

Overture to the opera "Le Prophète" (1849),
Reconstructed & edited by Mark Starr (US premiere) Giacomo Meyerbeer
Born September 5, 1791 near Berlin
Died May 2, 1864, in Paris

Meyerbeer was a famous German-born opera composer. He was the most important composer of French Grand opera during the 1830s and 1840s. Although he was tremendously popular in his day, his music is not often played now.

In 1849, at the first rehearsal of the grand opera "le Prophète" at the Paris Opera, composer/conductor Giacomo Meyerbeer ran through the entire opera with the orchestra, cast and chorus. To his dismay, he discovered he had composed 4 and 1/2 hours of music -- and that was not counting intermissions. Immediately, he slashed over an hour's worth of music from his score, including a magnificent 11-minute overture. Before the premiere, he replaced the overture with a 13-bar Prelude, and it was in this form that the opera was performed and subsequently published. The orchestral score of the Overture has never been published until now.

The orchestral parts of the overture were recently uncovered in the archives of the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris. It is upon these hand copied materials that music scholar and conductor Mark Starr reconstructed and edited the orchestral score of the overture to this grand opera. "Le Prophète" is a major landmark in the history of French opera.

Together with the orchestral score of the *Overture to Le Prophète*, Noteworthy Musical Editions in California has prepared a full set of orchestral parts, used for tonight's performance by the Saint Louis Philharmonic. This dazzling showpiece is scored for 2 flutes, 2 piccolos, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 4 bassoons, 4 French horns, 4 Trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, and strings.
--notes from the publisher, Noteworthy Editions