

May 2019 operettas

11 May 2019: 3 p.m.

Lehár, F. Eva. Operetta in three acts. Libretto by Alfred Maria Willner and Robert Baodanzky. First performed Vienna, 1911.

Eva works in a glass factory in Brussels. Octave Flaubert, a Parisian *bon vivant*, takes over the management of the factory from his father, the owner. He is captivated by Eva's beauty and attempts to seduce her by announcing to everyone that she is his fiancée. When she discovers that he doesn't mean it, she flees to Paris.

Courted by a Duke, she is drawn into the life of a *demi-mondaine* and even begins smoking cigarettes. Octave, lured to Paris by Eva's concerned companions, is dazzled by her new appearance and realises that he loves her. Eva is tired of the artificial life she has been leading and now finds that Octave is her 'prince in the fairytale' coming to her rescue.

25 May 2019: 3 p.m.

Sullivan, A. HMS Pinafore or The lass that loved a sailor. Operetta in two acts. Libretto by W.S. Gilbert. First performed London, 1878.

Josephine, daughter of the captain of the ship HMS Pinafore, is in love with a lower-class sailor, Ralph Rackstraw. Her father, Captain Corcoran, intends her to marry Sir Joseph Porter, First Lord of the Admiralty. Sir Joseph's advocacy of the equality of humankind encourages Ralph and Josephine to declare their love for each other and they plan to elope. The captain discovers this plan and sends Ralph to the brig.

Little Buttercup now reveals her long-held secret. Many years ago, when she 'practised baby-farming', she had cared for two babies, one 'of low condition', the other 'a regular patrician'. She confesses that she mixed up the babies. Ralph was the well-born; the Captain was the low-born. Sir Joseph now realises that Ralph should be the Captain and the Captain should be a lowly sailor. Sir Joseph's marriage with Josephine is now out of the question. Despite his former championing of equality, it does not extend to his own marriage to the daughter of a common sailor. He hands her to Captain Rackstraw. The former Captain, now of humble social rank, is free to marry Buttercup.