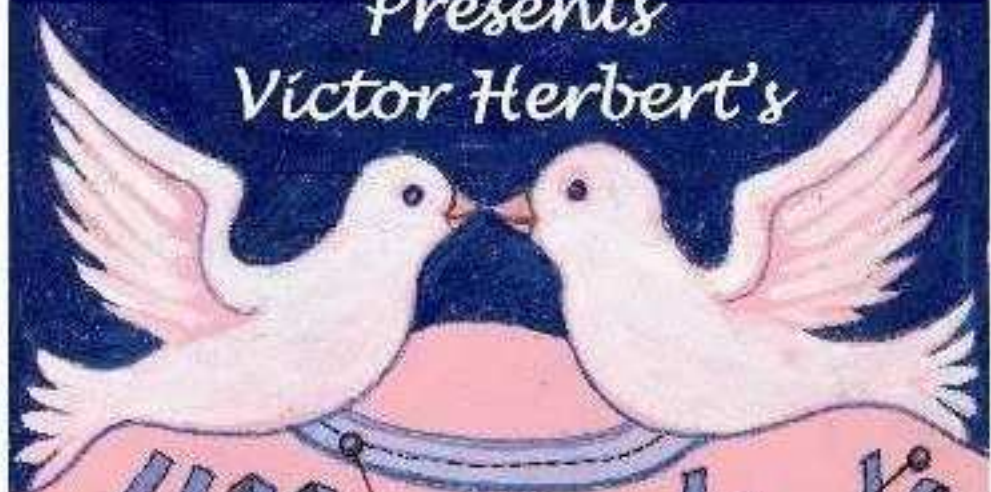


LIGHT OPERA
OF NEW YORK

Presents
Victor Herbert's



Mlle Modiste



Thursday, March 18, 2010—8:00 PM at The Players

Kiss Me Again !

Fritzi Scheff, “frisky Fritzi,” the “little devil” of the Metropolitan Opera had already achieved notoriety and fame at the Met when she agreed to appear in operetta for \$1,000 a week. She was Victor Herbert’s biggest star. He composed four works for her; *Babette* (1903) was the first and *Mlle Modiste* (1905) was the greatest.



Scheff was Viennese, and her English was none too strong. But she made history during the curtain calls for *Babette* when she pulled Herbert from the wings to take his bow. When he became flustered Fritzi stood on tiptoe, threw her arms around his neck, and planted a big, sexy kiss on his cheek. The audience went wild as Herbert stammered. The press went on endlessly discussing “the Kiss.” It was scandalous!

Two years later Victor Herbert wrote what would become his most popular melody—and he wrote it for Fritzi, his leading lady in *Mlle Modiste*! The title of the song— “Kiss Me Again”!

How long Herbert had the melody in his head is not clear, but Lionel Barrymore claimed that Herbert played it for him on his cello in 1901, right here at the Players!



Fritzi went on to make a career of *Mlle Modiste*, touring in it for years, even forming her own company in 1913. She never recorded commercially, so aside from a fragment on a Mapleson

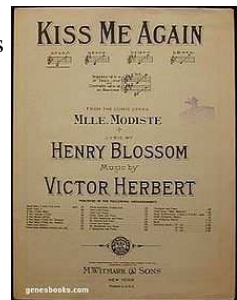
Cylinder, all we have of her voice singing “Kiss Me Again” is from a 1936 radio broadcast and another from a 1954

television appearance.

Henry Martyn Blossom proved to be the best librettist Herbert ever had. The two of them collaborated on a number of operettas, including *The Red Mill* (1906), *The Princess Pat* (1915) and *Eileen* (1917), in addition to *Mlle Modiste*.

Both men were very clear in how they wanted to portray the problems of the rigid societal stereotyping so common to the period. It took both words and music to convey the issues of class distinctions between commoners and nobility, as well as the exploitive relationships of employers toward their employees. What’s more, “a proto-feminist agenda is central to the piece: an orphaned female forced to survive on subsistence wages but possessed of a feisty, individualistic spirit triumphs over every type of gender-based restriction to achieve freedom from the highly stereotyped role in which we first see her, to become a fully realized individual, both as an artist and woman.” (1)

Mlle Modiste opened with a one-night-stand in Trenton, New Jersey on October 7, 1905, with a cast of 85. Then followed a triumphant week in Washington, DC, performing for President and Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt and much of United States officialdom. After a two and a half month tour, the show opened in New York on Christmas night 1905 at the Knickerbocker Theatre, followed by a run of 202 performances. After summer vacation, the operetta was back at the Knickerbocker for three more weeks, followed by a tour. (The show had to leave this house because Herbert’s next smash hit, *The Red Mill*, was coming in.) New York and touring performances continued for the 1907-1908 season, extending to the West Coast. Fritzi starred in them all!



(1) For more about Victor Herbert, see *Victor Herbert—A Theatrical Life* by Neil Gould, published by Fordham University Press; 2008, from which some of the above was drawn.

Mlle Modiste

Music by

Victor Herbert

Score compiled by

Dino Anagnost

New Libretto Adaptation by

Alyce Mott

Original 1905 Libretto & Lyrics by

Henry Blossom

Co-Producer and Stage Director: **Carol Davis**

Co-Producer: **John Odell Behonek**

Music Director: **Stephen Francis Vasta**

Choreographer: **Iris Karlin**

Costume Designer: **Lydia Gladstone**

Wardrobe: **Michelle Lepler**

Lighting: **Gary Slavin**

House Manager: **Jane Büchi**

The Cast

Mme Cecile, owner of a Parisian hat shop **Paula Rocheleau**

Fifi, (Mlle Modiste) clerk in the hat shop **Kristin Vogel**

Count Henri De Bouvray **Richard Holmes**

Etienne De Bouvray, nephew of the Count **John Tiranno**

Hiram Bent, American entrepreneur **Cory Clines**

Ensemble: Lesley Berry, Nathan Brian, Susan Case, Iris Karlin,

David Kelleher-Flight, Lucy Kirk, Brian Long, Leslie Tay

Ambience Strings

Violin I: Shane Thor Galligan *Violin II: Magdalena Garbalinska*

Viola: Kristin Sawyer Nikaj *Cello: Jillian Russo*

Bass: Patrick Roberts

Piano & Conductor: Stephen Francis Vasta

Piano & Flute: Iris Karlin

Special Thanks to: Phil Bowers & Don Hauptman (marketing), David Jones (season graphics), Kurt Keller (graphic production), Nathan Hull (logo), Norm Keller (flyer & program), Tony Cockcroft & Miranda Knowlton (box office), Deborah Thomas Shull & Ramona Flood (house), Jack Delbe (props), Tal Karlin (light board), Jay Gould (archival video recording), Bruce Greengart (archival audio recording), VLOG (costumes & rehearsal space) and Ohio Light Opera. For the Players: John Martello (Executive Director), Dennis Davies (Asst. to Executive Director) and Raymond Ridore (Technical Director).

Musical Numbers

ACT I: An obscure little hat shop in Paris on the Rue de la Paix

- Overture *Orchestra*
1. Furs and Feathers *Women*
2. Hats Make the Woman. *Fifi & Women*
3. When the Cat's Away. *Mme Cécile & Women*
4. The Time and the Place and the Girl. *Etienne & Ensemble*
5. If I Were On the Stage (Kiss Me Again) *Fifi*
6. The Dear Little Girl Who is Good. *Hiram & Women*
7. Finale *Fifi, Etienne, Count & Ensemble*

Intermission

ACT II: (One year later) Garden at the Chateau de St. Mar

8. Entr'acte. *Orchestra*
9. I Want What I Want When I Want It. *Count*
10. Love Me, Love My Dog *Etienne*
11. Here At the Bazaar *Ensemble*
12. The Mascot of the Troop *Fifi & Men*
13. Ze English Language *Mme Cécile*
14. The Nightingale and the Star *Fifi*
15. Grand Finale *Ensemble*

Who's Who in *Mlle Modiste*

Ambience Strings (*Orchestra*) is a collective of Conservatory Players, performing together professionally since 2000. Our players have performed at some of the most prestigious events in NYC, as well as recording, touring and collaborating with some of the best pop artists of today. www.thestringcollectivenyc.com.

Dino Anagnost (*Score Compiler*) is in his 30th season as Music Director and Conductor of The Little Orchestra Society, a NYC professional orchestra in its 62nd season. He has conducted the Society in 1,000+ concerts, bringing his remarkable programming innovations to adults and children alike. Known for his vast knowledge of Vivaldi, American and International film scores, orchestra commissions and premieres, Anagnost and Mott are co-creators of the Victor Herbert Renaissance Project which with The Little Orchestra Society have created more first class complete evenings of Victor Herbert than any professional ensemble in the world. www.littleorchestra.org

John Odell Behonek (*Co-Producer*) is founder/treasurer of LOONY. A theatre professional from age eight, he combined a love of performing arts with a 30-year career as a research biochemist and science educator. Past president of the Village Light Opera Group, the G&S Society of NY and the Theatre Association of NY State he currently serves as NYGASP secretary.

Lesley Berry (*Ensemble*): Blue Hill Troupe roles: Mrs. Partlet (*Sorcerer*), Angela (*Patience*), Peep-Bo (*Mikado*), Cleo (*Most Happy Fella*). St. Bart's Players: Diana (*California Suite*), Sally (*Follies*), Meg Brockie (*Brigadoon*), Ruth (*High Spirits*), Joanne (*Company*), Mrs. Anderssen/Quintet (*Night Music*). Amateur Comedy Club: Sarah (*Table Manners*). With LOONY, *Naughty Marietta*, *Mis(s)Trial By Jury*.

Nathan Brian (*Ensemble*) has recently performed with The Minnesota Opera, Johannesburg Symphony, The Ohio Light Opera, Sarasota Opera, Pine Mountain Music Festival and The International

Who's Who in *Mlle Modiste*

Symphony Orchestra. With performance degrees from the University of Michigan and the University of Utah, Nate has just recently moved to New York City.

Susan Case (*Ensemble*) made her LOONY debut in *Naughty Marietta* and is thrilled to return for more Victor Herbert. She has sung for many years with NYGASP and is a founding member of Out of the Box Theatre Co. Favorite roles include Nedda (*Pagliacci*), Casilda (*The Gondoliers*), Julia Jellicoe (*The Grand Duke*), Aline (*The Sorcerer*) and the Mother in *Amahl...*

Cory Clines (*Hiram Bent*) was praised by *Opera News* as being in "excellent voice and show[ing] a real spark of stage savvy." This bass-baritone sings both protagonists and comedians on stages ranging from opera to musical theatre. Mr. Clines can also be seen as Osmin in Liederkrantz Opera Theatre's upcoming *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* and will be returning to the Ohio Light Opera this summer.

Carol Davis (*Co-Producer/Stage Director*): is one of the founders of LOONY and its Managing Director. Carol has been president of the boards of both the Blue Hill Troupe (with whom she also sings) and the New York Gilbert & Sullivan Players; she is the current president of the G&S Society of New York. Carol has produced and/or staged all of the LOONY performances to date. She thanks her father for nurturing her life-long love of operetta.

Lydia Gladstone (*Costumes*): *Performing credits*: Jeannette Burmeister (*The Full Monty-Northern Stage*); Margaret/Vi (*Dog Day Afternoon-Barefoot Theatre Co., NYC*); Mme. Pastia (*Le Cabaret de Carmen-American Opera Theatre*); *Tovarich-Musicals Tonight*. Also: Fraulein Schneider (*Cabaret*), Mrs. Lovett (*Sweeney Todd*), Shirley (*Frozen*), Rose (*Gypsy*), Witch (*Into the Woods*), Sally Adams (*Call Me Madam*), Kate (*Broadway Bound*); *Side by Side by Sondheim, Closer Than Ever, Jacques Brel*.

Richard Holmes (*Count Henri De Bouvray*) has sung 162 complete roles! Principal artist: Glimmerglass, Virginia, El Paso, San Antonio, Lake George, Columbus, New York Grand Operas; guest artist, Metropolitan Opera. Roles from Rossini's Figaro and

Dandini to leads in operas by Britten, Argento, Barab, Harbison and Beeson; World premiere recording of "Sorry, Wrong Number." Festival soloist: Aix-en-Provence, Avignon, Stockholm, St. Petersburg, London, Prague, Paris, Amsterdam ... and Sioux City! 29-season NYGASP veteran. Next: Rossini *Stabat Mater* (Fairfield County Chorale), Dayton Opera debut. Recordings: Naxos, Vox, Albany, Lyrichord Records.

Iris Karlin (*Choreographer & Ensemble*): Master's degree Magna Cum Laude (Haifa's University), continued vocal education in Germany, Austria and New York. Began her operatic experience with the Israeli Opera, has continued performing in the States with Pacific, NYC Lyric, Amore (Musetta in *La Boheme*), Amici and Metropolis Operas. This is her third LOONY appearance.

David Kelleher-Flight (*Ensemble*): A Canadian baritone, David has been heard in the title role of *Mikado*, Sir Richard (*Yeomen*), Samuel (*Pirates*), and Njegus (*Merry Widow*). Graduate of the Manhattan School of Music, he is currently a Doctoral Candidate at SUNY-Stony Brook. Aspen Music Festival, Banff Centre for the Arts, Ohio Light Opera, Ash Lawn Opera and Oxford Lieder Festival (UK).

Mezzo soprano **Lucy Kirk** (*Ensemble*) has sung with the Blue Hill Troupe and VLOG, as well as ensembles in Washington, San Francisco, Philadelphia and London. She has performed at Don't Tell Mama and held principal roles with G&S groups in London and Colorado's Crested Butte Music Festival.

Brian Long (*Ensemble*) comes from Alaska, making a pit stop at Ithaca College to get his BM. NY credits include Teseo (*Il Sogno*) and Cheviot Hill (*Topsy Turvy Loves*). Other credits: Jester (*Once Upon a Mattress*) and Fyedka (*Fiddler...*), Monostatos (*Magic Flute*). Upcoming: Ellen Degeneres (*Bully Pulpit*) and Duke (*Patience*). Thanks to all his friends and family for their undying support, Love you all!!

Alyce Mott (*Libretto Adaptation*): Playwright, stage director, arts administrator, co-founder of the *Victor Herbert Renaissance Project* with Dino Anagnost.

Who's Who in *Mlle Modiste*

Author of eight new Herbert librettos, each resulting in productions with The Little Orchestra Society at Lincoln Center with such stars as Patrice Munsel, Estelle Parsons and Lynn Redgrave. Ms. Mott has maintained www.vherbert.com since 1999, and last year launched Shop VHSsource, an international on-line digital publisher of original Victor Herbert performance materials.

Paula Jean Rocheleau (*Mme Cecile*) is a 10-year veteran of the New York City Opera Associate Chorus, performing in NYCO productions including the celebrated NYC premiere of "Margaret Garner" in 2007. Roles with Amato Opera, Blue Hill Troupe and most recently in Bronx Opera's 2009 *Magic Flute*. Paula's voice has graced many concert halls in New York, including Carnegie Hall where she was a featured soloist with Skitch Henderson's New York Pops. She holds a BA in Vocal Performance from University of Wisconsin, Green Bay.

Leslie Tay (*Ensemble*) is a Singaporean character tenor. He has sung with companies including Bronx Opera and New York Lyric Opera (Carnegie Hall). He is a graduate of Manhattan School of Music where he was in the studio of Arthur Levy. He is currently a Resident Artist of Dicapo Opera. www.leslietay.net

John Tiranno (*Etienne De Bouvray*): Recent engagements include Alfredo in *La*

Traviata (Granite State Opera), Lord Tolloller in *Iolanthe* (Nashville Opera), Dr. Caius in *Falstaff* (Toledo Opera), Faust in Gounod's *Faust* (Opera in the Heights), Handel's *Messiah* (Dayton Philharmonic), Mahler's *Symphony No. 8* (National Academy Orchestra of Canada), and both Haydn's *Creation* and Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* (Vermont Mozart Festival). www.johntiranno.com

Stephen Francis Vasta (*Music Director*): a veteran conductor, vocal coach, and keyboardist, has conducted operettas including "Die Fledermaus," "The Merry Widow," and "The Mikado" for Opera Northeast; "Orpheus in the Underworld" as Assistant Professor of Theatre at Ball State University (IN); and "Trial by Jury" and "H.M.S. Pinafore" for Opera Naples (FL). He is also a regular contributor to "Opera News" and to the MusicWeb International website.

Kristin K. Vogel (*Fifi*): Earlier this year Ms. Vogel appeared with LOONY as Marietta in *Naughty Marietta*. In May she returns to Natchez Festival of Music as a Young Artist covering Mimi (*La Boheme*). Companies: Village Light Opera Group, Des Moines Metro Opera, Eugene Opera, Dicapo Opera Theater, Opera Manhattan, Liederkrantz Opera Theatre, Opera Company of Brooklyn. MM: Manhattan School of Music, BM: University of Southern California. www.KristinKVogel.com

About This Adaptation

The original *Mlle Modiste* featured 14 principals and a chorus of milliners, soldiers, servants, etc., a healthy payroll in any economy! It was also a little sparse in songs: Etienne only had one song, without a love duet anywhere in the score. Dialogue went on for days. Librettist Henry Blossom brought a fresh intelligence to his script, but he was young and relied on tried and true techniques.

This current libretto was originally performed with a conductor who has an aversion to a lot of dialogue between songs. To streamline it, I removed characters who did not really further the story: nine people who were "window dressing."

This was my first re-working of a Herbert libretto to use a character as the narrator. Mme. Cecile knew everything about everyone except Hiram so she was an obvious choice—one that allowed the narrator a couple of song opportunities.

My aim was to tell a sound story in the spirit of the original with characters who had a little more depth and a modicum of conflict. Dr. Anagnost removed songs of a lesser nature (remember "Keokuk"?) than the gems remaining. We assigned one to Etienne ("Love me, Love My Dog") and another ("Ze English Language") to Mme. Cecile.

This *Mlle Modiste* is shorter and (one hopes) funnier, while retaining most of the plot, and all of the joy, of Herbert's original.

Alyce Mott

Light Opera of New York

Celebrating the 150th anniversary of Victor Herbert's birth, Light Opera of New York completes this season with *The Red Mill* on May 20. To order tickets, turn the page.

Now in its fifth year, LOONY is a professional, not-for-profit company devoted to the performance of staged operettas and operetta concerts, performing classical operetta from a 21st century perspective. LOONY has performed a fully-staged *Fledermaus*, Victor Herbert's little known *The Magic Knight*, our own English translation of Offenbach's *Monsieur Choufleuri*, a staged production of William Gilbert's *Eyes and No Eyes* and both as-written and gender-reversed productions of *Trial by Jury*. We also perform concerts that draw songs and scenes from disparate operettas into a unified, sometimes wacky, theme.

Our Victor Herbert year at The Players kicked off with a gala concert last October, followed by *Naughty Marietta* in January. The 2010-11 season will feature fully-staged American operettas—favorites by Romberg and Friml.

LOONY is available to perform for your event with a range of programs, from a quartet of singers to a themed concert or a full operetta. If you're interested email us at: info@lightoperaofnewyork.org

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