

Johann Strauss – DIE FLEDERMAUS

This production toured as a co-production of Czech Opera Prague and Teatro Lirico D'Europa during the 2005-2006 US season.

NO TRICK – "Fledermaus" IS A TREAT"

On Friday, Teatro Lirico D'Europa in collaboration with Czech Opera Prague, presented the first of three Halloween weekend performances of DIE FLEDERMAUS at the Cutler Majestic Theatre. A better way to scare up some holiday fun could hardly be imagined. While traditionally **FLEDERMAUS** is a staple of New Year's Eve galas at opera houses around the world, it is equally appropriate for Halloween. The engaging Czech Opera singers went through their paces with professional poise and boundless charm. The opera was sung in the original German, but the projected titles were almost unnecessary, so clear were the cast's moves as directed by Martin Otava. Conductor, Martin Mazik kept Strauss's musical champagne flowing by the magnum as did standouts like Jitka Svobodova as Rosalinde, Jan Jezek as Eisenstein, Jaromir Novotny as Alfred and Anna Klamatova-Janotova as Adele."

BOSTON HERALD – T. J. Medrek – October 2005

CASTING BOLSTERS PERFORMANCE

"A lighter-than-air performance of Johann Strauss **DIE FLEDERMAUS** Saturday evening at the Lied Center. There was not a heavy note in the entire production, from the cast's precise and weightless movements about the stage to the lighthearted treatment of the plot itself. The operetta was performed in German, with English supertitles, but when the audience heard Eisenstein, in the first scene, tell the maid to order "Kentucky Fried Chicken" for his supper,

we knew the company would wring more fun than usual from this airy plot. Comic acting was broad and excellent throughout, and the music was pleasing from the familiar three opening notes of the overture until the last chord of the choral finale. Casting was right on the money, and there were no weak individual performances. Jitka Svobodova gave Rosalinde both the requisite hauteur and a strong dramatic coloratura voice that stood out clearly over the chorus and shone. Tenor Jan Jezek played and sang Gabriel Von Eisenstein with clarity and assurance. And the young lyric soprano Anna Klamova-Janotova stole scene after scene as the soubrette Adele, hitting her high notes and flouncing about the stage convincingly as a hoyden having the time of her life. The part of Dr. Falke, the "Fledermaus" of the title, was well-played by baritone Pavel Klecka, who gave his character just enough edge to make his desire for revenge believable. Bass-baritone Marian Rehor made a fine coconspirator, prison warden, and Chevalier Chagrin, Jaromir Novotny in a too-tight vest played a farcical Alfred, the tenor who won't stop singing. Though the character's singing is a running joke among the others, the joke does not conceal Novotny,'s fine lyric tenor. The diminutive mezzo-soprano Viara Zhelezova, in a role often given to women, played a fey and blase Prince Orlovsky, playing host to the ball, dictating its rules and leading the praise of King Champagne. She and a dance partner also turn in a graceful performance as they led the waltz near the second act's close. The third act opened with veteran Bulgarian actor Gueorgui Dinev in an old coat, beret and boots as the slivovitz-addled Frosch (German for "Frog") in an extended comic interlude. The audience broke into applause as he kick-started an imaginary (and

anachronistic) motorcycle and puttputted offstage. Martin Mazik conducted the Sofia Symphony Orchestra and Chorus. The orchestra was the best heard in a Lied Center opera in several years, while the chorus filled every inch of the house with sound, especially in the big second-act numbers in praise of love and wine. The chorus, joined by dancers filled the stage with music and movement. Colloquial supertitles kept the audience engaged in the dialogue. At evening's end, a well-filled house, still energized after nearly three hours, kept the cast for third and fourth bows."

LAWRENCE JOURNAL WORLD – Dean Bevan

SHOW'S HUMOR IS A PLEASANT SURPRISE

DIE FLEDERMAUS, the comic operetta by Johann Strauss could be enjoyed by the opera lover as well as those new to opera. The element that set it apart was its comedic timing and the way the performers tried to make an old art new. In other words, it was funny! Who knew? **DIE FLEDERMAUS** which means The Bat, centers on Dr. Falke's plot to get back at Gabriel Von Eisenstein for leaving him in a bat costume on a park bench. The evening is full of mistaken identities, plenty of champagne and jubilant music. All the characters had fun with their roles in the fancy Vienna setting of the 1890s. The characters fit their roles perfectly, and their comedic timing was impeccable. Attending three hours of opera can seem a daunting endeavor. However, once the curtain opened, time passed quickly through the evening of lively song and dance. Much of the singing revolved around either champagne or being too tipsy, all of which worked toward the prevailing mood of festive happiness. The ending left the audience full of exultation and a desire to toast with the performers. And those who attended Die Fledermaus know the Czech Opera Prague deserved many toasts!" *Lawrence.com ARTS – Laura Parkinson*

FLEDERMAUS at BOSTON'S MAJESTIC THEATRE

"One word can best describe the production of Johann Strauss' classic operetta, **DIE FLEDERMAUS** last night at the Cutler Majestic theater in Boston: flawless! Strauss surely had to be smiling on Friday evening as this magnificently staged production wowed Boston's opening night opera audience. The cast was robust and electrifying, the music, conducted brilliantly by Martin Mazik, was performed with verve and an incredibly high level of energy that was contagious on the audience, the staging by Martin Otava, was superb and well thought out, the sets and lighting, also by Martin Otava, were effective and colorful, and the costumes by Martin Otava were sumptuous – and these are just initial impressions. This production, staged with such exacting attention to detail and with such energy was an opera event, that will be difficult to forget. From the moment the curtain rose, and the magnificent display of color and rich stage sets appeared, one sensed this was going to be something special – and what made it so special was a dynamic cast that reached for the best they could give, and then gave and gave and gave, right up until their final bows. This entire cast and chorus were lively, fully involved in what was going on on stage and directed such that even when the stage was full of bodies, as it was for the gala ball, everyone had something to do. When they did the conga, you really did believe you were at a wild party. There was whistling, shouting, giggling, flirting, and movement that captured the moment just beautifully. And that's the bottom line on this production: Wonderful in every sense, flawless in its execution and a joy to behold."

OPERAONLINE.US – P. Walkowski

DIE FLEDERMAUS is a hilarious treat

"Audiences of all kinds will be delighted with **DIE FLEDERMAUS** the operetta written by Johann Strauss. Full of mistaken identity, physical humor and irony, people will revel in its timeless tale of friendly mischief and pranks.

The Czech Opera Prague performed "Die Fledermaus" on Sunday, October 23, at the Touhill Performing Arts Center to a full audience. The audience was delighted with the operetta and its wonderful cast of characters that included many talented opera singers and actors. Performed in German with English subtitles, the audience has no problem following the comprehensible storyline. The characters are fresh and witty and the audience is captivated by their words. The singing, from Jitka Svobodova, the soprano who plays Rosalinde, to Pavel Horacek, the baritone Dr. Falke, was spectacular even to those who are not fans of opera music. The timelessness and comic timing of this wonderful operetta deserves an A and a strong recommendation to any opera lovers to see it. Even if you have never been to an opera, this is the perfect one to try out." *THE ST. LOUIS CURRENT – Laura Ayres*

"Strauss's **DIE FLEDERMAUS** in the Cutler Majestic Theatre last Friday night was an entertaining, bubbly show, with pretty sets and costumes by Martin Otava, also responsible for the witty, detailed staging. Strauss's alluring waltzes were well played by the orchestra of Teatro Lirico D'Europa, energetically conducted by Martin Mazik. These Czech artists looked their parts and acted and danced them to the hilt."

BOSTON GLOBE – Richard Dyer

This BAT Hits It Out of the Park

"This 3 act opera that brought the Garde Arts Center to their feet Tuesday, thanks to a lively performance of **DIE FLEDERMAUS!** The opera company had to be admired for its theatrical and vocal skills. Soprano Jitka Svobodova as Rosalinde was a standout singer, displaying great control and power. Anna Klamova-Janotova, a lovely soprano, won hearts in her role as Adele, the vivacious chamber maid, and displayed a fine range and technical mastery well beyond her years. The men's parts called on a broad range of acting skills,

and Jezek and Kriz enjoyed the challenge. The most riveting scene occurred in the 3rd act when G. Dinev appeared as Frosch – a drunken jailer. Dinev was hysterical. The stage direction by Martin Otava added physical interest to the music with interesting blocking, beautiful costumes and professional dancers. The sets were lavish and nicely done while the orchestra directed by Martin Mazik conveyed the wide swings between gaiety and somberness with great aplomb. Lightness and good humor prevail when the refrain "Chacun son gout" – "do what you want" – ushers one out into the night refreshed and humming a lively waltz tune." *THE DAY – Lee Howard*

Strauss, a 'Mouse' and a Night of Memories - DIE FLEDERMAUS

"I was whistling the waltz everyone knows as I left the Naples Philharmonic Center for the Arts Tuesday evening. "Well I see you really enjoyed tonight's performance," two of my favorite ushers commented, smiling as I stopped to chat with them. Czech Opera Prague collaboration with Teatro Lirico D'Europa certainly proved itself to be a competent company. The wall – to-wall audience clearly loved the performance, more than a few of them nodding and swaying to the familiar music as the drama unfolded. Particularly noteworthy was soprano Anna Klamatova-Janotova, perfectly cast as the petulant but sexy Adele. Sung and spoken in German with English super titles, one need not know a word of German to follow the story. Frosche, the tipsy jailer played by Gueorgui Dinev, brought down the house. Every five years or so I get a hankering for a fix of comic opera. Last night's performance satisfied that craving." *NAPLES DAILY NEWS – Peg Goldberg Longstreth*

A ROUSING DIE FLEDERMAUS

"PCA Great Performances lit another candle on its 75th-birthday cake with a charming performance of **DIE FLEDERMAUS**...a first rate and genuinely

humorous production, which was little short of miraculous for a road show in terms of voices, character acting, costumes, choreography and stage design. All of the characters were equally well sung and acted – and earned a late night standing ovation.” *PORTLAND PRESS HERALD – Christopher Hyde*