

Why a new version?

Needing no translation from one language to another, Strauss' brilliant score for "Die Fledermaus" has charmed audiences throughout the world regardless of . . . and often in spite of . . . the many libretti which have been conceived to support the amusing plot.

It is the music, of course, and not the plot which makes "Die Fledermaus" such a popular favorite, but the plot grows in significance when one recalls that the music was conceived for the express purpose of communicating this amusing little story.

The original statement of the plot, entitled "Das Gefangnis," ("The Prison"), was written in 1851. Sometime during the next twenty years the story interested a pair of French librettists who transformed it into what we would call a musical comedy: "Revillon," ("Supper At Midnight").

"Revillon," in turn, attracted attention in Germany where two more librettists set to work on it for Johann Strauss. Since 1874 their creation, "Die Fledermaus," has been translated and adapted in many ways.

Several English versions were reviewed prior to the West Bay Opera production in 1958. The most entertaining of these was selected for presentation but several changes were thought necessary to shorten the text and to sharpen the humor; we were anxious to get on with the music and the fun. Before

repeating the work this season a completely new text was prepared . . . "Carnival in Vienna" . . . so named because the emphasis has been taken away from an unseen joke involving Dr. Falke and returned to over-all atmosphere of gaiety which prevailed in "Revillon."

The plot and its characters remain identical to those which prompted Strauss to compose his magnificent score in a total of 42 days. The new text, I must admit, took much longer; his was the inspired art of creation, mine the affectionate labor of matching syllables to quarter notes in the faint hope of finding a rhyme waiting at the end of a phrase.

Strauss has given us music that should soar, and it is my hope that the new libretto lightens the load ordinarily placed upon it by cumberson words. In short, I would like to think that Herr Strauss would be pleased. By the same token, I have attempted to sustain the artistic integrity of the West Bay Opera Company for whom this text was written and to whom it is dedicated.

Above all, it is the audience whose satisfaction and pleasure are paramount and for whom this new production has been prepared. We cannot, like Prince Orlofsky, "guarantee to those who stay the best time of their lives," but we do hope you'll agree when the performance ends that "Whatever's wrong, we need no more endure it; a Carnival will cure it, a Carnival will cure it!"

—G.A.W.

ACT ONE

No.1 Introduction

ALFRED

(Appearing at window) Little turtle dove so sweet, time for bill and cooing.
I recall when'er we meet what the birds are doing.
Join me now on wings of song, wave your lovely feather.
Rosalinda, turtle dove, we belong together;
Rosalinda, turtle dove, we belong together. *(Disappears)*

ADELE

(Enters gaily with letter in hand) La de da de da de da, etc. Ah....
Oh I most enjoy the Carnival for handsome men I've met
And this letter from my sister guarantees the best time yet!
Prince Orlofsky the Carnival host cordially hopes that she will be his guest;
She and all the lovely dancers who represent the ballet chorus.
And now she asks if I can join her to take the place of one young dancer.
(Reading) For an evening on the town now, beg your mistress for a fown now.
She must understand your wishes, you were meant for more than dishes.
(Folds letter away) Sister's right, of course, but still the mistress may not
quite agree; it's too much to ask for time off plus a dress for all to see,
And so, poor me! Ah...Who says "Wish upon a star"? That depends on who you are.
If you lead a life of leisure, wishing can be quite a pleasure;
But if you are just a maid wishes are most oft delayed; wishes are most always
delayed.

ROSALINDA

(Off stage, calling) Adele! Adele!

ADELE

My mistress! *(Conceals letter)*

ROSALINDA

(Enters) Adele? Has my husband come in yet?

ADELE

No, madame *(Begins to sob)*

ROSALINDA

There, there; you mustn't take on so; I'm sure he'll get out of this trouble.

ADELE

Oh, begging your pardon, madame, it's my poor aunt I'm crying for.

ROSALINDA

(Prayerfully) She's ... gone?

ADELE

Going, madame.

ROSALINDA

(Suspiciously) Is this the same aunt who was "going" last Carnival season?

ADELE

(Nods in handkerchief)

ROSALINDA

And again that fortnight two months ago?

ADELE

Yes, but the doctor says that he was mistaken before; he's promised not to let us down this time! If you'll just let me have this evening

ROSALINDA

What, tonight?

ADELE

I wouldn't have to leave until eight o'clock.

ROSALINDA

Remarkable how exact a science medicine has become. I'm sorry, no.

ADELE

But my aunt...she's...going!

ROSALINDA

She'll simply have to keep going a little longer. We have a crisis of our own tonight and I can't let you go.

ADELE

But madame....

ROSALINDA

I'm sorry, Adele; not another word.

No. la Duet

ADELE

Poor old Auntie may not last
Life slips by so very fast
How I wish that I could leave now
Just a little time off to grieve now.
But if you are just a maid,
Wishes are most oft delayed;
Wishes are most always delayed.
(exits, weeping noisily)

ROSALINDA

I hope your aunt will last
But she has done quite well in the past.
I cannot let you leave now
So do not make me grieve now.
Just remember that for a maid,
Wishes are most always delayed.

ALFRED

(Climbing through window) No need to delay our wishes, turtle dove!

ROSALINDA

Alfred! What are you doing here?

ALFRED

I heard that your husband had flown the coop, so I just dropped by to help feather your nest....speaking metaphorically, of course.

ROSALINDA

Be sensible, Alfred.