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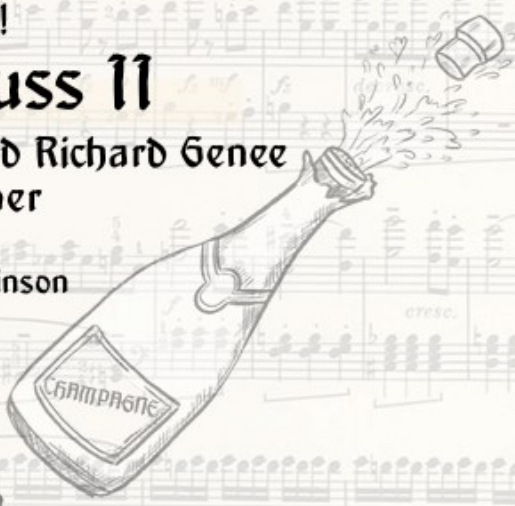


Die Fledermaus

or The Revenge of the Bat!

by Johann Strauss II

Libretto by Carl Haffner and Richard Genee
Translated by John Mortimer
Directed by Anthony Ravenhall
Musical Director Dr. Richard Jenkinson
With the Orchestra of St. John





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OPERA WORCESTER

presents

Die Fledermaus

or ***The Revenge of the Bat***

Music by Johann Strauss II

Libretto by Carl Haffner and Richard Genee
Translated by John Mortimer

20–22 March 2024
The Norbury Theatre, Droitwich

Act 1 ~ The Eisensteins' apartment in Vienna, New Year's Eve, 1899

Interval

Act 2 ~ Later that evening, a party on stage at the Old Imperial Theatre

Act 3 ~ The Municipal Penitentiary, the following morning

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A Message from the President

It is again my great pleasure to welcome you all to the Norbury Theatre for our production of *Die Fledermaus.* Those with long memories will know that this is third time we have presented this work, thought by many to be the finest of all operettas. Some members of tonight's cast appeared in our earlier productions of *Die Fledermaus,* though in different rôles. This year we introduce some new, young, singers of great talent, whose performances we are sure you will acclaim. We are also delighted that our performances are being accompanied by the Orchestra of St John, and we welcome dancers from the Translucent Dance Studio, whose contribution we are sure will enhance your enjoyment. The production, as last year's, is in the safe hands of Anthony Ravenhall and Richard Jenkinson, whose experience and skill guarantee us an enjoyable trip to imperial Vienna, the grandest and most opulent of imperial capitals.

Thank you for your support of Opera Worcester.

Paul Thompson

Anthony Ravenhall ~ Director

Born and raised in Worcester, Tony found his way to Drama School at the Royal Welsh Conservatoire of Music and Drama via Town Planning, the Worcester Arts Workshop, Supermarket Management and Driving a forklift truck in a maximum-security prison.

Specialising in Theatre for Young People and Education, he worked across the country ending up at the York Theatre Royal before helping to set up Cleveland Theatre Company and running the 'Take Off' international theatre festivals. Parenthood helped the move into Education, and whilst still freelancing as theatre director, he helped set up and ultimately became leader of the Performing Arts department at York College, helping train the young performers of the future.



Now semi-retired, Tony can take those jobs he is passionate about! Relishing the challenge and the opportunity to work with such a distinguished Musical Director and accomplished cast, Tony brought his diverse, depth of experience in theatre to the already well respected and appreciated work of Opera Worcester with last year's *Merry Widow.* He hopes this year to bring an exciting perspective and added dimension to the charms of Strauss's *Die Fledermaus.*

Richard Jenkinson ~ Musical Director

Richard's musical education began at the age of five and he studied cello with Florence Hooton, Raphael Wallfisch and William Pleeth. He studied conducting with Michael Salter and later at the Guildhall School with Alan Hazeldine. Richard graduated from the Guildhall with Distinction and was awarded the school's coveted Gold Medal. He was principal 'cello with the Irish Chamber Orchestra and until 2016 was principal with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. In 2012 Richard joined the Dante String Quartet and has recorded for Hyperion, Naxos and the Stanford's Quartets on the Somm label. The quartet has performed several cycles of the complete Beethoven and Shostakovich Quartets and toured Japan in 2016 and 2018.

Richard is Musical Director of the British Police Symphony Orchestra and the Orchestra of St John, Bromsgrove. From 2016-19 he was Music Director of the orchestra and choir of the G.K.T. Music Society at King's College, London and is conductor of the Worcestershire Youth Orchestra. Concerts have included regular appearances at Symphony Hall, Birmingham and conducting a gala concert at the Royal Albert Hall, London in an event involving over 600 performers. In 2019, he successfully defended a Ph.D. on the music of Kodály at the University of Birmingham. During the covid imposed lockdowns of 2020 Richard gained Grade 8 and an ARSM diploma in Singing, which he passed with Distinction.



John Mortimer

John Clifford Mortimer was born on the 21st April 1923 in London. Mortimer was educated at Harrow and at Brasenose College, Oxford. He wrote plays for the stage, television, movies and radio, as well as many novels, short stories and autobiographical works.

It was the TV series *Rumpole of the Bailey* that made Mortimer a household name. He merged his two fields together to create the character Horace Rumpole, which he loosely based on his father.

Mortimer's translation of Die Fledermaus was a more surprising foray into the world of opera, but his work for the Royal Opera House's 1989 production breathed new life into the classic with his customary acerbic wit. Mortimer died on 16th January 2009 at the ripe old age of 85 but his legacy lives on in Horace Rumpole, A Voyage Round My Father and, of course, The Revenge of the Bat!



Die Fledermaus

Johann Strauss II was born to an esteemed musical family and his father was credited with the title of the 'Father of the Viennese Waltz'. The composer Hector Berlioz would comment that 'Vienna without Strauss is like Austria without the Danube' and even 125 years after Strauss' death in 1899 the Strauss family dynasty is celebrated and revered in Austria. Strauss II (his father was also called Johann) has affectionately become known as the Waltz King composing hit after hit in his lifetime and is commemorated with a golden statue in Vienna – indeed no Viennese New Year is complete without his works!

Among his nearly twenty operas, *Die Fledermaus* (The Bat) has become a mainstay of the opera stage and is frequently performed at opera houses across the globe. However, the backdrop to Strauss' masterpiece were dark turbulent times and the calamitous collapse of financial stability in Austria-Hungary. The plot (after Meilhac and Halévy's vaudeville play *Le réveillon*) is almost farcical based on mistaken identity, flirtation and a practical joke that has rather unforeseen consequences to which Strauss adds his own unique brand of sparkling positivity that perhaps went someway to countering the worries of the day. From the moment *Die Fledermaus* hit the stage on 5th April 1874 at the *Theater an der Wien* it has never failed to delight audience with its glorious melodies, escapism from reality and a certain penchant for excessive drinking!

Director's Notes

New Years Eve, 1899, Vienna and the party to end the century has begun. The cream of city society are there but unaware that they are unwilling participants in Dr Falke's plans to repay his former friend Eisenstein, for a cruel practical joke, which resulted in Falke having to leave Vienna in disgrace some years earlier.

Aided by the jaded socialite, Prince Orlofsky, Falke has devised a devious and cunning plan, 'The Bat's Revenge'. Amidst entertainment from the Dancers of the Corps de Ballet and Guest Performers, the evening unfolds into a web of dalliance, disguises and deceit, but where will it end? Perhaps Frank, the Governor of the local Gaol can best tell us that.

Some say that Revenge is a dish best served cold, but this dish is served with Champagne. Lots of it and well chilled of course!

Opera Worcester is thrilled to bring this rare performance of the Royal Opera House's 1989 version of the original text by John Mortimer, of *Rumpole of the Bailey* fame, back to the stage. This version combines a new witty and extremely funny script with the original Strauss score to create a dazzling cocktail of well known arias and music with fast moving and scintillating dialogue We hope our production captures all the original excitement and fun of the 'Fin de Siècle' original within a contemporary sounding atmosphere that not only has you humming along to the well known tunes and music but journeying with us as we attempt to unravel the plot that is 'The Revenge of a Bat!'

Cast (in order of appearance)

Adele ~ *Lady's maid to Rosalinde*
Naomi Awre

Rosalinde ~ *Married to Eisenstein*
Catherine Barrett

Alfredo ~ *Italian Opera Singer*
Samuel Taunton

Gabriel von Eisenstein ~ *Married to Rosalinde*
Robert Felstead

Dr. Blind ~ *Lawyer*
Phil Joseph

Falke ~ *Barrister*
Aaron Prewer-Jenkinson

Colonel Frank ~ *Prison Governor*
Paul Ellis

Prince Orlofsky ~ *Russian socialite*
Meriel Ford

Ivan ~ *Valet to Orlofsky*
Jeremy Morfey

Ida ~ *Adele's sister and Member of the Corps de Ballet*
Briony Stevens

Frosch ~ *Prison Warder*
Tim Cranmore

Policemen
James Black, Michael Pugh

Waiters
Michael Pugh, John Caldwell

Party Guest Soloists
Shara Parry, Paul Thompson

Ensemble
Tammara Adams, Gail Black, James Black,
Ash Butler, Zero Butler, John Caldwell, Caroline Causier,
Jeremy Morfey, Shara Parry, Michael Pugh

Dancers
Alice Langford, Margaux Lucas, Elysia Winter

Director ~ Anthony Ravenhall

Musical Director ~ Dr Richard Jenkinson

Assistant Musical Director ~ Susan Black

Dance Principal ~ Elizabeth Winter (Translucent Dance)

Choreographer ~ Matthew Lucas

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Front of House Manager ~ Norbury Theatre

Front of House Team ~ Margaret Box and team, Norbury Theatre

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Jan Vale and St. Marks PCC
Phil Weston, Hayley Tally and all staff at Perdiswell Young People's Leisure Club
The Norbury Theatre staff and volunteers
Gill Bayliss

Orchestra of St John

Violin 1
Shulah Oliver-Smith (leader)
Sarah Vernon
Cat Ilingworth
Jon Pendrous

Violin 2
Terri Bethel
Gill Pendrous
Peter Jackson

Viola
Chris Bertram
Jo Joyce

Cello
Jo Stubbs
Julie Robertson
Kate Moon

Bass
Simon Smith

Flute
Jenny Argent
Heather Barnes

Oboe
Hazel Bates
Iain Rowe

Clarinet
Robert Porter
Kay Mellor

Bassoon
Oliver Ridgway
Jo Mattinson

Horn
Claire Poole
Sarah Gee

Trumpet
David Hirst
Colin Butterworth

T***rombone***
Dan Price
Craig Sproston

Percussion
Hannah Stubbs

Keyboard ~ Joy Reeve

Opera Worcester

Opera Worcester attracts singers from all over Worcestershire and surrounding counties. Our repertoire is varied and as well as opera, includes musicals and operetta. We like to give opportunities to aspiring young singers as well as established local performers but, above all, Opera Worcester seeks to bring passionate singers of all ages together to perform. Why not join us?

Opera Worcester rehearses on Monday evenings in St Mark's Church Hall, Cherry Street, Worcester WR5 3DW. Rehearsals generally run from 7.30pm to 10pm. We'd love to see you!
www.operaworcester.uk/membership/

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Remembered ~ May He Rest in Peace ~ Harry Emmerson

Opera Worcester Community Choir

Opera Worcester formed a Community Choir in September 2022. It has proved to be a most successful project and we are extremely excited about its future. The sessions are led by our musical director, Philip Prince, an established leader in community choirs in Worcester. We sing a wide range of music, including musicals, contemporary and popular classics.

We meet on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of the month at St Mark's Church Hall, Cherry Street, Worcester WR5 3DW from 1.30pm to 3.30pm. You don't have to read music and if you just enjoy music, singing and socialising, we would love to welcome you. Each session costs £5 and refreshments are provided.
www.operaworcester.uk/community-choir/

Do come and support the Community Choir's next concert, in aid of MacMillan Cancer Support:

Sounds of Summer ~ Saturday 8th June, 2.30pm ~ St Swithun's Church, Worcester.

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Conductor - Dr Richard Jenkinson

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