

Chandos

CHAN 8759

Treasures of Operetta III

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Carl Michael Ziehrer

- 2 **MONSIEUR BEUCAIRE:** Philomel [4:12]

André Messager

- 3 **A WALTZ DREAM:** Waltz of my dreams [4:19]

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- 4 **DER SINGENDE TRAUM:** You are the world to me [4:14]

Richard Tauber

- 5 **THE LAND OF SMILES:** Dance while you may [3:24]

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- 6 **THE MAID OF THE MOUNTAINS:** A Paradise for Two [3:44]

Harold Fraser-Simson

- 7 **THE FORTUNE TELLER:** Romany Life [3:43]

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- 8 **BRUDER STRAUBINGER:** It's Not a Sin to Kiss [3:42]

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- 11 **THE GEISHA:** Star of my Soul [4:04]

Sidney Jones

- 12 **LES SALTIMBANQUES:** It is love [4:40]

Louis Ganne

MARILYN HILL SMITH
soprano

PETER MORRISON
baritone

THE CHANDOS
CONCERT ORCHESTRA
RAYMOND COHEN *leader*
STUART BARRY *conductor*

THE CHANDOS SINGERS
JOHN MCCARTHY *director*

DDD

TT = 47:53

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Treasures of Operetta III

MARILYN HILL SMITH *soprano* • PETER MORRISON *baritone*

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DIE DREI WÜNSCHE

Thin, thin is my dear Gwendolin

Monsieur Beaucaire
Philomel

A WALTZ DREAM

Waltz of my dreams

DER SINGENDE TRAUM

You are the world to me

The Land of Smiles

Dance while you may

The Maid of the Mountains

A Paradise for two

THE FORTUNE TELLER

Romany Life

Bruder Straubinger

It's not a sin to kiss

Florodora

Tell me pretty maiden

FRIEDERIKE

Why did you kiss my heart awake?

THE GEISHA

Star of my soul

Les Saltimbanques

It is love



1. DIE DREI WÜNSCHE: Thin, thin is my dear Gwendolin [3:42]

Krenn & Lindau – Carl Michael Ziehrer (1843-1922)
English lyrics, Robin White

First performance: *Carl-Theater, Vienna. 9 March 1901*

The first-night critics of *Die drei Wünsche* (The Three Wishes) found the plot of this operetta to be as thin as Leopoldine, one of its characters (re-christened Gwendolin in Robin White's English lyric). Nevertheless, Ziehrer's delightful music maintained audience interest, and the stage work enjoyed success both inside and outside Austria.

In his Act 2 number *Dünn, dünn ist die Leopoldin'*, theatre-director Hummel sings the praises of his wife's manifold charms – though he confesses he finds her deficient in one respect...

2. MONSIEUR BEUCAIRE: Philomel [4:12]

Lonsdale – André Messager (1853-1929)
Lyrics, Adrian Ross

First performance: *Prince of Wales' Theatre, Birmingham. 7 April 1919*

Booth Tarkington's novel, *Monsieur Beaucaire*, formed the basis for André Messager's operetta, set in 18th-century England.

In a vain effort to distract the interest of Lady Mary Carlisle from the brave 'Duc de Châteaurien' (Monsieur Beaucaire in disguise), Frederick Bantison hosts a 'Pastoral Fête' (Act 2) in the elegant gardens of his residence just outside Bath. These peaceful, rural surroundings move Lady Mary to sing the opera's best-known number, a graceful hymn to Philomel, the nightingale.

3. A WALTZ DREAM: Waltz of my dreams [4:19]

Dörmann & Jacobson – Oscar Straus (1870-1954)
New English lyrics, Michael Flanders & Edmund Tracey

First performance (as Ein Walzertraum): *Carl-Theater, Vienna. 2 March 1907*

When Oscar Straus set out to compose *A Waltz Dream* he did so with the frankly admitted intention of equalling, or beating, the box-office records established by Lehár's *Merry Widow* – and for a time he succeeded.

Undoubtedly its most endearing song is the waltz *Leise, ganz leise* (Act 1), originally sung by two tenors, Viennese lieutenants, who are overcome by nostalgia and a longing to be back in their native city. Such was the immediate and universal popularity of this number, however, that it has since appeared in many different vocal and orchestral versions, including that recorded here for soprano and baritone.

4. DER SINGENDE TRAUM: You are the world to me [4:14]

Marischka & Feiner – Richard Tauber (1891-1948)
English lyrics, Robin White

First performance: *Theater an der Wien, Vienna. 31 August 1934*

Richard Tauber, the Austrian-born creator of several fine lyric tenor rôles in operettas by Franz Lehár, was an accomplished composer in his own right. In 1934, nine years before his best-known stage work, *Old Chelsea*, Tauber starred in his own three-act operetta, *Der singende Traum* (The Singing Dream). The story tells of a supremely gifted night-club chanteuse, who is first discovered and then promoted by a Korean magician. Its melodic score was undoubtedly influenced by Lehár's style, and perhaps nowhere more so than in *Du bist die Welt für mich* (You are the world to me).

5. THE LAND OF SMILES: Dance while you may [3:24]

Herzer & Löbner – Franz Lehar (1870-1948)

English lyrics, Harry Graham

First performance (as *Das Land des Lächelns*): Metropol-Theater, Berlin. 10 October 1929

Based on an earlier Lehar operetta, *Die gelbe Jacke* (1923), *The Land of Smiles* dramatically contrasts the widely differing cultures of West and East as its action moves from Vienna to Peking – cultures which are eventually to drive hero and heroine apart. But at the beginning of Act 1 all is bliss, as the curtain rises on a lively soirée. The entrance of the host's young daughter, Lisa, is greeted by applause. She thanks the guests, but reminds them that time is slipping away, and urges them to *Dance while you may*.

6. THE MAID OF THE MOUNTAINS: A Paradise for two [3:44]

Lonsdale – Harold Fraser-Simson (1873-1944)

Lyrics, Harry Graham

Additional numbers, James W. Tate (1875-1922)

Additional lyrics, F. Clifford Harris & Valentine [= Archibald Pechey]

First performance: Prince's Theatre, Manchester. 23 December 1916

Soon after the Manchester production of *The Maid of the Mountains* two numbers from Fraser-Simson's original score were replaced by new songs by James W. Tate. One of these was *A Paradise for two*, which appears in Act 2, set in the courtyard of the Governor of Santo's palace.

Teresa, the 'Maid of the Mountains', has been captured by the Governor's men. The price of her release is an exchange with the notorious bandit chief, Baldassarre, with whom she is in love. Baldassarre enters disguised, accompanied by two of his robbers. One of them, Beppo, is very fond of Teresa, but because of her feelings for Baldassarre she cannot return his love. Their situation finds expression

in one of British musical theatre's most beloved duets.

7. THE FORTUNE TELLER: Romany Life [3:43]

Smith – Victor Herbert (1859-1924)

First performance: Grand Opera House, Toronto. 14 September 1898

The Irish-born Victor Herbert settled in America in 1886, and became the first composer of American operetta to achieve international significance, creating cohesive scores linked to the libretti rather than vaudeville-style stage works which were merely vehicles for popular comedians.

The Fortune Teller, one of the most popular of Herbert's 40-odd operettas, was written for the Alice Nielsen Opera Company and starred Alice Nielsen herself in the tripartite rôles of Irma, a ballet student heiress at the Budapest Opera, her twin brother Fedor and a gypsy fortune teller called Musette. The last-named makes her Act 1 entrance with the rousing 'Gypsy Song à la Csárdás', *Romany Life*, a number which had to be repeated at the première.

8. BRUDER STRAUBINGER: It's not a sin to kiss [3:42]

West & Schnitzer – Edmund Eysler (1874-1949)

English lyrics, Adam Carstairs

First performance: Theater an der Wien, Vienna. 20 February 1903

After his identification papers are stolen the young Straubinger finds employment in a travelling show, where he is exhibited as 'Germany's oldest surviving soldier'. By chance, another of the show's attractions turns out to be Straubinger's long-lost love, Marie, but because of his disguise she fails to recognise him – until he sings her their old love song, *Küssen ist keine Sünd* (It's not a sin to kiss).

9. FLORADORA: Tell me, pretty maiden [3:45]

Hall – Leslie Stuart (1864-1928)

Lyrics, Ernest Boyd-Jones & Paul Rubens

First performance: Lyric Theatre, London. 11 November 1899

'Florodora' is a perfume, distilled on a Phillipine island of the same name, owned by Cyrus W. Gilfain. He also owns Abercoed Castle in Wales where, in Act 2, his daughter Angela is entertaining six of her girl friends. These young ladies have already made the acquaintance of Cyrus Gilfain's six clerks during a visit to Florodora, and *Tell me, pretty maiden* provides the girls and their admirers with the opportunity for a showstopping 'double sextette', in which the latter declare their emotions on bended knee. The version recorded here presents this classic of musical comedy as a charming vocal duet.

10. FRIEDERIKE: Why did you kiss my heart awake? [3:37]

Herzer & Löhner – Franz Lehár

English lyrics, Harry S. Pepper

First performance: Metropol-Theater, Berlin. 4 October 1928

Lehár's three-act play with music, *Friederike*, concerns a bitter-sweet episode in the life of Germany's revered poet, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832).

Although Friederike and Goethe are deeply in love and plan to marry, Friederike's prospective brother-in-law persuades her that her love for Goethe will jeopardise the poet's career, and that they should part. Sorrowfully she resigns herself to the inevitable, and pours out her feelings in the reflective *Why did you kiss my heart awake?*

11. THE GEISHA: Star of my soul [4:04]

Hall – Sidney Jones (1869-1946)

Lyrics, Harry Greenbank

First performance: Daly's Theatre, London. 25 April 1896

Lieutenant Reginald Fairfax, a British naval officer, is a frequent visitor to the Japanese 'Tea House of Ten Thousand Joys', where he has grown close to the lovely O Mimosa San, chief geisha at the establishment. He is, however, engaged to an English girl, and in Act 2 he reflects on the depth of his love for his absent fiancée in the ballad *Star of my soul*.

12. LES SALTIMBANQUES: It is love [4:40]

Ordonneau – Louis Ganne (1862-1923)

English lyrics, Marilyn Hill Smith

First performance: Théâtre de la Gaîté, Paris. 30 December 1899

The principal characters in Ganne's delightful opéra-comique, *Les Saltimbanques* (The Travelling Players), are artistes in the rather shabby Circus Malicorne. Act 1 sees the troupe in Versailles. Marion, a tight-rope walker, and her colleague, the chanteuse Suzanne, have both rejected the advances of the Baron de Valengoujon. Their action angers their money-grabbing director, Malicorne, since the Baron is a wealthy patron of the troupe, but the two girls are protected by the strong man, Grand Pingouin, and Paillasse, a clown. The four friends determine to leave the Circus and seek their fortunes elsewhere. The Act 1 curtain falls as they depart, singing the show's hit tune *C'est l'amour* (It is love).

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