



# DIE LUSTIGE WITWE

Franz Lehár

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Logos for this production: **Rising Alternative + Semperoper Dresden + Euroarts**

Libretto by Victor Léon and Leo Stein after the comedy *L'attaché d'ambassade* by Henri Meilhac.

Opera in three acts

*Sung in German*

Recorded 2007

From Semperoper Dresden, Germany

Approximately running time 2h23

## CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor	Manfred Honeck
Production	Jérôme Savary
Set design	Ezio Toffolutti
Choreography	Nadège Maruta

Produced by EuroArts, ZDF/ARTE in co-operation with the Compagnie Jérôme Savary.

## ARTISTIC TEAM

Baron Mirko Zeta	Gunther Emmerlich
Valencienne	Lydia Teuscher
Graf Danilo Danilowitsch	Bo Skovhus
Hanna Glawari	Petra-Maria Schnitzer

Symphony Orchestra and Chorus of Staatsoper Dresden.

## PRESENTATION

*The Merry Widow (Die Lustige Witwe)* had its premiere at Vienna's Theater an der Wien in 1905. Franz Lehár's impressive entry into the world of operettas unexpectedly with *The Merry Widow* gave rise to a second resurgence of the genre. Often called "The Queen of Operettas", this is certainly the most celebrated and successful show of its kind ever written.

Frequently staged in an abridged version, this production from the Staatsoper Dresden features many musical numbers that are usually omitted.

This staging by the famous opera director Jérôme Savary makes *The Merry Widow* a very colourful and a subtle tribute to the golden age of Hollywood.

## **SYNOPSIS**

### *PROLOGUE*

#### **ACT I**

The Paris embassy of the Balkan kingdom of Pontevedro. Baron Mirko Zeta, the Pontevedrian envoy, is concerned that the fortune of Hanna Glawari, a young Pontevedrian widow, is going to be lost to the nation by her remarriage. He hatches a plot to marry her off to a young and eligible Pontevedrian bachelor, Count Danilo. It turns out that the two are former lovers, but Danilo is not interested, because a declaration of love would just put him alongside all the Frenchmen who are after her money. In the ballroom Hanna must choose a dancing partner and selects the one man who appears to be ignoring her, Danilo. As a subplot we discover the love of Camille, a French aristocrat, for Baron Zeta's wife, Valencienne.

#### **ACT II**

The following day Hanna hosts a party which begins with Pontevedrian dances and songs. Hanna sings the famous "Vilja Lied", about an alluring forest sprite. After various complications Hanna announces her engagement to Camille, a French aristocrat. Danilo, unable to disguise his grief, storms off to Maxim's, his favourite cabaret. Hanna realizes he loves her.

#### **ACT III**

Hanna's house is decked out as Maxim's. Danilo asks Hanna not to marry Camille in order to save the Pontevedrian economy. Danilo and Hanna confess their love for each other.