

The University of Washington
Schools of Music and Drama and
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THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR Betty
Text by Hermann von Mosenthal Overture
(after Shakespeare's play)
English version by
JOSEPH BLATT



Monday, November 13
Wednesday, November 15
8 PM
Meany Theater

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR
Synopsis of the Opera

ACT I

Scene One: A court. Mrs. Ford informs her friend, Mrs. Page, that she has received a crude love letter from the unattractive and corpulent, Sir John Falstaff. Outraged, the women decide to teach him a lesson. They leave. Mr. Page and Mr. Ford enter, accompanied by two suitors of Mr. Page's daughter, Anne--timid Slender and blustering Dr. Cajus. Anne's true love, Fenton, appears and asks Mr. Page for her hand. The penniless suitor is rudely rejected, but defiantly vows he will wed Anne despite every obstacle.

Scene Two: Mr. Ford's house. Mrs. Ford awaits Falstaff. She and Mrs. Page have sent an anonymous note to her husband informing him of her rendezvous with Sir John. A large basket is brought in. Later, the frightened Falstaff is stuffed into it and dumped into the Thames River. The women's plan works out perfectly; the jealous Mr. Ford is embarrassed in front of his neighbors.

ACT II

Scene One: A tavern. Ford, disguised as a "Mr. Brook" visits Falstaff at the Garter Inn. He seeks Sir John's help to gain the favor of Mrs. Ford and offers him a purse for his assistance. Ford discovers that Falstaff had been at his home the preceding day, and that his wife has invited him to visit her again this very afternoon.

Scene Two: A garden. Anne's two unwanted suitors, Slender and Cajus, unknown to each other, plan to meet her during her daily walk in the garden. When Fenton arrives, they are forced to hide. The lovers, unsuspectingly watched, reaffirm their affection.

Scene Three: Mrs. Ford's room. Falstaff has just arrived when Mrs. Page announces the unexpected approach of Mr. Ford. Quickly, the resourceful woman disguise Falstaff as an old woman, a relative of Mrs. Ford's maid. Mr. Ford has forbidden her presence in his house and in his anger, beats her mercilessly. He confidently searches for Sir John, but is again unsuccessful and ridiculed.

ACT III

Scene One: Mr. Page's house. The wives have informed their husbands of Falstaff's letter and his subsequent punishments. Ford has been forgiven his unwarranted jealousy. They decide to play another trick on Sir John. There is to be a masquerade and the wives are to meet him disguised as the legendary hunter, Herne, in Windsor Forest. Mrs. Page, alone with Anne, gives her a red elf's costume to wear. Cajus will then recognize her and they can elope. After Mrs. Page departs, Mr. Page enters with a green elf's costume. He has a similar plan, but it is Slender with whom Anne is to run off. Anne decides to give the costumes to Slender and Cajus, and steal away with Fenton.

Scene Two: Windsor Forest. The townspeople, disguised as spooks and spirits of the forest, await Sir John. He appears as Herne, with large antlers on his head. Mrs. Page and Mrs. Ford join him. When the ghosts approach noisily, the women run away, leaving the terrified Falstaff to face his tormentors alone. He tries in vain to hide, and is pinched, stabbed and mocked. Sir John repents, the masqueraders are revealed and the opera ends on a note of laughter and merriment.

TIME and PLACE: Late 16th Century. Windsor, England.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES:

Act I Scene I: A courtyard
II: A room in Mr. Ford's house

INTERMISSION

Act II Scene I: Outside the Garter Inn
II: The garden of Mr. Page's house
III: A room in Mr. Ford's house

INTERMISSION

Act III Scene I: A hallway in Mr. Page's house
II: Windsor Forest

CAST

Sir John Falstaff.....Paul Berkolds
 Mr. Ford.....Charles Wayne
 Mr. Page.....Brian Higham
 Fenton.....Rick Russell
 Slender.....Wendell Maunola
 Dr. Cajus.....Donald Walkup
 Mrs. Ford (Alice).....Emily Winstrom
 Mrs. Page (Meg).....Harriett Taylor
 Ann Page.....Connie Corrick
 A neighbor.....Keith Horlock
 Host.....Kevin D. McMurry
 Robin.....Travis McCauley

Chorus of townspeople: Linda Anderson, Lori August,
 Andrew Bernard, Elizabeth Brewster, Elisa Dakin,
 Beth Eaton, Bonnie Fuchs, Max Gerspacher, Keith
 Horlock, Mary Hull, Jeff Keith, Janet Kretlow,
 Dale Larsen, Morgan McCurdy, Janet Morietz,
 Margaret Pickering, Janet Ellen Reed, Maurita
 Rogers, Brian Russell, Bert Sullam, Brad Watson,
 David Williams, Brian Wines.

Dancers: (Elves and Spirits) Jennifer Gayda, Ken
 Gibson, Natalie Golden, Frances Hall, Bernadette
 Hunter, Jan Jackson, Kevin McMurray, Carolyn
 Phelps, Trudy Sussman.

Children: (Insects) Tamara Anderson, Amy Augustine,
 Keenan Bolin, Marya du Mont, Ryan Harris, Alison
 Herschberg, Sasha Herschberg, James LeBlanc,
 Travis McCauley, Lisa Neal, Meridith Pierce,
 Duncan Sailors, Cal Smith, Laura Swimmer, Ezra
 Waiter, Neill Warfield, Elliot Warfield.

Understudies: Karen Noble (Alice Ford), Yvonne
 Naum (Meg Page), Julie Carpenter (Ann Page),
 Theodore Deacon (Dr. Cajus).

Thanks to The Little School, its children and Pat Mowry.

ORCHESTRA

Violin I

Sandra Guy
 Barbara Rood
 Brigitte Grossrieder
 Karl Kamahara
 Scott Moline
 Christine Olason
 Eileen Hsu
 Antony Bondi
 Jennifer Bogert
 Carla Lehman

Violin II

May Zia
 Irene Stewart
 Wendy A. Lee
 Angela Chun
 Kee Soon Ann
 Katherine McWilliams
 Alicia Carlson
 Jennifer Chun
 Cindy Burgess
 Frances Mendina

Viola

Donald Maurice
 Martin Kelly
 Betty Agent
 Jennifer Smith
 Michael Watson
 Susan Koelle
 Thomas West
 Rebecca Williams

Cello

Pamela Roberts
 Rachel Abbey
 Constance Radke
 Patrice Young
 Anne Switten
 Annette Kruzic
 Kathleen Beasley
 William Jacobsen

Bass

Constance Radonich
 Ron Fordice

Flute

Annette Smith
 Francis Timlin

Oboe

Benith Richardson
 Laurel Uhlig

Clarinet

Julie Oster
 Barry Smith

Bassoon

Gary Claunch
 Fred Johnston

Horn

Jane Steinmetz
 John Graef (Asst.)
 Rodger Burnett
 Gus Sebring
 Diane Eaton (Asst.)
 David Cottrell

Trumpet

Thomas Copland
 Brian Adler

Trombone

Mark Williams
 Jon Lellelid
 Timothy Anderson

Timpani

Michael Clark

Percussion

James Kovach
 Terry Pollard

Harp

Kathleen Duffy

