

## October 1, 2020 – Richard Strauss’s *Der Rosenkavalier*

This week’s Thursday Night Opera House presents a perennial favorite by Richard Strauss that looks backward dramatically and stylistically to the Classical period of Haydn and Mozart. Between 1909 and 1932, Strauss collaborated with librettist Hugo von Hofmannsthal on six operas, and *Der Rosenkavalier* (*The Knight of the Rose*) is undoubtedly the greatest of them all. Loosely based on Louvet de Couvrai’s novel *Les amours du chevalier de Faublas* and Moliere’s comedy *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac*, it was first performed on January 26, 1911 at the Court Opera in Dresden.

Set in 1740s Vienna, the middle-aged Marschallin (soprano **Kiri Te Kanawa**) is having an affair with the young nobleman Octavian (mezzo-soprano **Anne-Sophie von Otter** in a “trouser” role). Her boorish country cousin Baron Ochs (bass **Kurt Rydl**) is engaged to Sophie (soprano **Barbara Hendricks**), daughter of the recently ennobled businessman Faninal (bass **Franz Grundheber**). Ochs asks the Marscallin to recommend a suitable young man to make the traditional presentation of the Silver Rose to the intended bride, and Octavian is selected for the task. Octavian and Sophie are immediately attracted to one another, while Ochs’s vulgarity revolts Sophie. Eventually, Ochs is embarrassed, Sophie and Octavian are united, and the Marshallin resigns herself with dignity to the loss of her lover to a young woman closer to his own age.

**Bernard Haitink** conducts the Staatskapelle Dresden, the Dresden State Opera Chorus, and the Boys of the Dresden Kreuzchor in this 1991 EMI recording.

**Erin Morley** and **Elīna Garanča** sing “Ist ein Traum,” Sophie and Octavian's Act III duet, in a 2017 Metropolitan Opera performance: <https://youtu.be/waSk776rZEO>.

Please join me next Thursday, October 8th, for Jacques Haléby’s *La Juive* (*The Jewess*), in observance of the Jewish High Holy Days. It features **Julia Varady** as Rachel, **José Carreras** as the goldsmith Eléazar, **Dalmacio Gonzales** as Léopold, **June Anderson** as Eudoxie, and **Ferruccio Furlanetto** as Cardinal Brogni. **Antonio de Almeida** conducts this 2006 Philips Classics recording.

The Thursday Night Opera House is heard at 7:00 p.m. Eastern on 89.7 FM in central North Carolina. We’re also streamed online, and you can listen as well on WCPE’s Android or iPhone apps.

*Bob Chapman*

**W. Robert Chapman, Host of the Thursday Night Opera House**