

March 2018 operettas

9 March 2019: 3 p.m.

Herbert, V. Naughty Marietta. Operetta in two acts. Libretto by Rida Johnson Young. First performed New York, 1910.

Captain Dick Warrington and his band of woodsmen, farmers and Indians vow to capture the pirate, Bras Piqué, who is actually Étienne Grandet, son of the acting governor of the French colony of Louisiana. Étienne has ambitions to rule Louisiana under a dictatorship and to separate it from both France and the burgeoning United States of America.

Dick meets an Italian girl, known as 'Naughty Marietta', singing by the fountain. Marietta tells him that it has been foretold that she will love the man who can complete the melody and she asks him to try to complete it. He refuses, but finds himself whistling it soon afterwards.

Governor Grandet announces that a dispatch has come from the King of France offering 10,000 francs for the return of the Contessa d'Altena who exchanged places with her maid and travelled to the colonies. The Contessa always sings a fragment of a certain tune. Étienne believes that Marietta is the contessa and hopes to marry her. He proposes to Marietta at a ball where he auctions off his slave, Adah. Dick buys Adah and sets her free. Dick now realises that he may be in love with Marietta but Marietta jealously agrees to marry Étienne, announcing that she is the lost Contessa d'Altena.

Adah tells Dick that, if he tears Étienne's right sleeve, he will reveal Étienne's real identity as Bras Piqué. Dick tears off Étienne's sleeve and denounces him as the notorious pirate so Marietta refuses to marry him. The Governor threatens to send her to a convent and locks her in a room. She hears a voice outside completing her song, *Ah, Sweet Mystery of Life*. It is Dick, and they embrace through the window. Étienne discovers them, but Captain Dick's infantry appears to arrest Étienne and the rest of the pirates. Étienne relinquishes his claim on Marietta, and Dick and his men allow the pirates to escape without harm.

23 March 2019: 3 p.m.

Lehár, F. The land of smiles. Operetta in three acts. Libretto by Ludwig Herzer. First performed Vienna, 1929.

In Vienna in 1912, Countess Lisa marries a Chinese diplomat, Prince Sou-chong, and returns with him to China despite the warnings of her friends

and family. In Peking, despite their love, she finds that she is unable to come to terms with his culture, and especially when she finds that that he has four other wives. He assures her that it is just a formality, but unhappiness is inevitable. She wants to return to Vienna but is locked in the palace. She escapes with the help of the prince's sister, Princess Mi and the Viennese official Gustav, once her suitor in Vienna. During the escape, she meets Prince Sou-chong by accident but the prince accepts her decision and allows her to leave although they still love each other.