



VIENNESE OPERETTA GEMS

Classic performances by

Jussi Björling

Hilde Gueden

Richard Tauber

Franz Völker

Marcel Wittrisch

Gitta Alpár

Walther Ludwig

Elisabeth Schumann

Julius Patzak

Charles Kullmann

and many others

**Original Recordings
1927-1949**

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Original Recordings 1927-1949

Mythical Vienna and operetta have long been synonyms and our brief survey of the Viennese *Operette* therefore appropriately begins with well-known samples from the landmarks of the Viennese 'Waltz King' Johann Strauss II (1825-1899). Strauss was already a fêted exponent of Viennese dance music before he turned to operetta, with *Indigo*, in 1871. He was born, spent most of his days and died in Vienna where, with the exception of *Eine Nacht in Venedig* (Berlin, 1883), the premières of his operettas all took place. His masterpieces and the quintessence of the Viennese genre, *Die Fledermaus* and *Der Zigeunerbaron* date from 1874 and 1885 respectively. From the former comes Rosalinde and Alfred's Act 1 'Drinking Duet' (featuring Frankfurt-born tenor Franz Völker (1899-1965), an intermittent star of the Vienna State from 1931 to 1950) and the maid Adele's coquettish Act 2 **Mein Herr Marquis** (sung here in the true soubrette style by Merseburg-born soprano Elisabeth Schumann, 1888-1952); from the latter, Barinkay's swaying opening waltz, crowned with a telling top C from the still underestimated American tenor Charles Kullman (1903-1983), an erstwhile star of the Berlin State, is followed by the Act 2 duet with Saffi and some caressing *mezza-voce* for which the Swedish Jussi Björling (1911-1960) won world renown.

In parallel with, and often rivalling, the younger Strauss, a constellation of other composers active in Austria and Germany continued the trends originally set by Offenbach, introducing *ad hoc* in response to popular demand more of the traditional 'Viennese'

elements of comedy and Singspiel. Among the most prolific of these was Franz von Suppé (really Francesco Ezechiele Ermenegildo, Cavaliere Suppé-Demelli, 1819-1895). An aristocrat-turned-conductor of Dalmatian origin, Suppé penned more than 200 works for the stage, including thirty-odd light operas and operettas of which several enjoyed high popularity in Vienna. His 1860 work *Das Pensionat* has, rightly or wrongly, been pinpointed as 'the first Viennese operetta', but his most enduring success was *Boccaccio* (1879), from which comes the superbly lyrical **Hab' ich nur deine Liebe**, seamlessly delivered by Vienna-born star tenor Julius Patzak (1898-1974).

Prominent in the next generation, and all Austrians, were Karl Zeller (1842-1898; born at St. Peter-in-der-Au), Richard Franz Joseph Heuberger (1850-1914), Karl Millöcker (1842-1899) and Karl Michael Ziehrer (1843-1922), the last two both natives of Vienna. An official in the Austrian Ministry of Education, music for Zeller was only a hobby until his greatest success, *Der Vogelhändler*, was given in Vienna in 1891. Initially a civil engineer, Heuberger turned to music in 1876 following his appointment as chorus-master of the Vienna Gesangverein. A noted music critic, editor and sometime professor of music at the Vienna Conservatoire, his sole operetta success, *Der Opernball*, was first heard at the Theater an der Wien, in 1898. The son of a Viennese jeweller, Millöcker was variously a flautist and conductor before being appointed, at Suppé's recommendation, musical

director of the Theater an der Wien, a post he held from 1869 to 1883. In its superbly integrated blend of burlesque and romance, his greatest success *Der Bettelstudent* (1882) has been rated the Viennese counterpart to Lecocq's French *opérette* masterpiece *La fille de Madame Angot*. Self-taught, from 1863 Ziehrer toured Austria and Germany with his own dance orchestra before promoting popular concerts in Vienna. The composer of about 600 marches and waltzes he also wrote operettas, his most celebrated *Die Landstreicher* (1899).

By the second decade of the last century Viennese operetta was dominated by two figures, both Hungarians by birth and ancestry: Franz (originally Ferencz) Lehár (1870-1948) and Emmerich (originally Imre) Kálmán (1882-1953). A native of Siófok, Kálmán studied with organist-composer Hans Koessler in Budapest and settled in Vienna where he wrote a succession of tuneful Viennese-style operettas, beginning with *Ein Herbstmanöver*, first given in Budapest in 1908. While his subsequent Vienna successes include *Die Csardasfürstin* (1915), *Die Bajadere* (1921 – in the Act I finale Hungarian soprano Gitta Alpár (1903-1991) is joined by Swiss tenor star of German radio Herbert Ernst Groh, 1905-1982) and *Die Zircusprinzessin* (1926), his finest and most often performed work, *Gräfin Mariza* (Vienna, 1924) contains several rousing tunes, not least **Komm', Zigan'** (a fine vehicle for Belgian-born star of the Berlin State Opera, Marcel Wittrisch, 1903-1955).

Born in Komárom, like his father before him Lehár served for a time as a military band-master. Earlier, he had studied violin, piano and composition at the Prague Conservatory and harmony and

counterpoint, privately, under Zdenko Fibich and Antonín Dvořák. His first opera, a flop, was produced at Leipzig in 1896 but by 1903, when he took up the musical directorship of the Theater an der Wien, he was already famed for his popular waltz 'Gold und Silber' Op.75. In 1905, after five moderate operetta successes, his fortuitous assumption of a libretto rejected by Heuberger altered the direction of Viennese operetta. *Die lustige Witwe* first ran at the Theater an der Wien in 1905 for a record-breaking 483 performances. From 1907 it ran in London for 778 and on Broadway for 416 and by 1909, when it hit Paris, it had sparked new crazes in women's fashion and altered global trends in operetta writing.

Lehár's subsequent hits included *Der Graf von Luxemburg* (1909) and *Zigunerliebe* (1910 – its tenor solo is sung here with panache by the Romanian Joseph Schmidt, 1904-1942), in addition to several vehicles for Linz-born tenor Richard Tauber (1891-1948), including *Paganini* (1924 – from this the solo **Liebe, du Himmel**, is sung by the Viennese star of more recent revivals, Hilde Guden, 1917-1988), *Friederike* (1928), *Schön ist die Welt* (1930 – in this Tauber's partner was Gitta Alpár and *Giuditta* (in this, Lehár's swansong attempt at opera-writing staged at the Vienna State Opera in 1934, Tauber shared the honours with Czechoslovakian opera soprano, and subsequent singing film-actress Jarmila Novotná (1907-1994).

During the 1930s, with works by Robert Stolz (1880-1975), Nico Dostal (1895-1981) and others, Viennese operetta made its first entrées into the new medium of the film musical. Scion of a musical family, Dostal first worked in Berlin as a conductor and arranger. He also wrote for stage and film before

his first operetta success, *Clivia*, was premièred in Berlin, in 1933, starring his wife-to-be, the Viennese coloratura Lillie Claus. Among his subsequent successes were *Die Vielgeliebte* (1935) and *Monika* (1937 – filmed in 1942 as *Heimland*, its hit-song is sung here by the Bohemia-born star of the Berlin operetta stage Anni Frind, 1900-1987). Although only one of his stage works (*Liebesbriefe*, 1955) was premièred in Vienna, all are moulded in the Viennese tradition. His last operetta, *Rhapsodie der Liebe*, was first heard in Nuremberg in 1963.

A pupil of Robert Fuchs in Vienna and Humperdinck in Berlin, Graz-born Robert Stolz started his musical career as a répétiteur. A fine pianist, he won early note as a conductor (including the première of Lehár's *Die lustige Witwe*). For twelve years musical director at the Theater an der Wien, by 1940 he had emigrated to the USA,

returning to Vienna only in 1946. His work in the genre, however, endured until 1969, long after the heyday of the *Operette* was past. Marked by a characteristic penchant for the nostalgic and languid, Stolz's anachronistic but highly popular works in the Viennese idiom, which were variously mounted in Budapest, Berlin, Vienna, London and Zurich, include *Der Tanz ins Glück* (1920), *Venus in Seide* (1932) and *Zwei Herzen im Dreivierteltakt* (1933). Outstanding among his many film-musical successes were *Das Lied ist aus* (1930), *Liebeskommando* (1931) – both featuring Wittrisch – and *Zauber der Bohème*, a 1937 re-vamp of Puccini's opera with extra material by Stolz (including *Ich liebe dich*) originally conceived for Polish opera and film tenor Jan Kiepura (1902-1966) and his Hungarian soprano spouse, Marta Eggerth (born 1912).

Peter Dempsey, 2003

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1 Als flotter Geist, doch früh verwaist
from Der Zigeunerbaron 2:52
(Johann Strauss II–Ignaz Schnitzer)
Charles Kullmann, tenor; members of the Chorus
& Orchestra of the Staatsoper, Berlin, conducted
by Clemens Schmalstich
Columbia WR 488 (Berlin, 1932)

2 Vem oss har vigt? (Wer uns getraut?)
from Der Zigeunerbaron 3:11
(Johann Strauss II–Ignaz Schnitzer)
Jussi Björling, tenor; Hjärdis Schymberg,
soprano; orchestra conducted by Nils Grevillius
(Sung in Swedish)
Swedish HMV OSB 741-5 (Stockholm, 1938)

3 Mein Herr Marquis
from Die Fledermaus 3:22
(Johann Strauss II–Richard Genée–Carl Haffner)
Elisabeth Schumann, soprano; orchestra
conducted by Karl Alwin
HMV Bb 12008 (London, 1927)

4 Trinke, Liebchen, trinke schnell
from Die Fledermaus 3:19
(Johann Strauss II–Richard Genée–Carl Haffner)
Franz Völker, tenor; Elsa Kochhann, soprano;
orchestra conducted by Joseph Snaga
Polydor 1689br (Berlin, 1929)

5 Lagunenwalzer
from Eine Nacht in Venedig 3:06
(Johann Strauss II–Richard Genée–F. Zell)
Julius Patzak, tenor; orchestra of the Berlin
Staatsoper conducted by Alois Melichar
Polydor 6143½ GD8 (Berlin, 1934)

6 Hab' ich nur deine Liebe
from Boccaccio 3:09
(Franz von Suppé–Richard Genée–F. Zell)
Julius Patzak, tenor; orchestra of the Berlin
Staatsoper conducted by Alois Melichar
Polydor 6144½ GD8 (Berlin, 1934)

7 Schenkt man sich Rosen in Tirol
from Der Vogelhändler 2:44
(Karl Zeller–Moritz West–Ludwig Held)
Walther Ludwig, tenor; Lillie Claus, soprano;
chorus & orchestra of the Berlin Staatsoper
conducted by Gerhard Steeger
Deutsche Grammophon 933½ GE9
(Berlin, 1940)

8 Ich hab' kein Geld
from Der Bettelstudent 1:39
(Karl Millöcker–Richard Genée–F. Zell)
Franz Völker, tenor; members of the Berlin
Staatsoper Orchestra conducted by Alois
Melichar
Deutsche Grammophon 5674½ GR 8
(Berlin, 1934)

9 Komm', Zigan'
from Gräfin Mariza 3:09
(Emmerich Kálmán–Julius Brammer–Alfred
Grünwald)
Marcel Wittrisch, tenor; orchestra conducted
by Ernst Hauke
Electrola OD 1335 (Berlin, 1932)

10 Finale (Act 1)
from Die Bajadere 3:17
(Emmerich Kálmán–Julius Brammer–Alfred
Grünwald)
Gitta Alpár, soprano; Herbert Ernst Groh, tenor;
orchestra conducted by Otto Dobrindt
Odeon W133554-2 (Berlin, 1932)

11 Sei gepriesen, du lauschnige Nacht
from Die Landstreicher 3:13
(Karl Michael Ziehrer–L. Krenn–C. Lindau)
Sung and whistled by Elisabeth Schumann,
soprano; orchestra conducted by Lawrence
Collingwood
HMV OEA 4683-2 (London, 1937)

- 12 Im Chambre séparée**
from Der Opernball 3:03
 (Richard Heuberger–Viktor Léon–Heinrich von Waldberg)
 Richard Tauber, tenor; orchestra conducted by Erich Wolfgang Korngold
 Parlophon-Odeon Be 9424-2 (Berlin, 1932)
- 13 Lippen schweigen**
from Die lustige Witwe 2:56
 (Franz Lehár–Viktor Léon–Leo Stein)
 Dusolina Giannini, soprano; Marcel Wittrisch, tenor; orchestra conducted by Bruno Seidler-Winkler
 Electrola ORA 3228 (Berlin, 1938)
- 14 Ich bin ein Zigeunerkind**
from Zigeunerliebe 3:18
 (Franz Lehár–Viktor Léon–Leo Stein)
 Joseph Schmidt, tenor; orchestra conducted by Felix Günther
 Odeon 85273-3 (Berlin, 1936)
- 15 O Mädchen, mein Mädchen**
from Friederike 2:44
 (Franz Lehár–Ludwig Herzer–Fritz Löhner)
 Franz Völker, tenor; orchestra
 Polydor 805dk –IV (Berlin, 1928)
- 16 Bin verliebt, bin so verliebt**
from Schön ist die Welt 2:50
 (Franz Lehár–Ludwig Herzer–Fritz Löhner)
 Gitta Alpár, soprano; orchestra
 Parlophon-Odeon 38842-3 (Berlin, 1930)
- 17 Schön wie die blaue Sommernacht**
from Giuditta 3:17
 (Franz Lehár–Paul Knepler–Fritz Löhner)
 Jarmila Novotná, soprano; Richard Tauber, tenor; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Franz Lehár
 Odeon VE 2099-3 (Vienna, 1934)
- 18 Heimatland**
from Monika 3:18
 (Nico Dostal–Hermann Hermecke)
 Anni Frind, soprano; orchestra conducted by Bruno Seidler-Winkler
 Electrola ORA 2789 (Berlin, 1938)
- 19 Ich liebe dich**
from Zauber der Bohème 3:01
 (Robert Stolz)
 Marcel Wittrisch, tenor; orchestra conducted by Bruno Seidler-Winkler
 Electrola ORA 2331 (Berlin, 1937)
- 20 Liebe, du Himmel auf Erden**
from Paganini 3:10
 (Franz Lehár–Paul Knepler–Béla Jenbach)
 Hilde Gueden, soprano; Kingsway Symphony Orchestra conducted by Hans May
 Decca DR 13392 (London, 1949)

Research, Transfers and Digital Restoration by Peter Dempsey

Sparked by such imported French successes as Offenbach's *Orphée* and nourished by Viennese dance traditions, operetta sprang to life in Vienna in the mid-1870s with *Die Fledermaus* and other key works by 'Waltz King' Johann Strauss II. The new genre flourished with Suppé, Millöcker, Zeiler and Ziehrer, and evolved via Lehár (whose 1905 masterpiece *Die lustige Witwe* is still rated the finest Viennese musical comedy) and Kálmán until the 1930s when, with the advent of the film-musical, it reached an even wider audience.

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Joh. STRAUSS II (1825-1899):

- 1 **Als flotter Geist, doch früh verwaist** *from*
Der Zigeunerbaron Charles Kullmann 2:52
- 2 **Vem oss har vigt?** *from* **Der Zigeunerbaron**
Jussi Börling, Hjärdís Schymberg 3:11
- 3 **Mein Herr Marquis** *from* **Die Fledermaus**
Elisabeth Schumann 3:22
- 4 **Trinke, Liebchen, trinke schnell** *from* **Die Fledermaus** Franz Völke, Elsa Kochhann 3:19
- 5 **Lagunenwalzer (Eine Nacht in Venedig)**
Julius Patzak 3:06

FRANZ VON SUPPÉ (1819-1895):

- 6 **Hab' ich nur deine Liebe** *from* **Boccaccio**
Julius Patzak 3:09
- 7 **Schenkt man sich Rosen in Tirol** *from* **Der Vogelhändler** Walther Ludwig, Lillie Claus 2:44

KARL MILLÖCKER (1842-1899):

- 8 **Ich hab' kein Geld** *from* **Der Bettelstudent**
Franz Völker 1:39

EMMERICH KÁLMÁN (1882-1953):

- 9 **Komm', Zigan' from** **Gräfin Mariza**
Marcel Wittrisch 3:09
- 10 **Finale (Act 1) from** **Die Bajadere**
Gitta Alpár, Herbert Ernst Groh 3:17

KARL MICHAEL ZIEHRER (1843-1922):

- 11 **Sei gepriesen, du lauschige Nacht** *from* **Die Landstreicher** Elisabeth Schumann 3:13

RICHARD HEUBERGER (1850-1914):

- 12 **Im Chambre séparée** *from* **Der Opernball**
Richard Tauber 3:03

FRANZ LEHÁR (1870-1948):

- 13 **Lippen schweigen** *from* **Die lustige Witwe**
Dusolina Giannini, Marcel Wittrisch 2:56
- 14 **Ich bin ein Zigeunerkind** *from*
Zigeunerliebe Joseph Schmidt 3:18
- 15 **O Mädchen, mein Mädchen** *from* **Friederike**
Franz Völker 2:44
- 16 **Bin verliebt, bin so verliebt** *from* **Schön ist die Welt** Gitta Alpár 2:50
- 17 **Schön wie die blaue Sommernacht** *from*
Giuditta Jarmila Novotná, Richard Tauber 3:17

NICO DOSTAL (1895-1981):

- 18 **Heimatland** *from* **Monika** Anni Frind 3:18

ROBERT STOLZ (1880-1975):

- 19 **Ich liebe dich** *from* **Zauber der Bohème**
Marcel Wittrisch 3:01

FRANZ LEHÁR (1870-1948):

- 20 **Liebe, du Himmel auf Erden** *from* **Paganini**
Hilde Gueden 3:10

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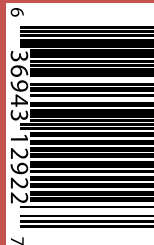
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