

February 2018 operettas

9 February 2019: 3 p.m.

Kálmán, E. Countess Maritza. Operetta in three acts. Libretto by Julius Brammer and Alfred Grünwald. First performed Vienna, 1924.

The impoverished Count Tassilo, under an assumed name, is appointed bailiff on Countess Maritza's estate. He needs to earn a living and provide a dowry for his sister Lisa. Maritza, a young widow, arrives at the estate to celebrate her 'engagement', an invention intended to put off her numerous suitors. She chooses the name Baron Koloman Zsupán for her fictitious fiancé from Strauss' operetta, *The Gypsy Baron*. Lisa is one of Maritza's guests. Tassilo instructs her to keep his identity secret. A genuine Koloman Zsupán materialises, having seen an announcement of his 'engagement' in the press.

Tassilo is heard singing *Komm, Zigány* (Come, gypsies) and Maritza orders him to repeat it. When he refuses, she fires him but before he can leave, she apologises. Zsupán has decided that he prefers Lisa to Maritza, while Maritza is increasingly attracted to Tassilo. Another guest reveals Tassilo's identity and Maritza in a high temper insults Tassilo, who declares that he will leave. However, before he goes, the repentant Maritza writes him a 'reference' which is in fact a proposal of marriage. The operetta ends with Maritza and Tassilo, and Zsupán and Lisa, engaged.

Romberg, S. The New Moon. Operetta in two acts. Libretto by Oscar Hammerstein II, Frank Mandel and Lawrence Schwab. First performed Philadelphia, 1928.

Robert, a young French aristocrat with revolutionary ideas, flees to New Orleans in 1792. Under an assumed name, he sells himself as a bond-servant to planter and ship-owner Monsieur Beaunoir. He falls in love with Beaunoir's beautiful daughter Marianne. Eventually he is tracked down by Vicomte Ribaud and put aboard a ship, the *New Moon*, to be returned to France. Marianne is travelling on the same ship, pretending that she is in love with the ship's captain, George Duval. Robert and the bond-servants mutiny and landed on the Isle of Pines they found a new republic.

French ships arrive and Vicomte Ribaud expects them to conquer the island for the King of France. However, the French Commander reveals that there has been a revolution in France and that all aristocrats must die unless they renounce their titles. Ribaud, a Royalist, heads for execution but republican Robert renounces his title. All ends happily for him and Marianne.

23 February 2019: 3 p.m.

Sullivan, A. *The Yeomen of the Guard*. Operetta in two acts. Libretto by W.S. Gilbert. First performed London, 1888.

Colonel Fairfax is to be beheaded that day for the crime of sorcery. Wilfred, the head jailer at the Tower of London, is in love with Phoebe. Phoebe's brother, Leonard, has been appointed a Yeoman of the Guard. Their father, Sergeant Merryll, is anxious to rescue Fairfax who had twice saved his life in battle. He plans that Phoebe will get the key to the Fairfax's cell from, Wilfred while Leonard and Fairfax will exchange identities. The charge of sorcery against Fairfax was made by his wicked cousin, Sir Clarence Poltwhistle, who will inherit his estate if he dies unmarried.

Before he dies, Fairfax asks that he be allowed to marry any available woman who will receive 100 crowns for her assistance. His request is granted. A young singer, Elsie, needs money to buy medicine for her ailing mother. She is offered the chance to earn 100 crowns for marrying the condemned man. Her companion, a jester, Jack Point, wishes to marry Elsie but is assured that she will be widowed very quickly. Elsie is blindfolded and led off for the secret ceremony. Meanwhile Phoebe distracts Wilfred and steals his keys which she gives to her father who goes to free Fairfax. Sergeant Merryll disguises Fairfax as his son Leonard.

All is ready for the execution. Wilfred, Fairfax (disguised as Leonard) and two Yeomen go to fetch Fairfax. They return and Fairfax announces his own disappearance. Point is distraught at the escape of Elsie's husband, Wilfred is blamed, and all rush off to hunt for Fairfax. Jack Point reveals the secret wedding to Wilfred and convinces him to swear that he shot Fairfax dead as he swam across the river to escape. Wilfred agrees to save his own skin. Fairfax discovers the identity of his secret bride and, disguised as Leonard, attempts to woo her but is rejected. He is about to reveal himself when a shot is heard. Wilfred and Point declare that Wilfred has shot Fairfax so Point asks Elsie to marry him. Fairfax (still disguised as Leonard) instructs Point in the art of wooing but it soon becomes clear that he is wooing Elsie for himself and Elsie is responding. Angry and hurt, Phoebe inadvertently reveals to Wilfred that 'Leonard' is in fact Fairfax. In her remorse, she agrees to marry Wilfred if he remains silent.

The real Leonard then returns and announces that a reprieve has come for Fairfax. When Elsie arrives for her wedding to 'Leonard', she learns that Fairfax lives. Fairfax arrives but the distraught Elsie does not turn to see his face. He keeps up the pretence until Elsie begs for her freedom to go to

'Leonard' but he refuses. Finally Elsie turns to see his face and finally recognises him. Everyone is happy except the broken-hearted Jack Point.