de MINETTE et EUGENIE (sa mère) Le Cap, Haïti, 1781. MINETTE est au lit. EUGENIE lui apporte le bébé.

MINETTE
Merci, maman !

On frappe à la porte. EUGENIE fait entrer MOREAU.

Oh mon fils. Qu'allons nous devenir, mon petit ?

MOREAU
Bonjour Eugénie. Comment se portent-ils ?

EUGENIE
Bonjour Monsieur.

Elle secoue la tête et sort.

MINETTE
Merci maman.

MOREAU
Il a déjà une sacrée voix.

MINETTE
Je crois qu'il est baryton, comme son père.

MOREAU
Lui avez-vous choisi un nom ?

MINETTE
Pourquoi pas Louis, votre deuxième prénom ?

MOREAU
Soit.

MINETTE
Tenez Moreau, prenez votre fils. 

Elle tend l'enfant à Moreau.

Il sera aussi grand comme son père. Regardez comme il l'est déjà ! Je lui apprendrai à lire et à écrire à la maison. Ainsi lorsqu'il entrera à l'école, il sera déjà en avance sur les autres.

MOREAU
Minette, nous en avons déjà parlé. Je suis venu prendre l'enfant.
MINETTE
Il n'est pas « l'enfant », il est notre fils !

MOREAU
Minette, nous en avons parlé et re parlé. Quel genre de vie aurait-il ici ? À traîner dans les coulisses de l'opéra.

MINETTE
Ma mère m'aiderait.

MOREAU
Ta mère était une esclave, tu n'es pas allée à l'école. Il aura tous les avantages et la meilleure éducation à Paris.

MINETTE
Tous les avantages sauf sa famille!

MOREAU
Le Chevalier de St Georges a offert de l'élever comme son propre fils. Et le Chevalier est mulâtre, il comprend sa situation.

MINETTE
Cela m'est égal ! Un enfant a besoin de l'amour d'une mère !

MOREAU
La plupart des petits français envieraient l'éducation qui sera donnée à cet enfant.

MINETTE
Son nom est Louis ! Il est votre fils, Louis !

MOREAU
Nous devons agir dans le meilleur intérêt de notre fils, de Louis ! Tu dois accepter cela ! Tu pourras rendre visite à l'enfant... à Louis, à Paris.

MINETTE
Vous arrangerez cela, n'est-ce pas ?

MOREAU
J'essaierai. Pour l'instant je dois employer toutes mes ressources pour l'éducation de Louis.

MINETTE
Il fut une époque où vous mettiez toutes vos ressources à ma disposition.

MOREAU
Les circonstances ont changé, comme tu le sais.

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MINETTE
Oui, notre Chica a pris fin. Et mon champion n'est plus. Vous ne pouvez vous permettre de m'envoyer à Paris ? Vous, l'homme qu'on appelle « Le Prince de Haïti » ?

MOREAU
Je ne suis pas un aristocrate, Minette.

Pas même un gentilhomme.

MINETTE
Il est vrai que je dois travailler pour vivre. Mais n'ai-je pas fait ce qu'il y a de plus honorable pour cet enfant ?

MOREAU
De l'honneur de blanc pour un enfant de couleur.

Beaucoup d'enfants blancs n'en ont pas autant.

MINETTE
Arracheriez-vous votre propre fils des bras de votre femme pour ne jamais plus lui permettre de le voir.

MOREAU
Je ne t'empêche pas de voir ton fils. Et d'ailleurs, je ne le verrai pas moi-même.

MINETTE
Il ne connaîtra donc jamais son père ni sa mère.

MOREAU
Tu es la bienvenue chez le Chevalier de St Georges quand tu le souhaites. Mais en ces temps, il est mieux pour lui que je ne le voie, ni ne le reconnaisse. Plus tard, peut-être.

MINETTE
Plus tard sera trop tard, Moreau.

MOREAU
Dans la situation actuelle ...

MINETTE
Qu'en est-il de « la liberté » et de « l'égalité » Moreau ? Je croyais que vous défendiez les mêmes idées que Jefferson et Lafayette ? À moins que vous ne les défendiez qu'un jour sur deux?

MOREAU
Minette, tu perds ton sang-froid...laisse-moi prendre l'enfant maintenant.
MINETTE
Non, je ne vous laisserai pas. Je ne peux pas (Elle s'effondre en pleurs). Je vous en supplie, Moreau, ne faites pas cela.

MOREAU
Tu lui rendras bientôt visite.

MINETTE
Non !

MOREAU
Minette, il n'est plus temps d'en débattre (Il prend le bébé).

Les lumières se fondent en deux taches de part et d'autre de la scène. MINETTE dans l'une, LOUIS dans l'autre. MINETTE chante le dernier couplet de l'aria de Zemire et Azore a capella. LOUIS en récite les paroles en alternance avec elle.

MINETTE
Mais par malheur
Vient l'oiseleur,
Qui lui ravit son espérance
La pauvre mère ! Elle ne pense
Qu'à son malheur
Tout retentit de sa douleur.

MINETTE
Tu regretteras ce jour, Moreau !

MOREAU
Tu as tort! Ce garçon nous remerciera un jour des opportunités que nous lui avons offertes ! J'aurais aimé en avoir autant ! (Il se retourne pour partir avec le bébé et appelle Eugénie) Eugénie? (Elle apparaît dans l'embrasure de la porte). Je t'en prie, prends soin de Minette (Il met de l'argent dans sa main).

MOREAU sort et rejoint LOUIS.
ACTE I
Scène 12

LOUIS
Alors, je devrais vous être reconnaissant, c'est cela?

MOREAU
Peux-tu honnêtement me dire que le Chevalier ne t'a pas aimé comme un fils ?

LOUIS
Je ne suis pas le fils du Chevalier. Je suis votre fils.

MOREAU
Très bien, dans ce cas, je me suis trompé. Tu ne m'es pas reconnaissant de la vie que je t'ai offerte.

LOUIS
Je n'ai pas dit cela.

MOREAU
Aurais-tu préféré grandir auprès de ta mère en Haïti ? Sans éducation. Et comment penses-tu que tu aurais été traité par les hommes de sa vie.

LOUIS
Cela aurait du être le choix de ma mère.

MOREAU
Ou aurais-tu préféré avoir un des meilleurs hommes de notre époque comme gardien. Grandir sous le toit du Ministre des Finances de la France, le père du Chevalier ... avec toutes les opportunités. Et je sais que le Chevalier t'a aimé.

LOUIS
(Un silence puis ...)
Ma mère vous a-t-elle dit que je veux aller en Haïti avec le Chevalier ? Il y est envoyé par la République pour rencontrer Toussaint-Louverture.

MOREAU
Non, elle ne me l'a pas dit.

LOUIS
Le Chevalier a dit que si je recevais votre accord, je pourrais m'y rendre avec lui.

MOREAU
Cela est très sage de la part du Chevalier. La situation y est extrêmement dangereuse.

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LOUIS
Comment pourriez-vous vous y opposer, vous, un meneur de la Révolution ?

MOREAU
Ta mère approuvait-elle ?

LOUIS
N'avez-vous pas eu une dispute à ce sujet le jour de sa mort ?

MOREAU
Je t'ai dit que je n'étais même pas au courant.

LOUIS
Vous l'étiez ! Elle était venue vous voir à Philadelphie, ce jour-là. Vous êtes la dernière personne à l'avoir vu !

MOREAU
Je ne lui ai pas parlé ! Je l'ai seulement aperçue dans la rue. Elle a trébuché... un attelage arrivait vite ... elle a glissé sous les chevaux... j'ai couru vers elle... il était trop tard.

LOUIS
Vous mentez !

MOREAU
C'est exactement ce qui s'est passé.

LOUIS
Elle est venue pour vous voir. Vous vous êtes battus. Elle est morte devant votre librairie. Vous avez été la dernière personne à la voir ! Vous vous êtes débarrassé d'elle, comme vous vous êtes débarrassé de moi !

MOREAU
C'est absurde. Il s'agit d'un accident !

LOUIS
Elle a été assassinée et vous le savez. La police a trouvé des traces de poison.

MOREAU
Qui t'a dit cela ?

LOUIS
Ma grand-mère.

MOREAU
Ce n'est que pure spéculation. Le rapport de police est sous scellé.

LOUIS
Alors pourquoi est-il protégé s'il n'y a rien à cacher ? Et qui aurait convaincu la police de sceller le rapport, si ce n'est vous ?

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Je n'ai rien fait.

Qui alors ? Était-ce votre ami Talleyrand ? Elle dînait avec lui avant de vous voir le jour de sa mort.

Talleyrand était son amant, il n'est pas son meurtrier. Tu ne le connais pas.

Aimait-elle Talleyrand ?

Je ne pense pas.

Alors pourquoi ?

Parce qu'il est aristocrate, puissant, célibataire ... elle espérait qu'il crée un foyer pour elle et pour toi, pour te récupérer.

Qu'est-il arrivé ?

Robespierre est arrivé. Nous avons tous dû fuir la France, et Talleyrand a emmené ta mère avec lui à Philadelphie. Mais il n'est pas du genre qui se laisse épouser.

Il n'a pas l'air d'un homme honorable...

Ta grand-mère t'a-t-elle dit si ta mère devait voir qui que ce soit d'autre le jour de sa mort ?

Et bien, oui, grand-mère m'a dit que ma mère lui avait donné une lettre à remettre à un homme ... et que celui-ci avait répondu qu'il attendait sa visite.

Quel était son nom ? Vous souvenez-vous ?

Oui, c'était votre Concitoyen colons : Charton... Philippe Charton...

Charton ! Bien sûr.
LOUIS

Que voulez-vous dire ?

MOREAU

Il a été son amant également. Avant Talleyrand.

LOUIS

Charton ? Cette brute? Ma mère n’aurait jamais voulu !

MOREAU

Ta mère n’avait que des revenus de chanteuse. Elle pouvait à peine subvenir à ses besoins et à ceux de sa mère. En outre elle voulait de l’argent pour venir te voir à Paris aussi souvent que possible.

LOUIS

Charton était un monstre !

MOREAU

Peut-être, mais c’était un homme avec une rente de cent mille livres.

LOUIS

Un monstre.

MOREAU

Rien qu’un oiseleur patient et habile.
ACTE I
Scène 13

Les lumières changent, baissant sur MOREAU et LOUIS et montant sur MINETTE, à nouveau dans son costume de Belle et chantant le dernier couplet de son aria à CHARTON assis devant elle.

MINETTE (chantant)
Mais par malheur
Vient l’Oiseleur,
Qui lui ravit son espérance :
La pauvre mère ! Elle ne pense
Qu’à son malheur.
Tout retentit de sa douleur.

À l’approche de la fin de l’aria,
CHARTON se lève, vient derrière elle et place un collier de pierres précieuses autour de son cou.
Tandis que MINETTE chante sa dernière note, il se penche et embrasse passionnément son cou.
Bref arrêt sur ce tableau.

Noir.

FIN DU PREMIER ACTE
Ouverture de L'Amant Anonyme du Chevalier de St GEORGES.

ACTE II
Scène 1

Installation : Les lumières montent sur un ensemble de musiciens conduit par le CHEVALIER DE ST GEORGES, à sa résidence parisienne, 1789. Les spectateurs sont MINETTE, quelques parisiens et quelques personnes de couleur libres. MOREAU et LOUIS sont sur le côté, ils observent. Une fois la musique installée, la conversation commence.

MOREAU (à LOUIS)
Le Chevalier de St Georges, Directeur du Théâtre du Palais Royal, Chef d'orchestre des Concerts Spirituels, compositeur célèbre, violoniste virtuose et champion d'escrime...

CHARTON (à MINETTE)
On dit qu'il a traversé la Seine en nageant d'un seul bras.

MINETTE
J'apprécie également sa façon de se déplacer sur terre.

LOUIS
Il n'est rien qu'il ne puisse faire mieux que quiconque.

MOREAU
Un être improbable.

LOUIS
Et mon parrain.

MOREAU
Oui.

LOUIS
De cela, au moins, je vous remercie.

ST GEORGES
Enchanté, Madame.
MINETTE
Tout l'honneur est pour moi, Monsieur.

ST GEORGES
Bienvenue à Paris. J'espère que vous apprécierez votre séjour. Il y a de très belles choses à voir, bien que, malheureusement, nous traversions une période agitée.

MINETTE
Je vous remercie. Mais vous savez que je ne suis pas ici pour visiter Paris ; je suis venue voir mon fils. Je ne pourrais jamais assez vous remercier de vous occuper de lui.

ST GEORGES
C'est un bon jeune homme.

MINETTE
Oui, grâce à vous.

ST GEORGES
Louis et moi sommes tous deux chanceux; nous avons tous deux eu de ravissantes mères.

MINETTE
Et Louis a le plus accompli des pères.

ST GEORGES
Moreau est un homme remarquable.

MINETTE
Non, vous êtes un homme remarquable Monsieur, et vous êtes le vrai père de Louis.

ST GEORGES
Il est vrai que je le considère comme mon fils. Moreau a eu tant à faire en Haïti comme en France.

MINETTE
Et si peu avec son fils.

ST GEORGES
Il est dans une situation délicate, comme vous le savez peut-être. Cependant, je suis heureux qu'il ait arrangé cette visite à votre fils.

MINETTE
Je crains que vous ne vous méprenez, Chevalier. Voici le gentilhomme qui a permis mon voyage.

Elle présente CHARTON.

CHARTON
Philippe Charton.
ST GEORGES
Jaugeant Charton et le considérant indigne de Minette et un sectaire à prendre à coups de pieds
Enchanté, Monsieur. Ce fut très aimable à vous.

CHARTON
Avec un air de supériorité
Notre famille fabrique des textiles à Paris et nos plantations de coton sont en Haïti ; je passe donc beaucoup trop de mon temps sur les bateaux. J'ai été très soulagé d'avoir cette compagnie.

ST GEORGES
Avec juste une nuance de sarcasme apparente
Oui, je l'imagine facilement.

CHARTON
Eloge feinte
Je vous félicitez de votre composition, Chevalier, très aboutie.

ST GEORGES
Reconnaissant l'habilité de la remarque
Mais pas à la hauteur de Mozart, pourriez-vous dire.

CHARTON
Avec insistance
« Le Mozart noir », c'est ainsi qu'on vous surnomme, je crois.

ST GEORGES
S'élevant au-dessus de Charton avec une grâce d'aristocrate
C'est un titre que je n'ai jamais revendiqué. Mozart est unique.

MAITRE DE CÉRÉMONIE
La course de montgolfières est sur le point de débuter. Je vous en prie, rejoignez le balcon si vous souhaitez assister au décollage des ballons.

CHARTON
St Georges, puis-je laisser MINETTE sous votre responsabilité quelques minutes ?

ST GEORGES
Je vous en prie.

CHARTON s'écarte vers le côté de la scène avec les autres invités. Le comportement de MINETTE devient moins charmant, bien plus sérieux avec St GEORGES.

Quelle est la situation à Haïti, Minette ?

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MINETTE
De plus en plus dangereuse, Monsieur. Vincent Ogé a fait la traversée sur le même bateau que nous.

ST GEORGES
Oui, je me suis entretenu avec lui ce matin. Il doit rencontrer un groupe de propriétaires de plantation la semaine prochaine, ici à Paris, pour essayer d'obtenir le droit de vote pour les mulâtres.

MINETTE
Quelles chances pensez-vous qu'il ait ?

ST GEORGES
Bien peu, Ma Chère. Ce qui signifie qu'il se présentera ensuite à la Société des Amis des Noirs.

MINETTE
Le groupe de Lafayette ?

ST GEORGES
Oui, il y a parmi eux des membres très influents, mais les planteurs n'apprécieront pas qu'Ogé les rencontre.

MINETTE
Avez-vous vu Moreau ? Nous aidera-t-il ?

ST GEORGES
J'espère le croiser à la Loge Maçonnique. Il est dans une situation très précaire. Comme nous tous, n'est-ce pas ?

MINETTE
Si nous nous allions aux blancs et que survient une révolte des esclaves, ce qui se produira certainement un jour, ils nous assassineront comme si nous étions blancs. Je crains pour ma vie.

ST GEORGES
Pensez-vous à quitter Haïti ?

MINETTE
Dans quel autre pays serais-je autorisée à monter sur scène ? Comment survivrais-je ?

ST GEORGES
C'est pourquoi il vous faut un protecteur.

MINETTE
Malheureusement oui. Mais, parlez- moi de mon fils, Monsieur.

ST GEORGES
Il a votre courage, Madame, et il fait des bonds de grenouille tant il est excité de voir sa maman.
CHARTON
Rejoignant MINETTE et ST GEORGES. MINETTE redevient séductrice.
Charton incapable de contenir sa condescendance

Quel spectacle ! St Georges, je souhaitais vous dire à quel point j'ai été peiné que vous n'ayez pas été nommé à la direction de l'Opéra. Pour moi vous étiez le plus compétent.

ST GEORGES
Tout le monde n'en pensait pas autant.

CHARTON
Oui, nos célèbres chanteuses, Sophie Arnould et Rosalie Levasseur.

ST GEORGES
Elles n'auraient jamais accepté ma direction.

CHARTON
Cela aurait été incommode pour elles. Mais Minette, je l'espère, n'aura pas cette difficulté.

MINETTE
Dégoûté de Charton et avec un ton d'irrespect
Bien au contraire. Être sous la direction du plus brillant compositeur et chef d'orchestre de Paris n'aura rien d'« incommode » pour moi.

ST GEORGES
Dès lors rien ne s'y oppose, si ce n'est qu'il ne se présentera aucune opportunité pour Minette en ce moment à Paris.

CHARTON
Ce que perd la ville sera mon profit: notre famille organiserà un concert privé pour vous deux avant notre retour.

MINETTE
Encore plus irrespectueuse et coquine, frappant l'oreille de Chartron avec son éventail un peu trop fort
Philippe vous êtes un autre homme quand vous êtes en France. Ce doit être vos oreilles d'aristocrate.

CHARTON
Il est vrai, nous pouvons être plus civilisés ici, et les règles du jeu sont différentes.

ST GEORGES
Vous me faîte une offre très généreuse, Monsieur, et pour cette occasion j'écrirais quelque chose spécialement pour vous, Madame. Mais, il me semble que le dîner est servi. (A Chartron avec un gracieux mépris) Je pense que vous trouverez nos huîtres à la hauteur de Mozart. Par ici, Mesdames, Messieurs.

Ils quittent tous la pièce pour aller dîner, MINETTE au bras de CHARTON.

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ACTE II
Scène 2

LOUIS
Charton ! Comment a-t-elle pu ?

MOREAU
Vous l'avez entendu de sa bouche.

LOUIS
Et vous lui avez refusé votre aide.

MOREAU
Je ne pouvais lui apporter aucune assistance. J'étais un homme marié avec une famille à faire vivre et je payais tous tes frais.

LOUIS
Le père du Chevalier était un homme marié et il a fait venir son fils pour vivre avec eux à Paris.

MOREAU
La vie du Chevalier est en tous points remarquable, y compris les arrangements faits par ses parents. Mon contexte était plus ordinaire et mes ressources considérablement plus modestes.

LOUIS
Au moins, auriez-vous pu donner à ma mère l'argent pour venir me voir.

MOREAU
À cette époque, je devais être complètement coupé de ta mère et de toi-même.

LOUIS
L'association aurait été trop humiliante ? Votre maîtresse de couleur ? Votre fils nègre ?

MOREAU
Cela présentait certains inconvénients.

LOUIS
Des inconvénients pour votre foyer, des inconvénients pour votre carrière. Nous n'étions que des inconvénients.

MOREAU
Il est des moments dans la vie d'un homme où il doit passer outre ses désirs personnelles pour faire face à des questions majeures.

LOUIS
Nous avions besoin de vous.

MOREAU
Et la France avait besoin de moi, et Haïti avait besoin de moi. J'ai cru que je pouvais leur apporter ma contribution.
LOUIS
Vous auriez apporté une contribution en montrant l'exemple, en prenant vos responsabilités vis-à-vis de ma mère et de moi-même. Peut-être que d'autres vous auraient emboîté le pas. Mais cela n'entrait pas dans le cadre de vos ambitions !

MOREAU
J'étais ambitieux, cela est vrai. Très ambitieux. Je savais que j'étais un homme capable.

LOUIS
Capable de lâcheté envers mon peuple. Capable de laisser votre maîtresse à une brute. Capable d'abandonner votre propre fils. Un homme très capable.

MOREAU
Tes accusations sont justes, Louis. Mais il y a plus à dire.

LOUIS
J'en ai assez entendu.

MOREAU
Non, Louis.

LOUIS
Plus qu'assez.

MOREAU
Si tu ne veux pas l'entendre de ma bouche, écoute ton parrain. Paris, septembre 1789.
ACTE II
Scène 3

Le CHEVALIER entre en scène croisant le fer avec un disciple.

MOREAU
(a Louis)

Le Chevalier perd la raison, comme beaucoup à cette époque. Regardez bien le pied gauche, il ne vagabonde jamais. La jambe droite parfaitement tenue. Contrairement à l'esprit en cet instant.

entre en scène tandis que LOUIS observe

St GEORGES, quelle est cette nouvelle absurde que j'entends ?

ST GEORGES
continuant à escrimer

Je ne sais.

MOREAU

Vous savez très bien ce dont je parle. Lever un régiment d'hommes noirs pour se battre pour la révolution.

ST GEORGES
continuant à escrimer

Et en quoi est-ce absurde ?

MOREAU

C'est téméraire ! Les royalistes et lespropriétaires de plantation vous prendront pour cible. Vous serez tué dans la semaine.

Le CHEVALIER marque une touche et congédie son partenaire. Il retire son masque d'escrime.

ST GEORGES
Furieux

Si je ne m'abuse, vous n'avez jamais craint de risquer votre vie pour la liberté.

MOREAU

Je n'ai pas eu le choix. Je suis Président des Electeurs de Paris. Je n'ai pas pensé que la Bastille serait prise d'assaut!

ST GEORGES

Et quand elle l'a été ? Vous avez empêché que Paris soit réduite en cendres !

MOREAU

Cela n'a pas été héroïque. Je n'ai pas quitté mon bureau.

ST GEORGES

C'est ce qu'on m'a dit. Vous avez expédié cinq mille ordres et n'avez pas quitté votre bureau pendant une semaine.
MOREAU
C'est exagéré. Et ce n'est pas comme monter au combat !

ST GEORGES
C'est sans doute pourquoi Lafayette vous a décoré. Je l'ai vu épingler cette médaille sur votre torse à l'Hôtel de Ville. J'ai également entendu son très éloquent discours. « Moi, Gilbert de Motier, Marquis de Lafayette, vous remets cette médaille frappée en votre honneur. Elle est le témoin de notre gratitude et de notre loyauté qui dureront autant que l'existence de la Cité que vous avez conservée. Nous offrons celle-ci à celui qui n'a pas craint d'exposer sa vie pour le salut de ses frères. »

MOREAU
Je vois qu'il est inutile d'essayer de vous dissuader.

ST GEORGES
Exaspéré
Qui a plus d'intérêt à se battre pour la liberté qu'un homme de couleur?

MOREAU
On se bat presque trop pour cette cause en ce moment. Qu'arrivera-t-il à Louis quand vous partirez avec votre régiment ?

ST GEORGES
Je me suis arrangé.

MOREAU
Il n'y a pas un endroit sûr en France.

ST GEORGES
Il sera en sécurité, à la campagne.

MOREAU
J'ai une meilleure idée. Pourquoi ne pas me laisser l'emmener en Haïti.

ST GEORGES

MOREAU
Il m'a offert d'être à la tête de la Garde Nationale Parisienne.

ST GEORGES
Toutes mes félicitations! C'est la place la plus puissante de Paris !

MOREAU
J'ai refusé.

ST GEORGES
Mon Dieu! C'est inconcevable! Pourquoi?
MOREAU
J'ai demandé le poste d'Administrateur d'Haïti à la place. C'est ce que j'ai toujours souhaité, St Georges, et je pourrai aider ma patrie, mon pays, mon île.

ST GEORGES
Mon Dieu !

MOREAU

ST GEORGES
_Furieux_

MOREAU
_Essayant de calmer Saint-Georges_
Comme ses deux pères.

ST GEORGES
Vous ai-je raconté qu'un jour le petit coquin a perdu son serpent domestique au Palais Royal et qu'on l'a retrouvé le matin suivant lorsque le Duc d'Orléans mettait ses bottes? Oh, non, Moreau, Louis reste en France.

MOREAU
Je vois.

_ST GEORGES_
_Réfléchissant encore à une autre manière d'avoir le garçon_

ST GEORGES
_mençant, puis riant_
À moins que vous ne souhaitiez me défier en duel.

MOREAU
Vous? J'ai peut-être risqué ma vie le jour de la prise de la Bastille, mais je ne souhaite pas particulièrement m'en défaire.

ST GEORGES
Et bien vous ferez bien de me laisser améliorer vos aptitudes au duel, mon ami, car vous allez devoir vous montrer expert en la matière.

MOREAU
De quoi parlez-vous ?

ST GEORGES
Vous ne l'avez pas vu ?

MOREAU
Vu quoi ?
ST GEORGES

Le pamphlet! (va le chercher) Tenez!

MOREAU

« Observations à la motion de M. Moreau de St-Méry » mnh.. « Si l'article proposé par l'illustre membre Moreau de St-Méry est voté par l'Assemblée Générale » Quel article ? « la Nation France donne la liberté aux noirs d'égorger trente mille blancs... » Quoi !

ST GEORGES

Continuez.

MOREAU

« La liberté entière aux noirs... » Je n'ai jamais rien proposé de tel!

ST GEORGES

Continuez

MOREAU

« Oh, mes Concitoyens ! Ne nous laissons pas induire en erreur! Évitons avec précaution le piège tendu avec artifice par Moreau de St-Méry! » Qui a écrit cela!

ST GEORGES

Regardez (il tourne la page et lui indique la signature).

MOREAU

Charton !

ST GEORGES

Faites-moi savoir quand vous serez prêt pour cette leçon !

ST GEORGES sort, MOREAU le regarde partir.
ACTE II
Scène 4

LOUIS
Donc, vous êtes un héros, finalement.

MOREAU
(se tournant vers Louis)
J'ai eu une médaille.

On installe le tribunal d'un côté de la scène.

LOUIS
Vous avez vraiment été le Roi de Paris.

MOREAU
Mon règne aura duré trois jours entiers.

LOUIS
Je comprends pourquoi vous n'avez pas choisi de montrer votre fils et votre maîtresse nègre au tout Paris.

MOREAU
Les temps étaient difficiles.

Le juge entre et prend sa place.

LOUIS
Et peut-être n'aviez vous pas entièrement abandonné votre fils.

MOREAU
C'est vrai, du moins pas par choix.
ACTE II
Scène 5

Le juge frappe un coup de marteau.

LE JUGE

MOREAU et CHARTON sont chacun derrière un pupitre de chaque côté du juge. Le CHEVALIER entre avec MINETTE de l'autre côté de la scène; le CHEVALIER a son violon, il tend à MINETTE une partition.

ST GEORGES
Voici la chanson que je vous ai promise. Parcourez-la. Je jouerai quand vous serez prête.

MINETTE
Merci Monsieur. Je suis très honorée.

LE JUGE
Il s’agit d’une accusation de calomnie. Monsieur Moreau, je vous prie, exposez votre affaire.

MOREAU
Le 10 juin 1789, Monsieur Charton a publié un pamphlet qui affirme que durant la réunion de l’Assemblée Générale de Paris du 9 mai, j’ai déposé une motion visant à libérer les esclaves des Colonies et à abolir le commerce des esclaves.

LE JUGE
Est-ce exact, Monsieur Charton, jusque-là ?

CHARTON
Oui.

LE JUGE
Poursuivez, Monsieur Moreau.

MOREAU
Je n’ai jamais proposé une telle motion à l’Assemblée Générale, ni le 9 mai, ni un autre jour !

MINETTE
Jouez Monsieur. Je vais essayer.
ST GEORGES
Écoutez tout d'abord la mélodie au violon.

Il commence à jouer la mélodie de St GEORGES « O toi qui règnes dans mon âme » changée en « Haïti qui règne dans mon âme ».

Le Tribunal continue.

LE JUGE
Monsieur Moreau, voulez-vous détailler vos activités du 9 mai ?

MOREAU
Le 9 mai, j'ai présidé l'Assemblée comme à l'accoutumée. J'ai remarqué un article concernant l'esclavage sur l'Agenda et l'ai trouvé insignifiant. J'ai indiqué à l'Assemblée qu'il me semblait que ce sujet méritait une étude plus approfondie, prenant en compte le livre que je venais de publier qui comprenait quatre mille lois sur le sujet.

CHARTON
C'est faux ! Moreau s'est exprimé vigoureusement et fort pathétiquement sur la condition des noirs dans nos colonies. Il y a alors eu une grande agitation au sein de l'Assemblée ... puis il a présenté sa motion ...et je me suis adressé à lui et ai dit que la liberté pour les esclaves était une attaque directe au droit de propriété de leurs maîtres, ce à quoi il a répondu: « A chacun son opinion » ! Pourquoi aurait-il dit « A chacun son opinion » s'il ne pensait pas que les esclaves dussent être libérés ?

Le CHEVALIER a fini de jouer la mélodie.

ST GEORGES
Voilà. Vous satisfait-elle ?

MINETTE
Elle est magnifique.

ST GEORGES
Bien, quand vous serez prête ...

MINETTE regarde à nouveau la partition pour la relire.

MOREAU
Charton a fait croire que j'avais fait une motion visant à libérer les esclaves pour me détruire !

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CHARTON
Quel intérêt pourrais-je avoir à publier une réponse à une motion qui n'aurait jamais été fait devant une assemblée publique ? On me supposerait dépourvu de raison !

MOREAU
Vous l'êtes ! Regardez cela : « Consultez nos Colons, ils vous répondront unanimement que cet esclavage prétendu qui vous révolte, n'a de réel que le nom. La journée finie, les nègres vont à la promenade, respirent l'air le plus suave, se délassent des fatigues de la journée dans les bras de l'amour, et le matin on les voit retourner au travail avec gaieté ». Etes-vous fou ?

CHARTON
Demandons aux propriétaires de plantation ici présents.

MOREAU
Charton, n'êtes-vous pas allé à la plantation Le Jeune avec le comité ? Oui ou non ?

CHARTON
Oui. Mais ...

MOREAU
Et avez-vous regardé dans les yeux ces femmes esclaves ? Avez-vous senti l'odeur de la chair pourrissante qu'étaient devenues leurs jambes ? Avez-vous vu les fers si serrés qu'elles ne pouvaient ni manger ni boire ? Comment osez-vous écrire de telles absurdités !

LE JUGE
Messieurs, je vous en prie. Nous allons nous faire une brève suspension d'audience le temps pour moi de passer les preuves en revue.

Le juge consulte ses papiers, tandis que MOREAU et CHARTON restent derrière leurs pupitres. MINETTE fait un signe de tête au CHEVALIER et ils jouent et chantent le premier couplet de leur chanson. Puis, le juge frappe son marteau.

CHARTON
Monsieur le Président du Tribunal, vous avez assisté à une démonstration de l'éloquence de Monsieur Moreau. C'est ainsi qu'il domine l'Assemblée. Il emploie parfaitement son impeccable éducation, ce en quoi je me trouve désavantagé. Je n'ai que la vérité pour moi.

LE JUGE
Les faits, messieurs, les faits. Monsieur Moreau, avez-vous une objection concernant un autre point de la publication de M. Charton ?

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MOREAU
Oui, Monsieur le Président, très certainement. Si vous me permettez de citer son pamphlet : « Si l'article de Moreau passe : nos plantations tomberont, cette espèce rustre et vindicative égorgera trente mille blancs, toute la Nation française sera humiliée. Plus de commerce pour nous, plus de marine. Nous serons gouvernés par l'Angleterre. Ne soyez pas trompé par le traître Moreau! »

CHARTON
Vous savez que chaque mot est vrai. Vous auriez sacrifié la France à votre ambition. Maintenant, vous souhaitez retirer la motion parce que vos opinions personnelles sont entrées en collision avec cette ambition ?

MOREAU
Mes opinions personnelles ?

CHARTON
Monsieur le Président, il se targue d'être l'ami de Monsieur de Lafayette, qui, nous le savons tous, est fondateur de la Société des Amis des Noirs ...

MOREAU
Je ne suis pas membre des Amis des Noirs !

CHARTON
Vous pourriez tout aussi bien l'être!

LE JUGE
Silence, messieurs! Revenons en aux faits. Monsieur Charton, avez-vous des témoins qui déclareront avoir entendu la motion qu'aurait déposée Monsieur Moreau ?

CHARTON

MOREAU
Votre honneur, j'ai ici un rapport de la Commission nommée par l'Assemblée Générale afin d'interroger ces témoins. J'aimerais vous le soumettre. Ils ont interrogé quinze des Electeurs nommés par Monsieur Charton. Ceux-ci ont déclaré qu'aucune motion en vue de libérer les esclaves n'avaient été faite, ni le 9 mai, ni à un autre moment.

CHARTON
J'ai entendu Moreau faire cette motion, et mes Concitoyens-Electeurs également.

LE JUGE
Messieurs, faites-moi voir vos pièces.

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MOREAU et CHARTON soumettent leurs documents au tribunal et retournent à leurs pupitres. Le juge parcours les pièces tandis que MINETTE et le CHEVALIER chantent et jouent le second couplet de la chanson.

ST GEORGES
C'est un crime que vous ne soyez pas autorisée à chanter en public ici, à Paris. J'ai peur qu'il ne soit pas en mon pouvoir de réparer cette injustice.

MINETTE
Vous n'y pouvez rien, Monsieur.

ST GEORGES
Je ne peux rien à ça. Mais je peux peut-être vous apporter assistance sur un autre point, qui concerne vos arrangements domestiques.

MINETTE
Pardonnez ma candeur, Monsieur, il n'y a que deux choses qui importent à mes yeux dans ce domaine : passer autant de temps que cela m'est possible avec mon fils, et être protégée dans l'hypothèse où je devrais fuir Haïti.

ST GEORGES
Je le sais. Et pour ceci, vous comptez sur l'assistance de Monsieur Charton, n'est-ce pas ? Il n'est pas l'ami des gens de couleur, Minette.

MINETTE
J'en suis consciente. Mais avez-vous un meilleur choix à m'offrir ?

ST GEORGES
Peut-être. Avez-vous entendu parler de Talleyrand ?

MINETTE
J'ai entendu son nom.

ST GEORGES
Un vrai aristocrate et l'un des hommes les plus capables de France. Il représente le Clergé à l'Assemblée et il a aidé à la rédaction de la Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme. Il a un pied légèrement boiteux.

MINETTE
J'ai moi-même légèrement boité, autrefois.

ST GEORGES
C'est un amoureux de la musique et des arts, un ami des gens de couleur, un homme aux moyens considérables, et actuellement sans maîtresse. Je pensais l'inviter à notre concert chez Charton. Si vous le permettez, bien évidemment.

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MINETTE
Vous avez ma bénéédiction, Monsieur.

ST GEORGES
Dès lors, peut-être devrions-nous revenir à notre musique. Nous ne voudrions pas que vous soyez moins qu'enchanteresse.

MINETTE
Jouez, Monsieur.

Elle chante un refrain final enlevé.
Les lumières s'éteignent sur MINETTE et ST-GEORGES.

---------------------------------------------

LE JUGE
Je souhaiterais que l'huissier note dans les minutes que le très estimé Vice Président de l'Assemblée Nationale, Monsieur de Lafayette, vient d'entrer et assiste à cette procédure. Continuez, Monsieur Moreau.

MOREAU
Je souhaiterais que le tribunal soit informé du préjudice causé à ma famille et à moi-même, conséquence du pamphlet de Monsieur Charton.

Dites.

MOREAU
Monsieur de Lafayette m'a informé que je serais nommé Administrateur d'Haïti. Ce fut le jour le plus heureux de ma vie. Je me suis vu sur le navire retournant à Haïti, courant pour étreindre ma famille, la foule courant pour m'accueillir... oh oui, la foule serait venue, grâce à Monsieur Charton, elle serait venue pour me donner la mort!

CHARTON
Vous exagérez!

MOREAU
Quand j'ai vu le pamphlet de Charton, je n'ai pas trouvé utile d'y répondre. Jamais je n'aurais pensé qu'il l'enverrait en Haïti !

CHARTON
Je n'en ai rien fait ! Je me moquait qu'il parvienne en Haïti!

MOREAU
Donc le pamphlet a nagé jusqu'en Haïti de sa propre initiative ! Des brigades de blancs se sont formées sur l'île pour déloger les membres de ma famille. Ma pauvre mère, veuve depuis mon enfance, a été jetée hors de sa maison. Ma belle-mère, également veuve, a été forcée à quitter le Cap.

CHARTON
Encore une déformation de la vérité !

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MOREAU
Mon beau-frère est mort par votre faute Charton! N'avez-vous pas honte!

CHARTON
Son sang est sur vos mains, pas sur les miennes!

MOREAU
Les hommes d'une de ces bandes l'ont arraché à son domicile, sa femme enceinte hurlant, l'ont mis sur un âne et l'ont emmené au cimetière où ils l'ont battu jusqu'à l'inconscience! Il était Médecin du Roi au Cap, Monsieur le Président.

CHARTON
Il était devenu Médecin du Roi sur l'île par l'influence de Moreau et non par transmission de père en fils comme de coutume. C'est pour cela qu'il n'était pas aimé!

MOREAU
Si ce tissu de mensonges obscènes et puants n'avait pas été publié, mon beau-frère serait en vie aujourd'hui.

CHARTON
Si vous n'aviez pas présenté de motion pour libérer les noirs, alors, oui, il serait en vie aujourd'hui!

LE JUGE
Cessez! Vous m'entendez? Bien,...Monsieur Moreau?

MOREAU
Quand la lettre me nommant nouvel Administrateur de l'île est arrivée en Haïti, les émeutiers ont fouillé chacun des cinq cents navires du port pour me pendre. J'ai perdu mon pays... Et Haïti a perdu à jamais son meilleur ami. Tout cela à cause d'un mensonge.

CHARTON
Trente mille colons sont vivants parce qu'ils ont appris la vérité.

MOREAU
Je sais ce qui se passerait si les noirs étaient libérés demain. Pourquoi proposerais-je quelque chose qui pourrait conduire à la mort de ma famille et de mes amis?

CHARTON
Pour que votre gloire remplisse les deux mondes!

MOREAU
Je n'ai pas fait de motion pour libérer les noirs!

CHARTON
Mais vous soutiendriez une telle motion, n'est-ce pas?

MOREAU
C'est hors de propos.

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CHARTON
C'est tout à fait à propos! Nous devons savoir, Moreau : dans quel camp êtes-vous ?

MOREAU
Je n'ai pas à répondre à cette question.

CHARTON
Vous avez peur de répondre à cette question !

MOREAU
Je n'ai pas peur! Cela détournerait le sujet des débats. C'est votre calomnie qui est en cause ici, pas mon opinion sur l'esclavage !

CHARTON
Monsieur le Président ?

LE JUGE
Monsieur Moreau, votre opinion n'est pas hors sujet, veuillez en informer le Tribunal.

MOREAU
Je ne suis pas un fanatique. Je ne suis pas un idéaliste politique, non plus philosophe ou idéaliste politique, ni propriétaire de plantation, ou marchand. Mais je connais ces îles au moins aussi bien que tout homme vivant. Ne suis-je pas également compétent en matière de révolution ? Y a-t-il un homme dans cette salle qui peut affirmer que ma voie n'est pas celle de la stabilité ? Je sais ce qui peut émerger même au sein d'une culture aussi civilisée que celle des Français. Notez mes paroles : ce sera le chaos et le carnage maintenant et pour des générations en Haïti si nous ne choisissons pas une voie raisonnable, qui, bien sûr, doit être poursuivie résolument, graduellement et sur une période de temps indéfinie. La première étape est l'amélioration des conditions des noirs, comprenant la prévention de la cruauté envers les esclaves, et la sanction, la sévère sanction des actes de cruauté. Une fois cela accompli, alors la seulement nous pourrons nous permettre d'abolir le commerce des esclaves.

Réaction de la foule et Charton.

Je crois que nous verrons les Etats-Unis et l'Angleterre suivre notre exemple. La priorité suivante devra être l'éducation et l'apprentissage des noirs. Et alors, seulement alors, nous passerons à l'étape finale de la liberté pour les noirs. Permettez à la France de conserver à la fois son commerce, son honneur, et sa gloire!
Les lumières sur le Tribunal baissent tandis que le discours de MOREAU est accueilli par des souffles coupés, est hué, félicité dans un chaos général. Dans la pénombre, on entend seulement le bruit du marteau qui s'arrête lorsque la lumière remonte sur MOREAU. LOUIS le rejoint.
ACTE II
Scène 6

LOUIS
Qu'est-il arrivé, après cela ?

MOREAU
Ma carrière était ruinée. J'étais trop radical pour les colons, trop conservateurs pour les fanatiques. J'étais seul.

LOUIS
Etes-vous jamais retourné en Haïti ?

MOREAU
Non : les soulèvements ont commencé peu après.

LOUIS
Mais Lafayette vous avait nommé Administrateur !

MOREAU
J'ai perdu le soutien des propriétaires de plantations. Je les avais bien servis : la codification des lois coloniales m'avaient pris des années et les colons en étaient les bénéficiaires, ils en étaient reconnaissants. Jusqu'à ce que la loi n'ait plus d'importance.

LOUIS
Et ils pensaient également que vous vouliez libérer les esclaves.

MOREAU
J'avais uniquement soutenu qu'il était de l'intérêt des propriétaires d'améliorer les conditions de vie de leurs esclaves.

LOUIS
Pensez-vous réellement que les planteurs vous auraient suivi ?

MOREAU
C'était notre seul espoir de stabilité. Mais, grâce à Charton, nous l'avons perdu.

LOUIS
Et que lui est-il arrivé ?

MOREAU
Il a perdu également. Il a perdu son siège à l'Assemblée. Et il a perdu Minette au profit de Talleyrand, qui a emmené ta mère à Philadelphie au commencement de la Terreur. Charton a fui pour l'Angleterre et c'est la dernière fois que j'ai entendu parler de lui jusqu'à ...

LOUIS
Jusqu'à ce qu'il tue ma mère. C'est ce que vous pensez, n'est-ce pas?

MOREAU
(hésitant, voulant dire la vérité à Louis, mais incapable de le faire ...)
Nous serions incapable de le prouver.

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LOUIS
Aurait-il pu avoir le poison ? Grand-mère a dit qu'il pouvait s'agir d'une racine haïtienne spéciale…

MOREAU
Oui, il avait le poison. Je l'ai vu passer entre ses mains par un esclave en fuite. Ils ont fait l'échange lors d'une cérémonie vaudou.

LOUIS
Que faisiez-vous à une cérémonie vaudou ?

MOREAU
Ta Grand-mère Eugénie avait fait le nécessaire pour que j'y assiste, pour que je puisse en faire la description dans un livre.

Les percussions jouent.

LOUIS
Oui ?

MOREAU
J'étais autorisé à observer d'un endroit secret, pour que je ne puisse pas déranger la cérémonie.
ACTE II
Scène 7

Les percussions se font plus fortes, les chants vaudous commencent et l’on assiste à toute une cérémonie vaudoue telle que décrite par MOREAU dans les années 1780, dans la première description écrite d’un rituel vaudou. Tôt dans la danse rituelle, CHARTON entre, et commence à négocier avec l’un des participants. Ils marchandent en pantomime. Finalement, ils parviennent à un accord et dans l’instant CHARTON reçoit un sachet de poison et le paye. La totalité de la danse se fige en un tableau.

LOUIS
Donc Charton a obtenu son poison.

MOREAU
Ils appellent cela le sang de Macandal. Mis au point par des esclaves en fuite et utilisé en tous lieux. Le sang de Macandal mélangé à du sirop de sucre de canne et versé dans le café d’un Français.

LOUIS
Donc, Charton a tué ma mère.

MOREAU
Attends, il y a autre chose.
ACTE II
Scène 8

Le tableau se défait, CHARTON part et la cérémonie continue, intense et puissante, formant un large cercle qui se fige à nouveau. CHARTON entre avec Mme MOREAU dans la librairie.

CHARTON
Elle s'est querellée avec Talleyrand et l'a quitté pour de bon – on pouvait les entendre hurler du bas de l'immeuble.

MME MOREAU
Quel lyrisme !

CHARTON
Elle est ensuite venue me voir, me suppliant de lui donner un foyer pour son fils et elle-même. J'ai dû lui dire que sa chanson avait perdu de son charme. Elle était désespérée, elle a alors dit qu'elle irait voir Moreau et se jeterait à ses pieds.

MME MOREAU
Quoi ! Que dites vous ?

CHARTON
Elle est sur le chemin. Prenez cela. (lui offrant son sachet de poison)

MME MOREAU
Qu'est-ce ?

CHARTON
Un poison, très violent. Le sang de Macandal.

MME MOREAU
Quelle horreur! Éloignez cela, je vous en prie. Je n'en veux pas. Et sortez par la porte de derrière, tout de suite! Je la vois arriver.

CHARTON sort, MINETTE frappe à la porte.

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ACTE II
Scène 9

MME MOREAU
Mais c'est Minette ! Vite, entrez. Il fait un froid glacial dehors.

MINETTE
Mme Moreau, pardonnez-moi, mais je dois urgemment voir votre époux pour une question légale.

MME MOREAU
Mon mari est sorti pour l'instant, mais il sera bientôt de retour. Désirez-vous l'attendre ? Je vais vous préparer une tasse de thé.

MINETTE
C'est très aimable à vous.

MME MOREAU
Apportant le thé.
Vous savez, j'aimais beaucoup cet aria que vous chantez, celui sur la mère oiseau, Minette. Comment était-ce ?

MINETTE
« La fauvette, avec ses petits, se croit la reine du bocage :». (boit une gorgée de thé).

MME MOREAU
N'est-ce pas charmant? « La reine du bocage». Continuez, je vous en prie …

MINETTE
« Sa naissante famille rassemblée sous son aile,
De leur amour pour elle, elle jouit encor. » (boit une gorgée de thé).

MME MOREAU
(MME MOREAU paraissant de plus en plus étrange et MINETTE, continuant à boire le thé, de moins en moins à son aise)
Oh Oui ! Comme je me sentais heureuse avec ma petite famille. C'est la joie d'une mère? Voici votre tisane, Minette, bien chaude. J'ai l'impression d'être au Cap, dans notre loge, à l'opéra. Il y a la loge de l'Administrateur avec sa splendide femme portant l'un de ses extravagants chapeaux, et à côté, la loge du Commandant, et au-dessus, la loge des femmes de couleur. On ouvre tous les volets de chaque côté du théâtre. Il fait très chaud ce soir, les feux de la rampe brillent... tout pourrait arriver. Oh! Vous avez fini ? Et alors, comment la chanson se terminait-elle, Minette ?

MINETTE
« Mais par malheur vient l'Oiseleur, qui lui ravit son espérance :
La pauvre mère ! elle ne pense qu'à son malheur.
Tout retentit de sa douleur.»

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MME MOREAU
« Pauvre mère », oui, voilà ce qui arrive aux espoirs des mères. Le thé vous a-t-il plu, Minette ? C’est une Tisane de Sapotille, une recette de famille que je tiens de ma grand-mère. Très, très apaisante.

MINETTE
(nerveuse)
Merci, mais je dois réellement y aller maintenant (se levant). Oh ! (un peu étourdie).

MME MOREAU
Suivez-moi. Je vous raccompagne.

Elles quittent la scène et la cérémonie vaudou reprend, atteint son apogée, puis les chanteurs et les danseurs se retirent.
ACTE II
Scène 10

LOUIS
C'est donc ainsi que ma mère a eu cet « accident ».

MOREAU
Louis, je savais que ta mère était en danger. Je devais faire tout ce qui était en mon pouvoir pour la tenir loin de moi, pour vous protéger. Mais les événements en ont décidé autrement. Je n'avais plus le contrôle. Je devais prendre soin de ce qui restait de ma famille. Comprends-tu pourquoi le rapport de police a été mis sous scellées ?

Il y a un silence entre les deux hommes.


LOUIS
Maintenant, je comprends

Un silence.

Je dois partir demain.

Demain ?

MOREAU
Oui, le bateau part demain. Je dois rejoindre le Chevalier pour l'accompagner en Haïti.

Je vois.

LOUIS
Le Chevalier requiert que j'aie votre permission. Me donnez-vous votre bénédiction ?

MOREAU
Tu es un homme maintenant. Tu n'as pas besoin de ma bénédiction.

LOUIS
Le Chevalier insiste.

MOREAU
Et bien, si le Chevalier insiste, alors tu as ma bénédiction.

LOUIS

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MOREAU

Louis...

Oui.

MOREAU

Je ... sois prudent.

Les deux hommes s'étreignent. C'est un moment intense, suivi d'une maladresse mutuelle.

Si tu as besoin de quoi que ce soit ... 

LOUIS

J'ai ce qu'il me faut.

LOUIS commence à partir, il s'éloigne. Quand il atteint l'autre côté de la scène, MOREAU parle.

MOREAU

Mes amitiés au Chevalier. Toussaint est un grand homme. Je suis sûr qu'il fera de grandes choses.

LOUIS

Vous n'approuvez pas.

MOREAU

J'ai vu suffisamment de révolutions. J'ai passé ma vie à mettre Haïti en ordre. Bien que je sache que l'ordre préserve l'injustice.

LOUIS

Vos écritures m'ont appris que l'ordre est nécessaire à la civilisation et à la danse...

L'orchestre baroque commence à jouer. Dans le « Final », chaque danse de la pièce est reprise pendant 20 à 30 secondes. Chaque danse et chaque groupe de danseurs se fondent dans la danse suivante, tandis que les danseurs entrent ou se retirent. L'ensemble débute avec la Contredanse en rondeau de Rameau du bal français, dansée par les colons français.

Chaque partie claire et articulée ...

MOREAU

Chaque pas en mesure avec le suivant.

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LOUIS
Les danseurs du « bal quarteron » dans un Carabinier, puis l’Allemande de Rousseau.

Le tout s’exprimant dans la beauté, le raffinement et la grâce.

MOREAU
Les cupidons impertinents dansent le passepied de Grétry.

La grâce infinie.

Les percussions haïtiennes commencent à jouer. On passe de la danse des esclaves imitant les Français sur la chanson de Pergolèse, aux colons français dansant un Menuet Congo sur Couperin.

Mais il y a d’autres danses.

LOUIS
Les esclaves reprennent le Calenda, suivi des danseurs du « bal quarteron » qui dansent la fin du “Chica du Bal”.

La danse de la liberté.

MOREAU
La danse du calumet de la paix des Sauvages de Rameau.

La danse de la transformation.

LOUIS
Extrait de la cérémonie vaudou.

La danse des dieux.

MOREAU
Souviens-toi, tu es mon fils.

LOUIS
Souvenez-vous, vous êtes mon père.

MOREAU et LOUIS s’avancent l’un vers l’autre au centre de la scène. Les danseurs baroques les entourent en dansant, puis sont entourés à leur tour par les danseurs haïtiens extatiques qui prennent l’avantage. Le rythme des tambours recouvre l’orchestre tandis que les lumières se s’éteignent doucement.

FIN