

MIGNON

Music by Ambroise Thomas

Libretto by Jules Barbier & Michel Carré

First Performance: Opéra-Comique, Paris, November 17, 1866

Lothario, an old wandering minstrel, has long been searching for his lost daughter. He comes across Mignon, who has been adopted by a gypsy band and is mistreated by their leader. Lothario and Wilhelm, a young student, rescue her. Leartes and Philine, actors engaged to appear in Frederic's castle nearby, observe the scene. Mignon becomes passionately attached to her new mentor, but Wilhelm has eyes only for Philine. Scenes which only emphasize the gulf between the young girl, dressed in boy's clothes, and the sophisticated actress, inflame Mignon further, until she violently wishes that Philine be burned alive. Lothario takes her at her word and fires the building where Philine is playing, but it is Mignon who is trapped. Wilhelm saves her and takes her to an Italian castle which, he tells Lothario, he intends to buy for Mignon. Here Lothario recovers his memory - it is his castle, and Mignon is his noble daughter.