FALSTAFF

GIUSEPPE VERDI

Meany Theater
8:00 PM, May 13 and 15, 1998
2:00 PM, May 17, 1998
CAST

FALSTAFF ............................................ Julian Patrick
NANETTA ............................................ Amy Bils
ALICE FORD ........................................ Amy Cheifetz
MEG ..................................................... Sarah Mattox
DAME QUICKLY ....................................... Jenny Knapp
FENTON ............................................... Kerry Jennings
FORD .................................................... Glenn Guhr
DR. Caius ............................................. William Carpenter
PISTOLA ................................................ Jay McManus
BARDOLFO ............................................. Harold Mortimer
INNKEEPER ........................................... Miguel Mejia

CHORUS

SOPRANO
Shawna Avinger, Candice Balen, Juliana Brandon, Meg Daly, Rosa Duarte

ALTO
Alice Bridgeforth, Essie Fine, Deborah Heuser, Carmen Sammy-Sacquitine, Kathea Wicks

TENOR
Elliot Harbin, Mikko Mannisto, David Williamsen, Jae B. Yu

BASS
Joseph Hawkins Jr., Daniel Lee Jansen, Miguel Mejia, Joachim Schneider

SPIRIT CHORUS
Katherine Bourne, David Hamilton, Joel Harrington, Kailey Kimball, Nicole Landreth, Samantha McDowell, Sarah Nye, Fred Nelson, Sam Nelson, Erica Smith, Derick Thompson, Daniel Wright
THE STORY...

ACT I, Part 1 - Inside the Garter Inn

As the opera begins, we see Falstaff sealing a couple of letters before being scolded by Dr. Caius. The doctor accuses Falstaff of causing much drunken havoc at Caius’ home. Falstaff accepts these charges with no comment. However, Caius now accuses Bardolfo and Pistola, Falstaff’s companions, of getting him drunk and taking his money. Indeed, he vows that if he ever drinks again, it will not be with such rascals. Following this outburst, he storms out of the room. Falstaff tries in vain to find some money, complaining about his two companions who seem to be adept at spending his funds, before singing a celebration of his enormous stomach! It is now that we hear the main thread of this story. Falstaff is enamored of two ladies, Alice Ford and Meg Page, who happen to be the wives of wealthy townsmen. He asks Bardolfo and Pistola to deliver sealed letters to each lady: however, the men refuse, saying that it is beneath their honor to do such a thing. Falstaff takes them aside and tells them that honor is nothing more than a feeble word. Then, taking a broom in his hands, he drives them out of the room.

ACT I, Part 2 - A Garden

After a brief orchestral introduction, we are introduced to Meg, Mistress Quickly, Nanetta and her mother, Alice Ford, in the garden of Ford’s house. Meg and Alice realize that they have received identical letters from Falstaff. They sing extensive quotes from their respective letters and, in the following ensemble, decide to take revenge on him.

Unbeknownst to the ladies, Fenton, Caius, Ford, Bardolfo, and Pistola enter, superimposing their own ensemble on that of the ladies. Following this, Bardolfo and Pistola warn Ford of Falstaff’s plans: Ford swears that he will keep a very close eye on Meg and Alice. The ladies return and on seeing the men, leave. Now only Fenton and Nanetta remain to sing the first of their love duets. Following this, the ladies once more return in order to arrange an assignation. The men return with another plan in which Ford will visit Falstaff under the guise of ‘Maestro Fontana.’ The final ensemble is a work of genius in which Verdi superimposes the ladies music on that of the men. The ladies quote once more from Falstaff’s letters before dissolving into laughter.

ACT II, Part 1 - At the Garter Inn

The scene opens with Bardolfo and Pistola making an extravagant penance before Falstaff. Mistress Quickly enters and describes the sham amorous states of Alice and Meg before arranging an assignation between Falstaff and Alice. Quickly departs, leaving Falstaff to spend a little time in an air of self-congratulation before the disguised Ford enters. A duet follows in which Fontana (Ford) offers to pay Falstaff to seduce Alice Ford. Falstaff replies by saying that he already has an appointment with her. Falstaff goes to dress in his finery, leaving Ford to ponder his wife’s seemingly unfaithful behavior. Falstaff reappears in his finest clothes and the two men, after much exaggerated politeness, leave the house.

ACT II, Part 2 - A room in Ford’s house

The curtain rises to show Alice and Meg, later joined by Quickly, who offers a report of her meeting with Falstaff. The ladies realize that the time of Alice’s meeting with Falstaff is close and they go about their preparations, bringing in a very large laundry hamper. This mood of busy preparation is interrupted by the arrival of a tearful Nanetta who tells them that her father, Ford, has ordered her to marry Dr. Caius. Alice assures Nanetta that nothing will come of this and everybody continues with their preparations. Alice sits down to play her lute and Falstaff arrives. As his courtship reaches a moment of intimacy, Quickly runs in and announces the arrival of Meg Page. Falstaff rides behind a screen at Meg’s entrance. She tells the other ladies that Ford is hurrying to the house in a state of jealousy. Ford arrives and looks through the laundry hamper for any evidence of Falstaff’s presence. On finding nothing, he hurries to search the rest of the house. Falstaff climbs into the already full hamper and is hidden by a pile of dirty laundry. Nanetta and Fenton see each other and slip behind the screen for a moment of privacy. A loud kiss from behind the screen is heard. Now, the men prepare to pounce on the screen thinking that Falstaff is behind it, when, in fact, he is crying out from his suffocating position amid the laundry. Finally, the men push over the screen to reveal the two young lovers. Ford scolds both of them. Now, Bardolfo thinks that he sees Falstaff outside and the men rush out in mistaken pursuit. The ladies summon servants who, with an enormous effort, lift the basket up to the window. The men return in time to see Falstaff being tipped out of the window into the river.

ACT III, Part 1 - An open square

Falstaff sits outside the Garter Inn, bemoaning his watery disgrace and reminiscing about his time as a noble soldier. However, a beaker of wine soon revives his flagging spirits. Quickly enters and convinces him of Alice’s affection towards him. Another assignation is arranged, this time at midnight under Herne’s Oak in Windsor Park. His disguise for this will be that of the Black Huntsman. Quickly paints an eerie picture of the supernatural midnight setting and leads Falstaff into the inn. This mood is continued by Alice Ford, Meg, Nanetta, Fenton, and Caius who have been observing from a distance. These plotters decide on their disguises for the midnight meeting. This other light-hearted atmosphere is interrupted by Ford and Caius who are planning Caius’ marriage to Nanetta that night. This conversation is overheard by Quickly who pledges to stop the marriage.
ACT III, Part 2 - Windsor Park

Fenton appears on stage, following an introduction of horn-calls from the distance. His aria follows—a love song, a tender moment in the midst of so much mayhem. He is soon interrupted by Alice who brings him his disguise, after which they both leave. Now Falstaff, in his elaborate disguise, enters as a bell strikes midnight. Alice soon joins him, although their assignation is interrupted by Meg who warns him of an approaching crowd of witches. Falstaff, fearing that he will die if he sees them, immediately throws himself to the ground. Nanetta (in disguise) enters to sing her beautiful aria before the rest of the cast run onto the scene to start tormenting the unsuspecting Falstaff. As the tormenting reaches its climax, Bardolph becomes somewhat over enthusiastic and his disguise falls off. Falstaff recognizes him and subjects him to a great stream of abuse. All is now revealed and Falstaff philosophically accepts the nature of the deception. Now, to the background of a lyrical minuet, Caius enters, accompanied by a disguised figure whom he thinks to be Nanetta. They are joined by another couple and they receive Ford’s blessing on their unions. However, Caius’ disguised partner turns out to be Bardolph and the other couple are Fenton and Nanetta. Ford admits defeat and accepts his daughter’s marriage to Fenton. Falstaff draws everybody together for the final ensemble, the message of which is that everything in the world is a joke.

Notes by Robert Huw Morgan

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\begin{align*}
DAT & \quad 13,299 = Act \ I, \ II \\
& \quad 13,300 = Act \ III \\
CASS & \quad 13,301 \ A = Act \ I; \ B = Act \ II \\
& \quad 13,302 \ A = Act \ III \\
VHS & \quad 13,303 = Act \ I, \ II \\
& \quad 13,304 = Act \ III
\end{align*}
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PRODUCTION STAFF

Production Manager ............................................................... Anne Stewart
Production Coordinator ........................................................... Camille Couture
Vocal Coach ................................................................. Lisa Bergman
Assistant Lighting Designer ...................................................... Josh Stein
Assistant Stage Manager .......................................................... Sturmy Edwards
Supratitle Operator ................................................................. Soon Cho, April Fissel
UW Technical Director ............................................................. Tom Burke
Prop Master ........................................................................... Alex Danilchik
Repetiteurs .............................................................................. Jeanne Drumm, Elena Kovacs
Master Electrician ................................................................. Nacho Bravo
Master Carpenter ..................................................................... Bob Bohler, Malcolm Brown
Set Construction ...................................................................... Derek Baylor, Tom Burke, Sanjeev Hass, Chris McBride, Joel Russ, Heather Wood
Charge Painter ......................................................................... Ruth Gilmore
Scenic Artists ........................................................................... Maureen Christoffel, Tracy Edmonds, Darren Loucas, Patty Makatura-Kutzke, John McDermott, Aaron Nather
Design Advisor ........................................................................ Robert Dahlstrom
Costume Design Advisor .......................................................... Deb Trout
Costume Shop Manager ............................................................. Josie Gardner
Cutter/Tailor ........................................................................... Laurie L. Kurutz, Nanci Vaeth
First Hand .................................................................................. Cynthia Abott, Christy Scoggins
Wigs .......................................................................................... Dennis Milam, Doug Decker
Hairstyles ................................................................................ Tisha Jahnke
Make-up .................................................................................... Cynthia Wheaton
Running Crew: Brad Balkenhol, Aaron Busalacchi, David Byrne, Heather Hill, Ryan Jones, Jee Kim, Kelly Lacombe, Neil McLaughlin, Meredith Neighbor, Brandt Olsen, Martin Owen, Jason Pendergraft, Vera Schimmelbusch, Rob Powell, Carol Robertson, Patrick Robinson, Mark Shogren, Andy Westoff, Mark Wiseman, Sam Wishring
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Meany Hall Staff ....................................................................... Jaimes Aitken, Emmet Kaiser, Amy Kues, John Poulson
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