QUEENS COLLEGE AARON COPLAND SCHOOL OF MUSIC, QUEENS COLLEGE OPERA, THE DEPARTMENT OF DRAMA, THEATRE & DANCE, AND KUPFERBERG CENTER FOR THE ARTS

present

Franz Lehár's

The Merry Widow

Music by Franz Lehár
Libretto by Victor Léon and Leo Stein
English Version Dorothy Danner
Directed by Dorothy Danner
Conducted by Mark Powell

April 7–10, 2022
Music by Franz Lehár
Libretto by Victor Léon and Leo Stein

DOROTHY DANNER
  Director

MARK POWELL
  Conductor

ANT MA*
  Scenic Designer
  *Based on an original design by Erhard Rom

REBECCA MING
  Costume Designer

JEFFREY GREENBERG
  Lighting Designer

JENNIFER N. WOITKO
  Stage Manager

RALPH CARHART
  Production Manager
The Merry Widow

Setting

Act I – The Pontevedrian embassy, Paris
Act II – Hanna’s villa the next evening
Act III – Chez Maxim’s nightclub

There will be a 15-minute intermission after Act I and Act II.

Cast of Characters

Hanna Glawari  Sherice Roberts
Danilo Danilovitch  Andrew Wannigman
Baron Mirko Zeta  Kyle Doherty
Valencienne  Celina Randazzo*/ Erica J. Fletcher **
Camille de Rosillon  Scott La Marca*/ Eduardo Pacheco**
Njegus  Daniel Bauman
Kromow  Pablo Giraldo
Bogdanovitch  Moises Rodriguez
Sylviane  Marcella Grancaric
Raoul de St. Brioche  Terrance Pogue
Vicomte Cascada  Frank Wiederhold
Olga  Margaret McGovern
Pritschtistch  Evan Batsford
Praskowia  Danielle Kelly

Pontevedrian Dancers: Anna Yau, Filippa Francke, Luisina Alonzo
Grisettes: Alyssa Aviles, Maya Hussein, Margaret McGovern, Anna Yau,
Filippa Francke, Kailani Estrada, Luisina Alonzo
Male Dancers: Steven Jeltsch, Victor Brown
Ensemble: Alyssa Aviles, Omar Ahmed, Samantha Constantino, Lesly DeCastro,
Elijah John-Burnley, Juney Li, Noelle Richard, Rebecca Silver, Caitlin Rossbotham,
Matthew Davidson, Juan-Manuel Martinez

* Performing April 7, 9
** Performing April 8, 10
The Merry Widow

Act I
Paris, 1905. The embassy in Paris of the financially strapped Balkan principality of Pontevedro is holding a ball to celebrate the birthday of their royal sovereign. The Pontevedrian ambassador, Baron Mirko Zeta, is hosting the event. Hanna Glawari, the Pontevedrian citizen, who has inherited twenty million francs from her late husband, is making her first appearance after her period of mourning. Baron Zeta is scheming to ensure that she will keep her fortune in the country, saving Pontevedro from bankruptcy. The Baron intends that Count Danilo Danilovitsch, the first secretary of the embassy, should marry the widow. Danilo is still not at the party, so Zeta sends Danilo’s assistant, Njegus, to fetch him from Maxim’s.

Baron Zeta’s wife, Valencienne, has been flirting with the French attaché to the embassy, Camille de Rosillon, who writes “I love you” on her fan. Valencienne, though madly attracted to Camille, puts off his advances, saying that she is a respectable wife and suggests that Camille should marry the widow. Hanna arrives at the ball, and she is immediately surrounded by eager Parisian suitors. Zeta and his staff—Bogdanovitch, Kromov, and Pritschitsch—all worry about the Parisians Camille, Cascada, and St. Brioche marrying Hanna. Zeta threatens his staff until they agree to enlist their wives Olga, Sylviane, and Praskowia to help keep the Frenchmen away from the widow. Danilo finally arrives at the ball after a night out at Maxim’s.

Hanna catches her breath, leaves the ball, and discovers Danilo in a room fast asleep. They were in love before her marriage, but his royal uncle had interrupted their romance because Hanna did not have the status for marriage to Danilo. Danilo now refuses to court Hanna for her fortune, and Hanna vows that she will not marry him until he says “I love you”—something he claims he will never do.

Njegus finds Valencienne’s fan with the incriminating words and gives it to Zeta. Zeta fears that the fan belongs to Kromov’s wife Olga and decides to return the fan discreetly. Valencienne, knowing it is hers, desperately offers to return the fan to Olga herself. The Baron orders Danilo to marry Hanna. Danilo refuses but offers to eliminate any Parisian suitors as a compromise.

As the “Ladies Choice” dance is about to begin, Hanna chooses the one who is not interested in her: Danilo. Danilo then announces that he will sell his dance with Hanna for ten thousand francs, with the proceeds to benefit charity. The suitors lose interest in the offer. After they leave, Danilo attempts to dance with Hanna, who refuses but eventually relents with passion.

Act II
Hanna hosts a party at her villa that celebrates the historic traditions of Pontevedro, which involve food, dancing, and telling the story of Vilia and unrequited love. Zeta is comforted by news that Camille is known to be in love with a married woman. Hanna accuses Danilo of avoiding her. Danilo and the men remark on the difficulties of handling women.

Camille continues to try and seduce Valencienne and begs her for a token of her love. Valencienne refuses and Camille asks that they at least say goodbye in private in the pavilion. Zeta, Danilo, and Njegus meet at the pavilion. Njegus sees the couple, as does Zeta, who says the woman kissing Camille is his own wife. To save Valencienne, Njegus skillfully puts Hanna in her place. Camille emerges from the pavilion with Hanna, who announces that they plan to marry. Zeta is even more distraught, as is Valencienne. Danilo is devastated and tells the story of the
princess who cheated on her prince. He angrily bolts from the party, but Hanna now has proof that Danilo does love her.

**Act III**

Njegus tells Zeta that Danilo was detained at the railway station and that Hanna is throwing a special surprise party for him at Maxim’s, including the famous dancing Grisettes. Danilo arrives and tells Hanna to not marry Camille for the sake of Pontevedro. Hanna confesses that she was never engaged to Camille but was protecting the reputation of a married woman. Danilo comes close to declaring his love to Hanna but says her fortune stands in the way. Cascada produces the fan, and Zeta finally recognizes it as his wife’s and threatens to divorce Valencienne on the spot. Njegus immediately proposes to Hanna, but upon learning that she will lose her fortune if she remarries anyone, he quickly retracts his offer. Now Danilo is free to tell Hanna he loves her and wants to marry her. Hanna joyously accepts, adding that her fortune will now revert to the state. Valencienne assures Zeta of her fidelity by pointing out her declaration of love: “To my darling husband” on the opposite side of the fan. With the couples united, the men are left to wonder about the mystery of women.

**A Note from Director Dorothy Danner**

What woman can boast of inspiring three films, a ballet, and a novel, not to mention hats, gloves, shoes, and a special style of corset!

The answer, of course, is the “Merry Widow”—that undaunted lady who has survived 117 years of unbroken performances in 24 languages.

Although the original book was written by Léon and Stein, based on a play by Henri Meilhac, there are dozens of adaptations from which to choose. After wading through the maze of possibilities plus the sole copy of the 1907 novel based on the operetta (which I found buried in the research shelves of the New York Public Library), one gratefully arrives at the score. Fortunately, it is masterful, filled with gorgeous melodies, wit, and elegance. The waltz is the soul of the operetta and much of the director’s focus is toward creating a romantic atmosphere which will allow the score to cast its spell and ensnare both the characters and the audience. The book reflects the irreverent political intrigue and naughtiness which the Viennese understood better than anyone else.

The *Merry Widow* opened in Vienna in 1905 and was an instant success, introducing a new eroticism to operetta. The operetta came to America in 1907 with some omissions of lines and situations considered too risqué for American tastes. Today, of course, the opera hardly seems shocking, but audiences continued to flock to its performances, to savor the glorious score and to go back to that lavish Viennese time when romance and the waltz reigned supreme.
## Production Staff

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<th>Role</th>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Director</td>
<td>Alex Paul Sheerin</td>
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<td>Musical Preparation</td>
<td>Ron Land</td>
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<td>Musical Preparation</td>
<td>Youn Ju Namkoong</td>
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<td>Co-choreographers</td>
<td>Carlos Fittante</td>
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<td>Co-choreographers</td>
<td>Dorothy Danner</td>
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<td>Assistant Stage Manager</td>
<td>Gabrielle Guagenti</td>
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<td>Dance Rehearsal Assistant</td>
<td>Julie Lemberger</td>
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<td>Technical Director DTD</td>
<td>William Griffiths</td>
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<td>Justin Tricarico</td>
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<td>Scenic Charge</td>
<td>Madeleine Dieterle</td>
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<td>Jessica Blackman</td>
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<td>Master Electrician</td>
<td>Craig Platt</td>
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<td>Light Board Operator</td>
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<td>Jenni Cabrera</td>
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<td>Makhai Grainger</td>
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<td>Rina Tazawa</td>
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<td>Jeongdae Lee</td>
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<td>Kemal Oksal</td>
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<td>Videographer</td>
<td>Amy Guarino</td>
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<td>Art Design</td>
<td>Grace Han</td>
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The producers want to thank the TDF Costume Collection Rental Program for its assistance in this production.
Orchestra

Violin I  Diana Pipa
          Alejandra Fred
          Ganling Chu
          Arielle Harvey

Violin II  Aaron Ichel
            Victoria Arsenicos
            Jillian Allen
            Albert Wheeler

Viola  Marcus Brodsky
       Erica Johnson
       David Uribe

Cello  Sara Strozzo
       Lily Manzueta
       Julia Sohl

Bass  Nathaniel Ryan
       Kathryn O’Neill

Flute  Zach Tad-Y
       Sophia Sheinin

Oboe  Eric Juneau
       Hailey Unger

Clarinet  David Valbuena
          Jackie Gillette

Bassoon  Sequoia Kessler
         Emily Bivona-Maldonado

Horn  Natalie Oliveri
       Connor Goodfellow
       Zavid Lan
       Devin McKenzie

Trumpet  Luis Cardenas
         Aiden Walsh

Trombone  Elliot Brown
          Djorkaeff Zentla
          Ric Becker

Timpani  Amala Korah

Percussion  Alphonso Valentin
            Linda Strzelecki

Keyboard  Brian Fong (Celeste/Harp)

Orchestral Administrator  Robin Grasso

Graduate Conducting Studio  Eric Juneau
                           Jeongdae Lee
                           Kemal Oksal
Aaron Copland School of Music

Director  Michael Lipsey
Associate Chairmen  David Schober
              Mark-Anson Cartwright
              Dennis Mackrel

Director of Vocal and Opera Studies  Sherry Overholt
Director of Orchestral Studies  Mark Powell
Director of Administration  Thomas Lee
Office Assistant  Janice Raskin
College Assistant  Christina Firdy

Department of Drama, Theatre & Dance

Acting Chair  Edisa Weeks
Dance Program Director  Yin Mei Critchell
Drama Program Director  Claudia Feldstein
Department Secretary  Christina Stahl
College Assistant  Orit Zilka

The Aaron Copland School of Music wants to thank the Department of Drama, Theatre & Dance and its faculty for their collaboration on all aspects of this production. A special thanks to Grace Han and Carlos Fittante for their contribution to this production. Thank you to Chief of Staff Meghan Moorewil for her on-campus support. Thank you to Michael Lipsey for his unwavering support as our producer. Most importantly, we also thank Dean William McClure and his staff for their full support of this production during this pandemic.

The Department of Drama, Theatre & Dance wishes to acknowledge that our facilities are placed on the traditional homelands of the Lenape people. We honor the Lenape as the past, present and future stewards of this land. You can learn more about the Lenape people now and their history in our region at their official website: https://nanticoke-lenape.info/history.htm

THE DEPARTMENT OF DRAMA, THEATRE, AND DANCE IS PART OF THE KUPFERBERG CENTER FOR THE ARTS, QUEENS COLLEGE.