

J. STRAUSS II

DIE FLEDERMAUS (HIGHLIGHTS)

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| <p>1 Overture Orchestra (8:50)</p> <p>2 Turtle dove who flew aloft Alfred (0:56)</p> <p>3 Here's a letter from my sister Adele (2:12)</p> <p>4 When these lawyers don't deliver Eisenstein, Lawyer, Rosalinda (2:14)</p> <p>5 Come along to the ball Falke, Eisenstein (1:43)</p> <p>6 To part is such sweet sorrow Rosalinda, Eisenstein, Adele (3:46)</p> <p>7 Drink, my darling, drink to me Alfred, Rosalinda, Frank (1:37)</p> <p>8 Good sir, what can you think of me Rosalinda, Alfred, Frank (1:48)</p> <p>9 My lovely, lively pigeon house Frank, Alfred, Rosalinda (1:44)</p> <p>10 What a joy to be here Chorus (1:13)</p> <p>11 From time to time I entertain Orlofsky (1:11)</p> <p>12 My friends, your kind attention Orlofsky, Falke, Chorus, Adele, Eisenstein (0:47)</p> <p>13 My dear Marquis (Adele's Laughing Song) Adele (1:59)</p> <p>14 How he prances and romances Rosalinda, Eisenstein (3:25)</p> <p>15 Voice of my homeland (Czardas) Rosalinda (3:01)</p> <p>16 Champagne's delicious bubbles Orlofsky, Eisenstein, Adele, Chorus (2:17)</p> | <p>17 Sir Chevalier, votre santé ... Brother dear Eisenstein, Frank, Falke, Rosalinda, Adele, Ida, Orlofsky, Chorus (6:33)</p> <p>18 Enough, my friends, enough Orlofsky, Chorus, Eisenstein, Frank, Rosalinda, Falke, Adele, Ida (4:06)</p> <p>19 Ever since I was a baby Adele, Ida, Frank (4:40)</p> <p>20 Last night I had adventures Rosalinda, Alfred, Eisenstein (2:45)</p> <p>21 Oh, Eisenstein, oh, Eisenstein Rosalinda, Adele, Ida, Frank, Chorus, Eisenstein, Falke, Orlofsky, Alfred (2:32)</p> |
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Original Libretto by Haffner and Genée
after *Le Reveillon* by Meilhac and Halévy
English libretto by Ruth and Thomas Martin

Rosalinda - Regina Resnik (*soprano*)
Adele - Patrice Munsel (*soprano*)
Alfred - Jan Peerce (*tenor*)
Gabriel von Eisenstein - James Melton (*tenor*)
Prince Orlofsky - Risé Stevens (*mezzo-soprano*)
Dr. Falke - Robert Merrill (*baritone*)
Frank - Hugh Thompson (*baritone*)
The Lawyer - Johnny Silver (*tenor*)
Ida - Paula Lenchner (*soprano*)

RCA Victor Orchestra
Robert Shaw Chorale (Robert Shaw, director)
Fritz Reiner, conductor

Recorded September 20, 1950 in Manhattan Center, New York City
First issued as RCA Victor LM-1114

Producer and Audio Restoration Engineer: Mark Obert-Thorn
Special thanks to Maynard F. Bertolet for providing source material
Cover artwork based on a photograph of Fritz Reiner

Total duration: 59:19 ©2010 Pristine Audio.

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FRITZ REINER

RCA VICTOR ORCHESTRA - ROBERT SHAW CHORALE



STRAUSS - DIE FLEDERMAUS (HIGHLIGHTS)

REGINA RESNIK • PATRICE MUNSEL • RISÉ STEVENS
JAN PEECE • JAMES MELTON • ROBERT MERRILL
ENGLISH LIBRETTO BY RUTH AND THOMAS MARTIN

Obert-Thorn

RECORDED 1950

PRISTINE
AUDIO

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AUDIO

PACO 037

STRAUSS DIE FLEDERMAUS (HIGHLIGHTS)
REINER, RCA VICTOR ORCH., SOLOISTS, ROBERT SHAW CHORALE

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COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO

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PRISTINE
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One of the new productions planned by Rudolf Bing for his first season as general manager of the Metropolitan Opera (1949-50) was an all-star, Broadway-style revival, in English, of *Die Fledermaus*. Garson Kanin (the playwright of *Born Yesterday* and screenwriter of *Adam's Rib*) was asked to provide a new book and direct, while Howard Dietz (whose musical theater collaborations with composer Arthur Schwartz included *Dancing in the Dark* and *You and the Night and the Music*) would furnish the lyrics. Veteran French coloratura Lily Pons was initially discussed for the part of Adele, and Fritz Reiner was engaged to conduct. The whole production was to be recorded by Columbia Records as part of their ongoing series of complete operas featuring Met personnel.

From early on, however, the original plans began to unravel. Reiner feuded with Kanin over some of the latter's staging ideas, such as having the conductor face the audience during the overture, and having the chorus lying supine during the "Duidu" portion toward the end of the second act where they would be out of the conductor's sightline. More significantly, and unbeknownst to the Met management, Reiner had recently switched allegiance from Columbia to its rival RCA Victor, which was planning its own *Fledermaus* highlights album using Met stars under contract to them, to be conducted by Reiner.

After learning of this, Bing maneuvered to replace Reiner with Eugene Ormandy, the Philadelphia Orchestra music director who was a Columbia artist, but who had had limited experience as an opera conductor. Reiner, furious when he heard he had been replaced, happened upon Ormandy in the office of the Met's musical administrator, and said with his typical dryness, "I hear that you are going to conduct *Fledermaus*. Do you know the piece?"

Meanwhile, the rest of the cast took shape. Ljuba Welisteh, the "Bulgarian bombshell" who had made such a striking impression as *Salome* under Reiner during the Met's previous season, would sing *Rosalinda*. Wagnerian tenor Set Svanholm was an unexpected choice as her husband, Eisenstein. Although Pons had learned the role of Adele, she would sing it only on the Columbia recording. Patrice Munsel was the Adele for the premiere, and would go on to record the role for RCA, as would the Orlofsky, Ruse Stevens. The production opened on December 20, 1950, and the Columbia recording (reissued on Pristine Audio PACO 030) was begun four days later.

By that time, however, the RCA highlights recording had already been completed for three months. The new Dietz translation being unavailable to the label, a version written by Ruth and Thomas Martin which had been prepared for an NBC television performance during the 1949-50 season was used. There was a fairly straightforward rendering of the Haffner and Genée original, as opposed to Dietz's much more self-consciously arch reworking. Most of the original numbers were preserved on the nearly hour-long LP, but some had to be limited to a single verse due to timing constraints.

In his essay on the work in *Opera on Record*, Alan Blyth preferred this highlights collection to the more-complete Columbia recording, finding that "[t]he young Regina Resnik makes a delightfully dizzy Rosalinde, James Melton a lively Eisenstein, Patrice Munsel a spirited Adele" while "Robert Merrill makes much of 'Brüderlein', sorry, 'Brother dear'" and Fritz Reiner conducts the work "with more brio" than Ormandy.

The present transfer was made from the best portions of several American RCA pressings (plum "shaded dog", red "shaded dog" and even 45 rpm discs). Despite the presence of Reiner and several celebrated singers, RCA has not made this recording available in any form for nearly half a century. We are happy to rectify that oversight now.

Mark Obert-Thorn

FURTHER NOTES ON THIS RECORDING CAN BE FOUND AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM