

ROLE OF MRS. FORD IN OTTO NICOLAI'S *MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR*

by

LAMBROULA MARIA PAPPAS

B.Mus., University of British Columbia, 1998

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF MUSIC

(OPERA)

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

(School of Music)

We accept this thesis as conforming  
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

April 2000

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Department of School of Music

The University of British Columbia  
Vancouver, Canada

Date April 28, 2000



*theatre*  
at UBC

at UBC

# The Merry Wives of Windsor

Otto Nicolai



February 10-13th

2000

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Chan Centre for the Performing Arts

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**Presents**

# The Merry Wives of Windsor

**By Otto Nicolai**

**Libretto by H. von Mosenthal**

**English Libretto by Josef Blatt**

**with**

**The UBC Opera Ensemble &  
The UBC Symphony Orchestra**

Conductor ~ Jesse Read  
Stage Director ~ Nancy Hermiston  
Musical Director ~ Richard Epp  
Set Design by Robert Gardiner  
Light Design by Jeremy Baxter

There will be one twenty minute intermission



Chan Shun Concert Hall

February 10-13th, 2000

*THIS PRESENTATION IS MADE POSSIBLE BY GENEROUS ASSISTANCE THROUGH THE  
CHAN ENDOWMENT FUND OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA*

## *A Message from the Head of Theatre, Film and Creative Writing*

The world of Opera and the world of Drama quite often follow separate and sometimes not even parallel courses. But there are times when those courses spectacularly converge. *The Merry Wives of Windsor* sits at one of those intersections, and it is a great pleasure to be able to explore all the ways that this union can create exciting and moving Theatre.

The Department of Theatre, Film and Creative Writing must continually address Marshall McLuhan's famous mantra "The Medium is the Message". To achieve meaningful communication, the manner in which a story is told may be more important than the story itself. The transference of any story from one performance medium to another also involves a translation, and in the process, some elements will be emphasized, and others suppressed, maybe even abandoned altogether. So, in the realm of human communication, it is more than a matter of passing interest to compare the way in which the story of Sir John is changed by the addition of a musical score.

One of the great advantages of operating a Theatre Program in the diverse environment of UBC is the possibility of interaction with other Artists and Scholars, and input from colleagues around the university is a vital factor in our presentations. The body of knowledge that surrounds *The Merry Wives of Windsor* as a play can be added to the knowledge of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* as an opera. Our students; whether they be singers, actors, technicians, musicologists or dramaturgs, will all benefit from exposure to the sort of joint presentation *The Merry Wives of Windsor* represents. We trust that they will take forward an increased understanding of both the work itself and of the complexities of the Art of the Theatre.

*A Message from the Conductor and  
Director of the UBC School of Music*

Who could resist such a combination, Shakespeare, Nicolai, the brilliant and exciting cast from the UBC Opera Ensemble, our fine Orchestra and the production so creatively designed by the Theatre Department? Obviously you couldn't, you are here! We welcome you again with open arms and hearts, and we know you will leave tonight's production singing, whistling and joyfully recalling the humour, the intrigue, the lyrical beauty of the music and the engaging unfoldment of the drama which was Falstaff! Not the Falstaff of the Globe Theatre, not the Falstaff of Verdi, but a version steeped in the Germanic tradition no fantastic dreams and puns in this version, but rather, Falstaff, gullible and self-deceived, and a musical cast of characters who sing the story of The Merry Wives into life.

Nicolai's music might have more in common with Mozart than one would first imagine. (After all, his musical experience was similar, his life in Vienna can even be compared to Mozart's,) he is forceful in his ensemble writing, crafty in his memorable and lilting melodies, and he never lets us forget this is musical/theatrical invention at its best.

So here we are: you- our devoted and honoured audience. Us- cast, crew, musicians and dramatic and musical supervisors this is why we do it, to give life to all these precious elements- literary, musical and theatrical splendour, and to arrive here tonight together with you for this, the living experience we know as OPERA.

Jesse Read  
Conductor  
Director, School of Music

## *A Message from the Director*

The UBC Opera Ensemble continues its 1999-2000 season at the Chan Centre for the Performing Arts with Otto Nicolai's delightful operatic rendering of Shakespeare's timeless play "The Merry Wives of Windsor". Joining forces with Theatre UBC and the UBC Symphony Orchestra we hope that, in the words of our two leading ladies, "wit and fancy, merry jesting will attract you to our bait." We greatly appreciate the Chan Foundation's financial support that made this production.

Since its creation in 1995, the Opera Ensemble has performed in Europe twice, toured B.C., collaborated with the Vancouver Opera and the Vancouver Symphony, appeared in senior's homes, colleges and schools throughout the Vancouver region and has become an integral part of our University's life. In May 2000 we return to the Czech Republic to begin our association with the third largest opera house in that country, Mestske Divadlo, Usti. With their production of Mozart's "Gärtnerin aus Liebe", their orchestra and technical staff, we will present two performances in The Estate Theatre in Prague, the theatre in which Mozart premiered his opera, "Don Giovanni." Several other performances of the "Gärtnerin" will be given in Usti along with performances of Johann Strauss' "Die Fledermaus".

Our performances in Europe last summer were well received and the whole experience was truly a multi cultural event. There we were - a group of English speaking Canadians, singing in Italian, in a German Opera House, with a Ukrainian orchestra. Our Ensemble consisted of students from China, Japan, Korea, India, Armenia, and Switzerland as well as Canadians of German, Russian, Scottish, Irish, British, Dutch, Swedish and French Heritage. It is no wonder that the European audiences not only marveled at the vocal and dramatic talent of the singers, but also delighted in the multi-cultural nature of our Ensemble. We were told on several occasions that we were indeed Canada's best ambassadors. Our language was universal – music. Our example - literal and symbolic harmony.

We look forward to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century with confidence, determination, energy, and enthusiasm. The Ensemble and I thank you for your support of and interest in our activities and hope that we can continue to win your respect and loyalty in the future.

Nancy Hermiston Director  
UBC Opera Ensemble



## CAST

### February 10th and 12th

Mrs. Ford	Lambroula Pappas
Mrs. Page	Sandra Stringer
Mr. Ford	Kevin Sean Pook
Mr. Page	Shae Apland
Sir John Falstaff	Chad Louwerse
Anne	Mari Hahn
Fenton	Michael Walker
Mr. Slender	Russell Robson
Dr. Cajus	Peter Mulholland
A Neighbour	Ian Paul

### February 11th and 13th

Mrs. Ford	Kimberly Webb
Mrs. Page	Suzanne Abbott
Mr. Ford	Garrick Huang
Mr. Page	Justin Welsh
Sir John Falstaff	David Jeffries
Anne	Sook Hyung Park
Fenton	Neil Wright
Mr. Slender	Philippe Castagner
Dr. Cajus	Elio Catana
A Neighbour	Craig Johnson

## OPERA CHORUS

Rhonwen Adams	Katherine Landry
Marianne Alonzo-Marin	Shauna Martin
Melissa Bencic	Yoonjo Park
Neema Bickersteth	Janet Vandertol
Katy Bowen-Roberts	Craig Johnson
Julianna Chin	Joel Klein
Charlotte Cumberbirch	Riley McMitchell
Neyir Hall	Matt Oliver
Dory Hayley	Ian Paul
Rhoslyn Jones	Mark Sampson
Mariya Krywaniuk	

# ORCHESTRA

## **VIOLIN 1**

+Alycia Au  
Adrian Dyck  
Rosemary Siemens  
Katherine Pawluk  
Gillian Mott  
Brooke Day  
James Hill  
Emily Akita

## **VIOLIN 2**

\*Ruth Huang  
Gillian Hunter  
Phyllis Ho  
Trevor Pearce  
Jonathan Ng  
Kevin McDonnell  
Monica Kuehn  
Willmann Liang

## **VIOLA**

\*Beth Schaufele  
Suzanne Schweikle  
Manti Poon  
Sarah Kwok

## **CELLO**

\*Diederik van Dijk  
Colin Giles  
Aniela Perry  
Anne Davison  
Hsin-pei Liu  
Colly Blenkinsop  
Katherine Sepp

## **BASS**

\*Megan Bradfield  
Leanna Wong  
Peggy Tong  
Dave Mansell  
Jennifer Chu  
Joanne Lee

## **FLUTES**

\*JackChen  
Rebecca Obedkoff  
Stacey Taylor

## **OBOES**

\* Sarah Cardwell  
Marisa Chang

## **CLARINETS**

\*Brenda Kim  
Mike Dowler

## **BASSOONS**

\*Gordon MacLeod  
Joyce Hong

## **HORNS**

\*Cheryl Lane  
Sarah Robinson  
Garlanda Kwan  
Adrienne Wasyluk  
Meg Smith

## **TRUMPETS**

\*\*Miriam Norton  
Ashley Moor

## **TROMBONES**

Andrew Cormier  
Jim Trarquilla  
Janice Jensen

## **TIMPANI**

Martin Fisk

## **PERCUSSION**

Kenneth Hsieh  
Dan Sia

## **LIBRARIAN**

Megan Bradfield

## **MANAGER**

Colin Giles  
Dave Mansell

+ **CONCERT MASTER**

\* **PRINCIPAL**

## PRODUCTION

### FOR THE PRODUCTION

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR  
**PEGGY JAMESON**  
REPETITEURS  
**RICHARD EPP**  
**DANIEL CHOW**  
**DONNA FALCONER**  
**BRETT KINGSBURY**  
CHORUS MASTER  
**TONY FUNK**  
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR  
**DEREK MACK**  
PRINCIPALS' COSTUMES  
**MALABAR LTD**  
WIGS  
**ELKE ENGLICHT**  
HEAD OF PROPERTIES  
**VALERIE MOFFAT**  
PROP BUILDER  
**VICTOR WAGNER**  
MAKE-UP  
**NELL VOLRICH**  
MAKE-UP ASSISTANTS  
**FRIENDS OF UBC OPERA**  
ASSISTANT SET DESIGN  
**ALESSIA CARPOCA**  
ASSISTANT LIGHTING DESIGN  
**MIKE INWOOD**  
LIGHTING BOARD OPERATOR  
**MIKE INWOOD**  
PAINTERS  
**GENNIE WILLOUGHBY-PRICE**  
**LIZ BACA**  
**MORGAN CARRIER**  
COSTUME COORDINATOR  
**LYDIA HIEBERT**  
COSTUME ASSISTANT  
**ROMA CHIN**  
WARDROBE MISTRESS  
**LYDIA HIEBERT**  
DRESSERS  
**FRIENDS OF UBC OPERA**

STAGE MANAGER  
**SUSEH NIEVARES**  
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER  
**V ATHONTON**  
**TARA ROUT**  
PROPERTIES CREW  
**MARGARET LAM**  
**LINDSEY BAILLE**  
PROPERTIES ASSISTANTS  
**SERENA YAU**  
**DARCY CORRIGAN**  
LOAD IN CREW  
**OPERA ENSEMBLE**  
RUNNING CREW  
**OPERA ENSEMBLE**

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### FOR THE THEATRE DEPARTMENT

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR  
**IAN PRATT**  
PRODUCTION MANAGER  
**ROBERT EBERLE**  
PROPS SUPERVISORS  
**JANET BICKFORD**  
**LYNN BURTON**  
COSTUME SUPERVISORS  
**JEAN DRISCOLL-BELL**  
STAGE CARPENTERS  
**JIM FERGUSSON**  
**DON GRIFFITHS**  
**JAY HENRICKSON**  
BUSINESS MANAGER  
**MARIETTA KOZAK**  
COMMUNICATIONS  
**JOAN WELLWOOD**  
**HUSSEIN JANMOHAMED**  
**JULIANNA CHIN**  
POSTER DESIGN  
**JAMES A. GLEN**  
BOX OFFICE  
**GERRY BRATZ**  
OFFICE SUPPORT  
**G. VANDERWOUDE**

## **FOR THE CHAN CENTRE**

DIRECTOR

**MICHAEL NOON**

DIRECTOR OF FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS

**CAMERON MCGILL**

PROGRAMMING MANAGER

**JOYCE HINTON**

CUSTOMER SERVICES MANAGER

**MARIE EDWARDS**

ASSISTANT TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

**STEVE DARKE**

SYSTEMS COORDINATOR

**TED CLARK**

FRONT OF HOUSE COORDINATOR

**KENT MARTIN**

CONCESSIONS COORDINATOR

**BASIL WAUGH**

TICKET OFFICE COORDINATOR

**SARAH ROBERTS**

FINANCIAL CLERK III

**FLORA LEW**

FINANCIAL CLERK II

**LAURA LEE SAMUELS**

## **OPERA ENSEMBLE EXECUTIVE**

**SUZANNE ABBOTT**

**RHONWEN ADAMS**

**NEEMA BICKERSTETH**

**JULIANNA CHIN**

**ROBYN DRIEDGER-KLASSEN**

**JEANINE FYNN**

**RHOSLYN JONES**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

**THE VANCOUVER OPERA, THE VANCOUVER PLAYHOUSE, BRIAN KING, VALERIE MOFFAT, ROMA CHIN, SCHOOL OF MUSIC OFFICE STAFF, DR. FLOYD ST. CLAIR, PHYLLIS LAVALLE AND THE FRIENDS OF UBC OPERA, DAVID SPENCER ENDOWMENT ENCOURAGEMENT FUND, MAPLE LEAF STORAGE, ENCHANTED FLORIST, SAMCO PRINTERS, RS DESIGN, IAN PRATT, UBC OPERA ENSEMBLE**

**A Very Special Thank You** to the Vancouver Opera Guild for their monetary donation to build "Herne's Oak" in the third act of this production.



**MEDIA AND PROMOTIONAL SUPPORT**



## Plot Synopsis

### **Setting: Windsor in the early 17th century**

#### **ACT 1.i**

*Between the houses of Ford and Page* Mrs Ford is reading a love letter from Falstaff; Mrs Page joins her and they realize that he has sent them identical letters. Their reaction to the effrontery of the fat old knight, and their plans to take revenge on him are revealed in their duet. In the following dialogue Page tells Ford, Slender and Dr Cajus that he hopes to wed his daughter, Anne, to Slender, though Dr Cajus and Fenton both want to marry her. In the recitative and duet Fenton urges his suit in vain; his ardent melodic line is effectively contrasted with Page's busy semiquaver patterns as he gloats over Slender's wealth.

#### **1.ii**

*Inside Ford's house* Mrs Ford considers what she will say to Falstaff when he visits her; the fine recitative and aria skilfully develops her character as a quick-witted, resourceful and charming woman. Mrs Page enters and in dialogue they discuss their plan to make Falstaff hide in a washing basket and then have him thrown in the river. Mrs Page conceals herself and as the finale begins Falstaff arrives. His portliness contrasts amusingly with the tripping figures that Nicolai gives him to sing as he begins his courting of Mrs Ford. Mrs Page bursts in as planned with the news that Ford is coming, and the two women get Falstaff into the basket. Ford, accompanied by his neighbours, enters in a fury and searches the house (he has been informed, anonymously, by his own wife of Falstaff's assignation with her). Meanwhile, the washing basket is removed by two servants, and Mrs Ford and Mrs Page laugh together, in a delightful duet, at the lessons they are teaching the men. When Ford returns from the search, his wife roundly scolds him for his unworthy suspicions; as the curtain falls, she simulates a fainting spell.

continued on next page...

**ACT 2.i**

*The Garter Inn* In a dialogue scene Falstaff is gossiping with his cronies; he has been invited to a further meeting with Mrs Ford. He and his friends sing a tuneful drinking song. In another short section of dialogue the waiter tells Falstaff that a certain Sir Brook, actually Ford in disguise, is waiting to speak to him. The following recitative and comic duet in which Ford tries to discover the truth about Falstaff's relationship with Mrs Ford, amusingly depicts the increasingly furious Ford's struggles to maintain the character of Sir Brook while Falstaff boasts of his success with Mrs Ford.

**2.ii**

*Page's garden* It is the evening and Anne's three suitors have the idea of serenading her. Nicolai blends this succession of scenes into a musically continuous number. Slender enters with comic fearfulness but hides on the arrival of Dr Cajus, whose comical mixture of French and mispronounced English increases the humour of the situation. Hearing Fenton approaching, he too hides. Fenton, thinking he has the garden to himself, sings a Romanze which is full of charming melodic invention with a smooth, expressive string accompaniment and bird-like trills in piccolo and flute. When Anne appears, they sing a duettino, an elaborate violin solo enriches the orchestral colour and the section closes with an ingenious cadenza for the two voices and solo violin. In the concluding quartet, the lovers pledge themselves to each other while Slender and Dr Cajus comment in suppressed fury from their hiding places.

**2.iii**

*Inside Ford's house* In a dialogue scene Falstaff is again courting Mrs Ford. As before, Mrs Page interrupts them with the news that Ford is coming. This time they disguise Falstaff as an old woman. Ford and his wife confront each other in the duet and she mocks his jealous fury. The finale follows without a break as Slender, Dr Cajus and Page arrive; Falstaff is smuggled out under their very noses and they again search the house fruitlessly.

**ACT 3.i**

*Page's house* The scene begins in dialogue. Mrs Ford and Mrs Page have explained the situation to their husbands; Ford is penitent. They plan to teach Falstaff a lesson he will not forget, and Mrs Page sings the ballad of Herne the Hunter.

Mrs Page privately tells Anne (in dialogue) that she has arranged for her to marry Dr Cajus that night; then Page tells Anne that he has arranged for her to marry Slender. Anne, alone, vows to confound both of them and marry Fenton, affirming her determination to outwit them in the aria.

### 3.ii

*Windsor Park* The moon rises during the orchestral introduction and Ford, Page and their neighbours sing the chorus 'Oh Sweetest Moon' as they prepare for Falstaff's arrival. Falstaff enters dressed as Herne the Hunter and in the trio Mrs Ford and Mrs Page flirt teasingly with him. Then follows a chorus of the neighbours dressed as elves and a harp solo announces the arrival of Anne dressed as Titania and Fenton as Oberon. Page appears dressed as Herne and the terrified Falstaff is further tormented. In the meantime, Slender and Dr Cajus go off with each other, disguised as elves, both thinking that they are with Anne, and Anne and Fenton hurry away to get married; there is then a general dance and chorus. In the final dialogue, Anne reconciles her parents to her marriage with Fenton, and the opera concludes with a charming trio for the 'merry wives', Mrs Ford and Mrs Page, with Anne.

### About Otto Nicolai



A native of Königsberg, Otto Nicolai was educated largely in Berlin, through the intervention of a sympathetic patron, and made a name for himself there, without great material success. A period in Rome as organist at the Prussian Embassy aroused his interest in opera, an enthusiasm he was able to pursue at the Court Opera in Vienna, finally, in the year before his death, achieving the position of director of the Berlin Cathedral Choir and Kapellmeister of the Berlin Opera. Nicolai is best known for his opera based on Shakespeare's comedy *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. *Die lustigen Weiber von Windsor* first performed in Berlin in March 1849, two months before Nicolai's early death. The opera occupies an important position in German Romantic operatic repertoire. Otto Nicolai was only 38 when he died.

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Chan Centre for the Performing Arts

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## Upcoming Theatre at UBC Productions & Events

### ***Life and a Lover***

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March 8-18, 7:30pm, Frederic Wood Theatre

### ***Casanova***

by Constance Congdon

March 22-April 1, 7:30pm, BC Tel Studio Theatre

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Presented by The Faculty of Arts, Women's Studies, Green College, Canadian Studies & The Department of English

April 27 ~ 29, 7:30pm, Frederic Wood Theatre

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