



Proudly  
Presents

**The Merry Widow (Die Lustige Witwe)**  
by  
Franz Lehár

Baron Mirko Zeta, Pontevedrian Ambassador in Paris . . . . . Bass  
Valencienne, his wife . . . . . Soprano  
Count Danilo Danilovich, First secretary . . . . . Tenor  
Hanna Glawari, a rich widow . . . . . Soprano  
Camille de Rosillon, a Parisian . . . . . Tenor  
Raoul de St. Brioche, a Parisian . . . . . Tenor  
Vicomte Cascada, a Parisian . . . . . Baritone  
Bogdanowitsch, Pontevedrian Consul . . . . . Baritone  
Sylviane, his wife . . . . . Soprano  
Njegus, an Embassy secretary . . . . . Tenor  
Kromow, Pontevedrian Councillor . . . . . Baritone  
Olga, his wife . . . . . Mezzo-soprano  
Pritschitsch, Pontevedrian Military Attache . . . . . Bass  
Praskowia, his wife . . . . . Mezzo-soprano

# The Merry Widow

Lehár began his career following his father's footsteps as a military bandleader. After his father's death, Lehár decided to earn his living as a composer. He met with some moderate success with his waltz *Gold and Silver* in 1902. In 1905, the Theater an der Wien premiered *The Merry Widow* which became Lehár's greatest success.

The premiere of *The Merry Widow* turned out to be the beginning of the "musical" but was sadly the end of the great Viennese operettas. From 1905 until Lehár's death after World War II, the genre faded while the musical became more popular with composers like Victor Herbert.

## Synopsis

Place: The Pontevedrian Embassy in Paris and Hanna Glawari's house in Paris  
Time: Early 20<sup>th</sup> century

### ACT I - the Pontevedrian embassy in Paris

A party is underway to celebrate the Pontevedrian prince's birthday at their embassy in Paris. Baron Mirko Zeta, the leader of the embassy staff, is most concerned in finding Hanna Glawari, the widow of one of the richest men in Pontevedria. Zeta is afraid that Hanna will find a new husband among the Parisian men and take her money out of the country. Zeta's young French wife, Valencienne, has been flirting with Camille de Rosillon who tells her of the seriousness of his love (*I'm a highly respectable wife*). Zeta sends the embassy secretary, Njegus, to ensure that Count Danilo is available when Hanna arrives. Zeta hopes that the Pontevedrian Danilo will be able to woo Hanna and keep her money in the impoverished country. Zeta was considering asking Camille to woo Hanna, but has discovered that Camille is in love with a married woman.

Hanna makes her entrance and invites everyone to a party at her house the following evening. Baron Zeta welcomes her and Hanna, who is quite aware of the Baron's interest in her money, assures him that she is a Pontevedrian at heart. With her male admirers in tow, Hanna leads them into an adjoining room for the festivities. Count Danilo Danilovich arrives and declares that after a hard day's work for his country, he likes nothing better than a visit to Maxim's (*I'm off to chez Maxim*). Zeta mentions Hanna's arrival to Danilo, who has a less than enthusiastic reaction. It is discovered that Danilo and Hanna were in love many years ago, but Danilo's family was against the match. Hanna and Danilo find themselves seated together and Danilo tells Hanna that he will never say he loves her, if it is interpreted that



Pictures are of Kentucky Opera's upcoming production featuring sets by Erhard Rom, courtesy of Virginia Opera.



he loves her money. Zeta tells Danilo that it is his patriotic duty to marry Hanna and save Pontevedria's future. The final dance is announced as Ladies' Choice and Danilo outmaneuvers all the other men to dance with Hanna.

### **ACT II – Hanna Glawari's house, the next evening**

A genuine Pontevedrian party is underway when Hanna interrupts to sing the ballad of Vilja, a forest nymph who fell in love with a mortal man (*The once lived a Vilja*). Danilo arrives and Hanna begins her pursuit of him. They sing together of a couple going on a romantic carriage ride (*Silly, silly cavalryman*). Zeta asks Njegus and Danilo to meet him in the summerhouse for a conference and with other men from the party, they reflect on how difficult it is to figure out women (*Oh these women, dreadful women*). Prior to the impromptu conference, Valencienne and Camille meet in the summerhouse where Valencienne reluctantly asks Camille to propose to Hanna. Njegus, having seen the would be lovers enter the summerhouse, quickly assists Valencienne out through the back when Zeta swears he saw her in the summerhouse with an unknown man. Zeta looks again and sees Hanna with Camille. Hanna announces that she and Camille are engaged, to the annoyance of Danilo and Valencienne who perceives Camille to be fickle. The jealous Danilo sings a sad song (*There once were two royal children*) and heads off to Maxim's to forget his troubles.



### **ACT III – the ballroom of Hanna Glawari's house**

Njegus has transformed Hanna's ballroom into a replica of Maxim's. Valencienne and the dancing girls are singing and dancing. Danilo enters and is greeted by a telegram confirming that unless money is found immediately, the Pontevedrian treasury will be bankrupt. Hanna tells Danilo that the events in the pavilion were not as they seemed and she never intended to marry Camille. Danilo admits that he loves her and they waltz together. Zeta is overjoyed until he discovers his wife's fan in the pavilion and realizes she betrayed him. He declares himself divorced and free to marry Hanna himself. Hanna tells him that as per her late husband's will, she is forbidden to marry again or lose her inheritance. At it turns out, the fan has writing on it, in Valencienne's clear hand, "I am a respectable wife". Danilo is delighted that he is free to propose to Hanna, who tells him that she will indeed lose her fortune because it will pass to her new husband. Danilo laughs and realizes that he will marry the woman he loves and save his country at the same time. All join in the final ode to the mystery of women.

All production pictures are from Kentucky Opera's upcoming production featuring set design by Erhard Rom courtesy of Virginia Opera.

# The Merry Widow

## Biography of the Composer

FRANZ LEHÁR

1870 - 1948



Franz Lehár was born on April 30, 1870 in Komarom Hungary to Franz Lehár senior, a military bandmaster and composer, and Christine Neubrandt. Being born into a musical house, Franz learned to play the violin and piano before he could read or write. His mother encouraged free improvisation on the piano, and by age eleven, Franz had composed his first lied. Franz then attended the conservatory at Prague for six years.

In the summer of 1888, Franz began his first musical engagement in Barmen-Elberfeld and worked his way up to concertmaster. However, he did not enjoy all the concerts because it left no time for him to compose. To get out of this predicament, his father arranged his draft into the army. Franz began his military service in the band of the infantry regiment #50 conducted by his father. Father and son did not always agree, so Franz left and found a post as the bandmaster of the 25<sup>th</sup> infantry in Losoncz. Beginning in 1890 and for the next twelve years, Franz was a military bandmaster. To supplement his pay, Franz made band arrangements of folk songs, classical pieces and popular songs. In 1894, Franz was discharged from the military after an "incident" in which he did not follow his commanding officer's order to conduct a concert to the end. So Franz conducted the naval band in Pola, the naval port of the monarchy. In Pola, Franz met the poet Felix Falzari and began a collaboration to create his first opera *Kukuschka*. Publishers began to take interest in Franz, who gave up his post hoping to make his living as a composer. Unfortunately, while *Kukuschka* met with some popular success with the public, it failed to become the breakthrough that Lehar was looking for. So Lehar took up the military bandleader post in Trieste and in 1898, Franz took the former post of his father for the infantry regiment #87 in Budapest. He eventually transferred to Vienna in 1899 as the bandmaster of the infantry regiment #26 and in 1902, he composed the waltz *Gold and Silver* that garnered him some of the international fame that he sought. Later that same year, Lehar gave up the military for good and received the position of musical director at Vienna's Theater an der Wien.

Franz began a friendship with Viktor Léon, a noted librettist and one of the most important and successful personalities of the Viennese operetta scene. Leon gave Franz a libretto for the operetta *Der Rastelbinder* that was accepted by the Carl-Theater, a direct competitor with the Theater an der Wien. This dual role as composer at large and conductor at the Theater an der Wien soon ended in 1902, but the real fame for Lehar was just around the corner.

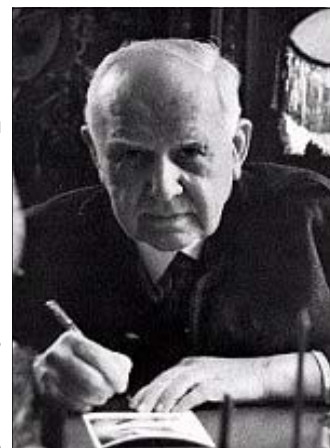
Already a well-known character around Vienna, Lehár announced his new work to be produced for the Theater an der Wien on December 30, 1905 as *Die Lustige Witwe* (*The Merry Widow*). The libretto was written by Viktor Léon and Leo Stein after Henri Meilhac's comedy *L'attaché d'ambassade* (*The Embassy Attaché*). The operetta met with an instant success among the public (although the critics were divided) and was on the program almost continuously until March 1907. By April 1907, *The Merry Widow* celebrated its 400<sup>th</sup> performance. Later in 1907, *The Merry Widow* was performed in London and New York, with performances in 1908 in Copenhagen,

Moscow and Milan; 1909 in Madrid and Paris and in 1910 in Brussels.

After the success of *The Merry Widow*, Franz no longer needed to worry about composing for a living. The royalties alone made him a wealthy man and he soon purchased a summer home in Bad Ischl, the playground of the wealthy. It was in Bad Ischl, that Franz met his future wife, Sophie Meth (née Paschkis), the daughter of a Viennese carpet dealer and already married. In 1906, they began a love affair that ended with Sophie's eventual divorce from her husband and subsequent marriage to Lehár in 1921. Although married, Franz insisted on maintaining his original style of autonomous living and insisted on separate apartments.

Lehár continued to write operettas although none achieved the same success as *The Merry Widow*. Throughout 1909 and 1910, he composed *Peter und Paul im Schlaraffenland*, *Der Mann mit den drei Frauen*, *Das Furstenkind*, *Der Graf von Luxemburg* and *Zigeunerliebe*. The latter three operettas gained in fame throughout the Viennese theaters in record breaking fashion. In three Viennese theaters during 1910, Lehár's operettas were performed 200 times in each.

During World War I, Lehár continued to compose operettas, lieder cycles, and symphonic poems. However the operetta scene was somewhat stagnant during this time of war. After the war, Lehár began an experimentation phase in search of new musical forms. Lehár also began a friendship with Giacomo Puccini that began in 1920 during a visit to Vienna by Puccini. Although Puccini's admiration for Lehár's work was genuine, Franz was greatly affected by the rejection of his work by Richard Strauss. In 1940, Strauss stated that "The danger, which threatens our whole cultural level by Lehár and his companions and to which it has already succumbed for the most part, can not be settled anymore with noble disregard."



Lehár in 1945

In 1921, Lehár would begin a friendship that would dramatically effect his compositional life; he met the famed tenor Richard Tauber. Tauber's interpretation of Lehár's work entranced the composer as well as the public. During the remainder of the 1920s, Lehár wrote for Tauber's voice in the operettas *Paganini*, *Der Zrewitsch* and *Das Land des Lachelns*.



Bad Ischl

In 1933, Lehár composed *Giudetta*, a full fledged comic opera, which became Lehár's final work. During his final years, Lehár devoted himself to the Glocken-Verlag, a publishing house he founded in 1935. During World War II, Franz and Sophie faced a most difficult situation given that Franz had cooperated with Jewish librettists, and Sophie had Jewish origins. Fortunately for the Lehárs, Hitler was an admirer of *The Merry Widow* so they escaped the brutality of the Nazi regime. Not so for Lehár's librettists, Fritz Grunbaum and Fritz Lohner who were eventually murdered in

concentration camps. Franz and Sophie spent the remainder of World War II at their home in Bad Ischl, while their home in Vienna was ransacked. After a visit to Zurich to see Richard Tauber, Sophie died in 1947. In the summer of 1948, Franz returned to Bad Ischl to settle his estate. He gave his villa to the city of Bad Ischl on the condition that they turn it into a Lehár museum. Franz Lehár died on October 24, 1948. In 1958, a monument dedicated to the composer was created in Bad Ischl and the theater in the town is named after him.

# Where in the World?



Austria is located at the crossroads of Europe and from the earliest times has been a pathway and a battleground. Originally settled by the Celts, the area was conquered by Romans, Huns, Goths, Lombards and Bavarians (from the 5<sup>th</sup> century), and conquered in 788 by Charlemagne who established a territory in the Danube Valley known as the Ostmark and the area became Christianized and predominantly Germanic. The area was again conquered, this time in 814 by the Moravians and then the Magyars and re-conquered in 955 by the Holy Roman Emperor Otto I who eventually gave Austria to the house of Babenberg in 976. Eventually Austria was acquired by Ottocar II of Bohemia in 1251 and in 1282 Rudolf I of Habsburg (King of the Germans) defeated Ottocar and began his rule of Austria. From 1282 until its fall in 1918, Austria was ruled by the Habsburg family (learn

more about this family in the section "Who were the Habsburgs?").

Although the Habsburgs were not adverse to using a bit of muscle, they preferred less barbaric ways of extending their territory and so Austria gradually expanded thanks to smart real estate purchases and some political marriages. One such marriage produced two sons: the eldest became Charles I of Spain and three years later became Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire; the younger son, Ferdinand, became the first Habsburg to live in Vienna and became ruler of Austria, Hungary and Bohemia. In 1556, Charles abdicated as Emperor and Ferdinand I was crowned in his place. Charles' remaining territory was inherited by his son, Phillip II, splitting the Habsburg dynasty into two distinct lines - the Spanish and the Austrian.

In 1571, when the emperor granted religious freedom, the majority of Austrians turned to Protestantism. In 1576, the new Emperor, Rudolf II, embraced the Counter-Reformation and much of the country reverted,



Maria Theresa

with a little coercion, to Catholicism. The attempt to impose Catholicism on Protestant areas of Europe led to the Thirty Years' War, which started in 1618 and devastated much of Central Europe. Peace was finally achieved in 1648 with the Treaty of Westphalia. For much of the rest of the century, Austria was preoccupied with halting the advance of the Turks into Europe. Vienna was nearly captured by the Turks in 1683 but was rescued by a Christian force of German and Polish soldiers. Combined forces swept the Turks to the south-eastern edge of Europe. The removal of the Turkish threat saw a frenzy of Baroque building in many cities, and under the musical emperor Leopold I, Vienna became a magnet for musicians and composers including Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

In 1740, Maria Theresa ascended the throne and ruled for 40 years. This period is generally acknowledged as the era in which Austria developed as a modern state. During her reign, control was centralized, a civil service was established, the army and economy were reformed and a public education system was introduced. But progress was halted when Napoleon defeated Austria at Austerlitz in 1805. European conflict dragged on until the settlement at the Congress of Vienna in 1814-15. Austria was in control of the German Confederation but suffered during the 1848 revolutions and eventual defeat in the 1866 Austro-Prussian War. This led to the formation of the dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary in 1867 under emperor Franz Josef and exclusion from the new German empire unified by Bismarck. A period of prosperity followed but Austria's expansionist tendencies in the Balkans and its annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1908 led to the assassination of the emperor's nephew in Sarajevo in June 1914. A month later, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia, the Russians came to the Serbians' aid and WW I began in earnest. Following the collapse of the Habsburg monarchy at the end of World War I, German Austria was made a republic (1918). The Treaty of Saint-Germain (1919) fixed Austria's boundaries and reduced the size to a country of approximately 7 million people and took away its supply of raw materials, food and markets. Following the treaty, unemployment bankruptcy and political problems followed and in 1934, a totalitarian regime was established under Engelbert Dollfuss, who was later assassinated. His successor was Kurt von Schuschnigg.



Emperor Franz Josef



Austria became part of Hitler's Third Reich in 1938 and was occupied by German troops until 1945 and when it was restored as a republic. For the next ten years, Austria was divided into zones and occupied by the Allied forces. Finally a peace treaty in 1955 declared Austria a sovereign country and neutral.

Politically, Austria had a nearly equal balance of power between conservative and socialist parties. This resulted in several coalition governments until 1966 when the conservative People's party won a majority. This party lost to the Socialists in the 1970 election when Chancellor Bruno Kreisky was elected. He was Chancellor until 1983 when he was succeeded by several Socialist party candidates including Franz Vranitzky, Kurt Waldheim and Thomas Klestil. Austria joined the European Union in 1995. In 2002, Austria adopted the Euro as its currency replacing the schilling. The official state language of Austria is German and the federal capital is in Vienna.

## Who were the Habsburgs?



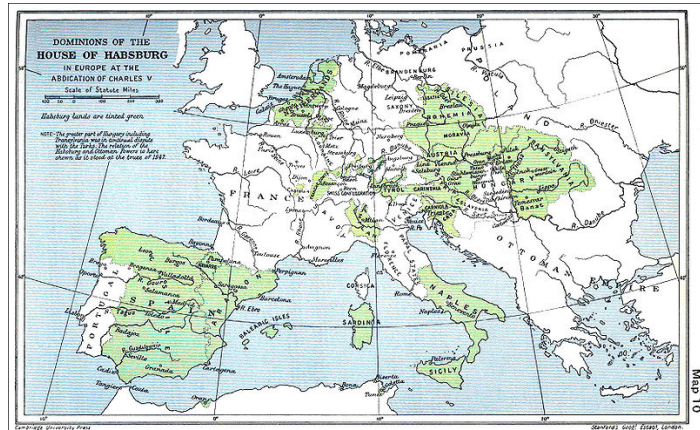
Charles V

The Habsburgs were the ruling house of Austria from 1282 to 1918. The family originally held lands in Alsace and NW Switzerland. Otto (died 1111) took the name of Habsburg when he was made a count. In 1273 Count Rudolf IV became king of the Germans and was known as Rudolf I. His war with Ottocar II of Bohemia resulted in Ottocar's defeat (1278) and confirmation of Habsburg possession of Austria, Carniola and Styria (modern day Slovenia). These lands and the Austrian ducal title were declared hereditary in 1282, and in 1335 Carinthia, too, was claimed. The possessions were divided (1365) between the Albertine and the Leopoldine lines but were reunited under Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I in the late 15th cent. Eventually Tyrol



Joseph II

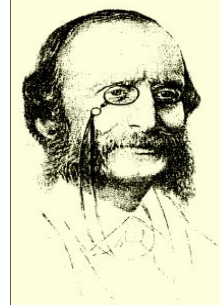
(1363), NE Istria (1374), and Trieste (1382) were added to the Habsburg domain. From the election (1438) of Albert II as German king, the head of the Habsburgs, with one exception, was chosen German king and Holy Roman emperor. Through marriage the Habsburgs gained most of the Low Countries, and Habsburg power reached its height under Emperor Charles V, who had inherited the crown of Spain (1516). Charles was succeeded in Spain by his son, Philip II, and in Austria by his brother, Emperor Ferdinand I. The Spanish Habsburgs line died out in 1700. In Austria the Pragmatic Sanction (1713) guaranteed the indivisibility of the Habsburg domains and the succession of Maria Theresa. Her son, Emperor Joseph II, began the line of Habsburg-Lorraine. In 1806 Holy Roman Emperor Francis II abdicated and assumed the title emperor of Austria. In 1867 the Habsburg empire was reorganized into the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, which was dissolved at the end of World War I.



The House of Habsburg circa 1547 under Charles V

# HMS PINAFORE TO AMERICAN IDIOT— THE JOURNEY OF OPERETTA TO MUSICAL

Operetta is a stage play with songs and dance interspersed with dialogue. In the 18th century, the term meant a short opera, but in the 19th and 20th centuries it came to mean a play with music of light character and popular appeal. The French operetta developed in small theaters such as the Bouffes Parisiens, founded by the composer Jacques Offenbach. The form, originally a one-act piece, later grew into a three-act or four-act play that approached the *opéra comique*. Offenbach's 90-odd operettas include *Orpheus in the Underworld* (1858) and *Tales of Hoffman* (1881). For these works, he and his countryman Charles Lecocq, composer of *La fille de Madame Angot* (1872), used the term *opéra bouffe*.



Jacques Offenbach

The roots of the Viennese operetta lay in the *singspiel* and the local farce. Franz von Suppé helped establish this form and excelled in it, producing such works as *The Beautiful Galatea* (1865), *Light Cavalry* (1866), and *Boccaccio* (1879). With Johann Strauss, Jr., Viennese operetta reached international repute. The waltz was an essential element in the operetta of the younger Strauss, and with *Die Fledermaus* (1874) he introduced a significant quality of sentimentality and operatic seriousness, which became an important musical aspect of the typical Viennese second-act finale. Other Viennese composers of operettas were Franz Lehár, who wrote *The Merry Widow* (1905); Robert Stolz, known for his *White Horse Inn* (1936); Oscar Straus, composer of *The Chocolate Soldier* (1909); and Emmerich Kalman, composer of *Countess Maritza* (1924).

The English operetta developed from the short ballad opera to more extended works. British playwright John Gay created one of the best examples of ballad opera in his work *The Beggar's Opera* (1728). Gay's political and social satire influenced artists who followed, including playwright Bertolt Brecht and composer Kurt Weill. The development reached a climax in the light operas of Sir Arthur Sullivan and Sir William S. Gilbert, among them *H.M.S. Pinafore* (1878) and *The Mikado* (1885). A late example is *Bitter Sweet* (1929), with libretto and music by Sir Noel Coward.

The outstanding American operetta composer was the Irish-born Victor Herbert, whose 40 operettas included *The Red Mill* (1906) and *Naughty Marietta* (1910). Among other noted Americans in this field were Reginald De Koven, the Czech-born Rudolf Friml, and the Hungarian-born Sigmund Romberg. American operettas that achieved considerable success include De Koven's *Robin Hood* (1890), Friml's *Rose Marie* (1924) and *Vagabond King* (1925), and Romberg's *Student Prince* (1924) and *Desert Song* (1926). After 1930, operetta, at least in the United States, gradually evolved into the musical or musical comedy.

Other notable composers of the American musical of the 20s and 30s included Irving Berlin, the Gershwin brothers, Richard Rodgers, Cole Porter and Jerome Kern. Kern and Hammerstein's *Show Boat* (1927) set the standard for future musical theater. The setting was Edna Ferber's novel of life on the Mississippi covering a period from the mid 1880s to 1927. This groundbreaking musical steered away from the typical lightweight musical comedy and overweight operetta. Their characters were three dimensional and the plot dealt with a number of previously taboo topics including unhappy marriages, miscegenation and the hard life of black stevedores (best expressed in the song "Ol' Man River").



Richard Rodgers



Rodgers & Hammerstein

The mid to late 1940s would see the continuation of collaborations between Rodgers and Hammerstein as well as some new "kids" on the block including Leonard Bernstein with *On the Town* (1944), Kurt Weill with *Street Scene* (1947), Frederick Loewe and Alan Jay Lerner with *Brigadoon* (1947), and Jule Styne and Sammy Cahn with *High Button Shoes* (1947). The same period saw established composers and collaborators continue their success including Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Carousel* (1945) and *South Pacific* (1949), Irving Berlin's *Annie Get Your Gun* (1946) and Cole Porter's *Kiss Me, Kate* (1948).

The 1950s saw a boom in musical theater, starting the decade with Frank Loesser's *Guys and Dolls* (1950), Rodgers and Hammerstein's *The King and I* (1951), Lerner and Loewe's *Paint Your Wagon* (1951), and Kurt Weill's *Threepenny Opera* (1954). Many of these would go on to be produced by MGM as part of their monopoly on the Hollywood musical. However, very few of the original Broadway actors made it into the Hollywood versions. One of the exceptions was Yul Brynner. Brynner was cast as King Mongkut in Rodgers and Hammerstein's *The King and I* as a virtually unknown actor. Attempts had been made to cast Rex Harrison, Noel Coward and Alfred Drake but it was Brynner who was finally cast as the legendary king. Although others have played the character, Brynner will always be associated with this character. In 1956, Lerner and Loewe created *My Fair Lady* based on the George Bernard Shaw play *Pygmalion* (1914). The original cast included well known actor Rex Harrison as Professor Higgins (a part he would also play in the movie as well), relatively unknown actress Julie Andrews as Eliza Doolittle and character actor Stanley Holloway as Alfred P Doolittle. At the time, it was the longest running musical in Broadway history at just over nine years. That record has since been broken by Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Cats* (1982). The latter half of the 1950s saw remarkable musicals by Leonard Bernstein including *Candide* (1956) and *West Side Story* (1957) with Stephen Sondheim, as well as *The Music Man* by Meredith Wilson (1957), Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Flower Drum Song* (1958) and *The Sound of Music* (1959) and Jule Styne's *Gypsy* (1959).

The 1960s proved to be an eclectic decade on Broadway. After their success with *My Fair Lady*, Lerner and Loewe created *Camelot* (1960) based on T.H. White's book *The Once and Future King*. Featuring Julie Andrews, Richard Burton and Robert Goulet, it had the biggest advance sale in Broadway history up to that point. Stephen Sondheim stepped out on his own as both composer and librettist to create *A Funny Thing Happened on the way to the Forum* (1962). The celebrated story of Ziegfeld comedienne Fanny Brice was made into the musical *Funny Girl* (1964) by Jule Styne. Featuring a relatively unknown Barbra Streisand, her version of "People" was a hit even before the show opened. *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964) dealt with persecution, poverty and the problems of holding onto traditions in a hostile world while *Man of La Mancha* (1965) tackled the story of Don Quixote. *Cabaret* (1966) showed the decadent world of pre-Hitler Germany through the eyes of British expatriate and dancer Sally Bowles. Charles Schultz's "Peanuts" comic strip inspired Clark Gesner to create *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* (1967) which follows a day in the life of Charlie Brown.

The late 1960s Broadway musical also reflected what was happening in American society. America was deep into the Vietnam conflict and the hippie culture along with rock & roll was thriving. To that end, *Hair* (1968) was billed as the American Tribal Love-Rock Musical. With its shocking all nude ending in the first act, *Hair* created quite a following and was eventually made into a film in 1979. The idea of a rock opera began as the brain-child of Pete Townsend, guitarist/songwriter for The Who. In 1969, he began writing *Tommy*, a rock opera about a deaf, mute and blind boy who must deal with his dysfunctional family and ultimately his own success as a new age Messiah when he is able to see, hear and speak as an adult. Eventually, *Tommy* premiered at the Metropolitan Opera House in 1970, was made into a movie in 1975 and hit Broadway in 1993.

The early 1970s continued with the rock musical with *Godspell* (1971) and *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1971). Both dealt with the final seven days of Christ, and were flamboyant, campy and whimsical. The sleeper hit of 1972 was *Grease*, a musical set in the 1950s. *Grease* was a huge Broadway hit and became an even bigger movie with John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John. Both new and well established composers saw Broadway success during the 1970s such as Stephen Sondheim's *A Little Night Music* (1973), *Pacific Overtures* (1976) and *Sweeney Todd* (1979), Charlie Smalls' *The Wiz* (1975), Marvin Hamlisch's *A Chorus Line* (1975), Charles Strouse's *Annie* (1977), the Fats Waller tribute *Ain't Misbehavin'* (1978) and Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Evita* (1979). Following tradition, many of these musicals became movies, although with varying degrees of success.



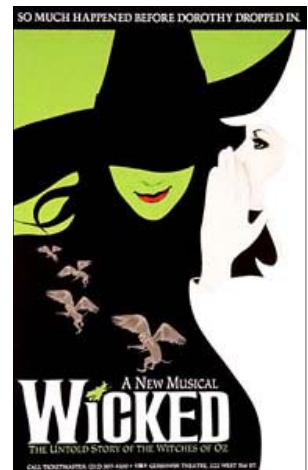
Andrew Lloyd-Webber

The 1980s saw the almost complete domination of Andrew Lloyd Webber, an English composer, over the American musical landscape. Following *Jesus Christ Superstar*, his collaboration with librettist Tim Rice created *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (1981), *Cats* (1982), *Phantom of the Opera* (1988) and with librettist Richard Stilgoe *Starlight Express* (1987). Visually, these new musicals set standards of theater production that other musicals had to live up to but did not break any new ground musically or

dramatically. Lloyd Webber is a master at writing memorable tunes like "Memory" from *Cats* or "Music of the Night" from *Phantom*. *Cats* has broken all records as the longest running musical and *Phantom* has been touring internationally for many years. Lloyd Webber was not the only composer on the Broadway scene in the 1980s. Roger Miller, better known for country music, teamed up with William Hauptman to create a musical based on Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and they called it *Big River* (1985). Claude-Michel Schonberg and Herbert Kretzmer took Victor Hugo's epic *Les Miserables* and made it into a musical that would eventually rival *Phantom of the Opera* in popularity. *Les Miserables* (1987) tells the story of Jean Valjean, a former thief and chain gang member, who breaks his parole and becomes successful and wealthy, only to be pursued by the over zealous policeman Javert. Stephen Sondheim took a darker look at fairy tales with *Into the Woods* (1987) and Benny Andersson and Bjorn Ulvaeus (of ABBA fame) created *Chess* (1988), a look at the cold war using an international chess match as a metaphor.

The 1990s started much like the 1980s with another musical from Andrew Lloyd Webber, *Aspects of Love* (1990), although this did not have the same success as earlier Lloyd Webber musicals. Claude-Michel Schonberg teamed with Richard Maltby, Jr. and Alain Boublil to create *Miss Saigon* (1991), based loosely on Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* and a news photograph of a Vietnamese woman giving her baby to an American G.I. The female team of Lucy Simon (Carly Simon's sister) and Marsha Norman created *The Secret Garden* (1991) based on the book of the same title by Frances Hodgson Burnett. *The Will Rogers Follies* (1991) was a look back at the old style musical produced by Florenz Ziegfeld and featuring comic Will Rogers. Another musical that was a celebration of a specific composer (like *Ain't Misbehavin'*) was *Jelly's Last Jam* (1992) based on the music and life of Jelly Roll Morton and featuring the tap dancing of Gregory Hines. *Tommy* (1993) had its Broadway premiere in the 1990s as did *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (1993). In 1994, Disney took an interest in Broadway by turning their hit movie *Beauty and the Beast* into a musical, with the help of Alan Menken, Howard Ashman and Tim Rice. *Beauty and the Beast* (1994) had an extended score and featured assorted special effects. Disney was not done with Broadway and in 1997 turned *The Lion King* into a musical through the visionary director, Julie Taymor. Taymor's use of masks and African images and puppetry has made *The Lion King* one of the most sought after tickets in New York and Los Angeles. The 1990s also saw many revivals including *Show Boat*, *Grease* (with Rosie O'Donnell as Rizzo), *How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying* (with Matthew Broderick), *The King and I* (with Lou Diamond Phillips), and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (with Nathan Lane). In a step back towards the musicals of the late 60s and early 70s, Jonathan Larson created *Rent* (1996) loosely based on Puccini's *La Boheme*. *Rent* had a rock score and told the story of a group of young people who were dealing with AIDS, poverty, drug use, personal identity and death. In that same year, Savion Glover, a young tap dancer who received acclaim for his performance in *Black and Blue*, created *Bring in da Noize*, *Bring in da Funk*, celebrating modern tap.

The turn of the 21st century saw Elton John and Tim Rice team up again (they originally wrote the music/lyrics for *The Lion King* movie and subsequent musical) to create *Aida*, based on the Verdi opera. Other 21st century musicals include *The Full Monty* (based on the movie), *Seussical* (based on the works of Dr. Seuss), *Jerry Springer; the opera*, *Movin' Out* (based on the music of Billy Joel), *Avenue Q*, *Wicked* (based on the novel by Gregory Maguire), *Billy Elliot* (based on the movie), *Jersey Boys*, *Spamalot* (based on the comedy of Monty Python and the movie *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*), and rock operas made a return with *Spring Awakenings* and Green Day's *American Idiot*.



## Art Nouveau—the artists and the movement

Kentucky Opera's production of THE MERRY WIDOW is designed entirely in the Art Nouveau style. After reading this section on Art Nouveau, see if you can find the ways that The Merry Widow production uses Art Nouveau.

When the Industrial Revolution began in the late 1700s it meant more machine production and less handcrafted work in everything from architecture to furniture. Quality often suffered because machines could not mass produce superior quality ornamentation and decoration.

After the French Revolution, the nouveau riche, or new middle class, wanted the finer things in life that had previously only been available to the very wealthy. Artists of this period were seeking to put new life in the bland designs created by machines. The use of curving lines as they appear in nature - the nude female form, flowers, the sea - are the basic design forms of this movement.

In its heyday, from about 1880 to 1920, Art Nouveau was given many names in many languages - Metro Style, Inglese Style, Modernismo, and the Glasgow School, to name a few. Worldwide, this new style was ornamental and full of curves, and it represented a total decorative style where the distinction between the fine arts and the decorative arts was not considered. Each nation developed its own version. The popularity of Art Nouveau in America never rivaled its appeal in Europe.



Louis Comfort Tiffany

Glass from the Art Nouveau period is some of the finest ever made. Emil Galle believed that using plants, fruits, and flowers in his works would bring about renewed life in the decorative arts. He closely supervised skilled craftsmen at his family's glass factory in Nancy, France where the tradition of fine glassmaking began in the 1700s.

Art Nouveau style in America is most often associated with Louis Comfort Tiffany and the "Gibson Girl."

Louis Comfort Tiffany, the son of a wealthy goldsmith and jewelry merchant in New York City, is the American most identified with Art Nouveau. An accomplished artist, Tiffany was interested in ceramics, jewelry, enamels, and wrought iron. But he was especially brilliant with his talents in glass, especially blown glass. Tiffany started radical experiments with glass in the 1870s while he was still in his 20s. His peculiar style was quickly identified in Europe as genius. He was commissioned to design a series of colored glass windows in designs similar to works of Toulouse-Lautrec, Vuillard, and Bonnard.

Unsatisfied with glass made for him by existing companies, he used family money to build a furnace for the production of his fanciful favrile glass. Tiffany built the Stourbridge Glass Company in Long Island, New York in 1893.

President Chester A. Arthur sold twenty wagonloads of furnishings from the White House and had Tiffany redecorate the mansion. Among other things, Tiffany designed an opalescent glass screen that reached from floor to ceiling in the hall. When Teddy Roosevelt became president he had that Tiffany masterpiece removed.



Magnolias and Iris

The brainchild of artist Charles Dana Gibson, the Gibson Girl was the first great American glamour girl before movie stars became idols. She wore a starched dress and fashionable hat perched high on her coiffure, which always had a wispy lock blowing on her face. This completely feminine woman was shown in many outdoor pursuits such as golfing and boating. Though her activities were totally proper, she had a glint in her eye that made her a trifle daring for her time. Created in the 1890s, she reigned on magazine pages, postcards, and witty cartoons until she fell out of fashion, along with everything else Art Nouveau, at the start of World War I.



Victor Horta

Victor Horta was born in Ghent in 1861 and died in Brussels in 1947. He is considered to be one of the most important masters of Art Nouveau, and between 1893 and 1903 he completed numerous private residences and town houses in which he revolutionized the concept of space and light, and introduced many new decorative motifs based on floral inspirations.

But his career did not end with the end of Art Nouveau. The Brugmann Hospital, the Musée de Tournai, as well as the Palais des Beaux-Arts, were masterworks completed during the second half of his career. Here Horta used a more severe repertory of forms that responded in a direct way to the Art Deco style of the period.



Hotel Tassel

Horta's wish to unify design can be seen in his building facades. From his designs for the Hotel Tassel of 1893, onwards, Horta created with a sculptor's eye, giving his buildings an organic character -- they give the impression that they have sprouted from the earth like a plant. Horta is also known for the honest use of materials, and most notably, the visible use of iron beams in domestic and commercial architecture. Until then, iron had been relegated for use only in industrial buildings, stations, and glass houses. Horta turned iron into a luxury material just at the time when Brussels society considered iron to be lower class.



Horta House

Horta designed his spaces for the user. Their fluidity gives them an impression of freedom. Refined and inventive in their details, his spaces give both comfort and pleasure. Horta had a gift for conceiving a distribution of space and volume that rigorously followed his clients' wishes, taking into account the planning environment and the often restrictive settings.

Light also played a crucial role in the work of Victor Horta. Almost all of his buildings include a lightwell in the roof, allowing light to enter the heart of his buildings, whether they are terraced houses or very deep buildings.

Above all, Horta designed total works of art -- for him, architecture was an all-embracing art form. He demanded throughout his career, a free hand in the complete design of his buildings from decor and heating to door-handles, furniture, and chandeliers.

Horta extremely successful in integrating his buildings into the urban fabric of Brussels at the end of the 19th and early 20th century -- a sign that he understood the city as a collective work, whose primordial value many people have rediscovered today.