

**DER ROSENKAVALIER (THE
ROSE-BEARER): COMEDY
FOR MUSIC IN THREE ACTS**

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HUGO VON HOFMANNSTHAL & RICHARD STRAUSS

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DER ROSENKAVALIER

(THE ROSE-BEARER)

Comedy for Music in Three Acts by
HUGO VON HOFMANNSTHAL
(English Version by ALFRED KALISCH)

Music by
RICHARD STRAUSS
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Dr. Richard Strauss

SYNOPSIS

The play begins with a scene in a chamber of the Princess von Werdenberg's Vienna residence in the early years of the reign of Maria Theresa. The Princess reclines on a sofa half embraced by the ardent Octavian who professes an all consuming love for her. In the midst of this impassioned scene the lovers are disturbed by sounds which the indiscreet ones fear are the footsteps and the voice of the Prince von Werdenberg, returning unexpectedly from hunting. Octavian quickly conceals himself and dons the dress of a lady's maid, and the anxiety of the Princess is changed to amusement when the noisy, boastful and debauched Baron Ochs of Lerchenau unceremoniously enters the chamber to crave the assistance of the Princess in his forthcoming marriage with Sophia Faninal. The old rake no sooner sets eyes on Octavian disguised as a maid that he makes love to her and invites her to sup with him. Meanwhile the Princess, as was the practice of ladies of quality in those days, has her morning interview with her attorney, head cook, milliner, hairdresser, literary adviser, animal dealer, etc., including a flute player and an Italian tenor, whose business it is to help divert her.

When Baron Lerchenau departs the Princess asks Octavian to be the bearer of the silver rose which the bridegroom left with her to be delivered to the bride, Sophia, according to the custom of those days. The first act ends a little sadly when the Princess reflects on the day not distant when her charm shall have faded and her power to attract her lover shall have passed away.

In the second act Sophia in her home receives the silver rose sent to her by the Princess in behalf of Baron Lerchenau. Unfortunately for the Baron, Octavian no sooner delivers the rose, and Sophia no sooner receives it, than the two fall desperately in love with each other. In the midst of their new-found joy the Baron enters to be formally presented to his betrothed and to have the contract duly drawn and signed. His impudent manner and loose language disgust Sophia. Octavian picks a quarrel with him, draws his sword and wounds him in the hand. Sophia weeps and protests she will never marry the Baron. Faninal fumes and rages, declaring his daughter shall marry the Baron or take the veil, for he is socially ambitious and seeks to link his wealth as a merchant with an aristocratic house. Octavian sets his wits to work and the third act of the play puts everything to rights.

Disguised as the maid of the Princess he makes and keeps an appointment with the Baron, at an inn. There so many tricks are played on the Baron that he thinks he has lost his reason and is in a madhouse. Faces appear in unsuspected panels; a widow enters claiming him as her husband; children rush in and hail him as "papa"; the commissary of police arrests him on a charge of leading young girls astray; and in his attempt to clear himself, he makes a hopeless muddle of it all and is rightfully disgraced. The merchant, Faninal, is furious to find his prospective son-in-law in such a brawl, and Sophia publicly renounces him. The arrival of the Princess is the signal for the police to withdraw and for Octavian to reveal himself to the Baron in his usual garments of a man.

And so the play ends, happily, although there is a little bitter in the cup of the Princess as she sees her lover so soon another's prize. The love of the Princess for the boy was but a passing romance, innocent enough, though indiscreet, but it supplies the shadow to the lovely picture of Octavian and Sophia locked in each others arms when the comedy is done.

CHARACTERS

PRINCESS VON WERDENBERG (<i>Wife of Field Marshal Prince von Werdenberg</i>)	Soprano
BARON OCHS OF LERCHENAU	Bass
OCTAVIAN (<i>called Mignon—a Young Gentleman of Noble Family</i>)	Mezzo-Soprano
HERR VON FANINAL (<i>a Rich Merchant, Newly Ennobled</i>)	High Baritone
SOPHIA (<i>His Daughter</i>)	High Soprano
MISTRESS MARIANNE LEITMETZER (<i>Duenna</i>)	High Soprano
VALZACCHI (<i>a Man of Affairs</i>)	Tenor
ANNINA (<i>His Partner</i>)	Alto
A COMMISSARY OF POLICE	Bass
MAJOR-DOMO OF THE PRINCESS	Tenor
MAJOR-DOMO OF FANINAL	Tenor
THE PRINCESS'S ATTORNEY	Bass
LANDLORD	Tenor
A SINGER	High Tenor
A SCHOLAR	
A FLUTE PLAYER	
A HAIRDRESSER	
HIS ASSISTANT	
A WIDOW OF NOBLE FAMILY	
THREE ORPHANS OF NOBLE FAMILY	{ Soprano Mezzo-Soprano Alto
A MILLINER	Soprano
A VENDOR OF ANIMALS	Tenor
FOUR FOOTMEN OF THE PRINCESS	{ Two Tenor Two Bass
FOUR WAITERS	{ One Tenor Three Bass
<i>A Little Black Boy, Footmen, Couriers, Heyducks, Cookboys, Guests, Musicians, Two Watchmen, Four Little Children, Various Personages of suspicious appearance.</i>	

PLACE OF ACTION :

Vienna, in the early years of the reign of Maria Theresa.

ERSTER AUFGUG

Das Schlafzimmer der Feldmarschallin. Links im Alkoven das grosse zelförmige Himmelbett. Neben dem Bett ein dreiteiliger chinesischer Wandschirm, hinter dem Kleider liegen. Ferner ein kleines Tischchen und ein paar Sitzmöbel. Auf einem Fauteuil links liegt ein Degen in der Scheide. Rechts grosse Flügeltüren in das Vorzimmer. In der Mitte kaum sichtbar kleine Türe in die Wand eingelassen. Sonst keine Türen. In dem Alkoven rechts steht ein Frisiertisch und ein paar Sessel an der Wand. Fauteuils und zwei kleine Sofas. Die Vorhänge des Bettes sind zurückgeschlagen. Octavian kniet auf einem Schemel vor dem Sofa links und hält die Feldmarschallin, die in der Sofaecke liegt, halb umschlungen. Man sieht ihr Gesicht nicht, sondern nur ihre sehr schöne Hand und den Arm, von dem das Spitzenhemd abfällt. Durch das halbgeöffnete Fenster strömt die helle Morgensonne herein. Man hört im Garten Vöglein singen.

OCTAVIAN: Wie du warst! Wie du bist!
Das weiss niemand, das ahnt keiner!

MARSCHALLIN (*richtet sich in den Kissen auf*):
Beklagt Er sich über das, Quinquin? Möcht' Er, dass
viele das wüssten?

OCTAVIAN (*feurig*):
Engell! Nein! Selig bin ich,
Dass ich der Einzige bin, der weiss, wie du bist.
Keiner ahnt es! Niemand weiss es!
Du, du—was heisst das "Du"? Was "du und ich"?
Hat denn das einen Sinn?
Das sind Wörter, blosser Wörter, nicht? Du sag'!
Aber dennoch: Es ist etwas in ihnen,
ein Schwindeln, ein Ziehen, ein Sehnen und Drängen,
ein Schmachten und Brennen:
Wie jetzt meine Hand zu deiner Hand kommt,
Das Zudirwollen, das Dichumklammern,
das bin ich, das will zu dir;
aber das Ich vergeht in dem Du . . .
Ich bin dein Bub', aber wenn mir dann Hören und Sehen
wo ist dann dein Bub' vergeht—

MARSCHALLIN (*leise*):
Du bist mein Bub', du bist mein Schatz!
(Sehr innig).
Ich hab' dich lieb!

OCTAVIAN (*fährt auf*):
Warum ist Tag? Ich will nicht den Tag! Für was ist der
Tag!
Da haben dich alle! Finster soll sein!
(Er stürzt aus Fenster, schliesst es und zieht die Vorhänge zu. Man hört von fern ein leises Klinglein.)

MARSCHALLIN (*lacht leise*):
OCTAVIAN: Lachst du mich aus?

ACT ONE

The bedroom of the Princess. In the alcove to the left the large, tent-shaped fourposter. Next the bed a threefold screen, behind which clothes are scattered to the ground. A small table, chairs, etc. To the right, folding doors leading to the antechamber. In the centre, scarcely visible, a little door let into the wall. No other doors. Between the alcove and the small door, a toilet table and some armchairs against the wall. The curtains of the bed are half drawn. Through the half-open window the morning sun streams in. From the garden sounds the song of birds. Octavian kneels on a footstool, half embracing the Princess who is reclining in the bed. Her face is hidden, only her beautiful hand is seen, and her arm peeping from out the sleeve of her night gown of lace.

OCTAVIAN (*rapturously*):

All thy soul, all thy heart—
Their perfections who can measure?

PRINCESS: Why grieve so sorely at that, Mignon,
Should they be known on the housetops?

OCTAVIAN (*passionately*):

Angel! No! Blessed am I
That it is I, I alone who know their secrets.
Who can measure such perfection?
Thou, thou, thou! What means that "Thou?"
That "Thou and I,"
Have they meaning or sense? —
They are merely empty nothings. What? O say,
Yet have they something,
Yea, a something is in them
That craveth, that urgeth, that striveth,
That fainteth and yearneth.
To thine my hand thus its way hath found:
And this quest for thee, and this clinging —
That am I, who seek thee out
Mingling with thee and lost in that "Thou."
I am thy Boy; but when reft of all senses I lie in thy arms
Where then is thy Boy?

PRINCESS: Thou art my Boy. Thou art my Love. I love thee so.

OCTAVIAN: Why dawneth day? How hateful is day. What availeth
the day?

Then all men can see thee. Dark let it be.

(He rushes to the window and closes it. A bell is heard ringing softly in the distance. The Princess smiles to herself.)

Smil'st thou at me?