

= Fatinitza =

Fatinitza was the first full @-@ length , three @-@ act operetta by Franz von Suppé . The libretto by F. Zell ( a pseudonym for Camillo Walzel ) and Richard Genée was based on the libretto to La circassienne by Eugène Scribe ( which had been set to music by Daniel Auber in 1861 ) , but with the lead role of Wladimir , a young Russian lieutenant who has to disguise himself as a woman , changed to a trousers role ; in other words , a woman played the part of the man who pretended to be a woman .

It premièred on 5 January 1876 , at the Carltheater Vienna , and proved a huge success , running for more than a hundred performances , with the march " Vorwärts mit frischem Muth " , proving a particular hit . The opera as a whole is no longer in the popular repertory , but the overture is performed as a stand @-@ alone piece .

= = Background = =

Viennese operetta sprang out of an attempt by Viennese composers to imitate Jacques Offenbach 's works , after the highly successful performance of Le mariage aux lanternes at the Carltheater in 1858 . Franz von Suppé was the most notable of these early composers , and proved instrumental in defining the new subgenre . Grove Music Online names Suppé 's Das Pensionat ( 1860 ) as " the first successful attempt at a genuine Viennese operetta " , and this was followed by several more successes , for Suppé , including Flotte Bursche ( 1863 ) and Die schöne Galathée ( 1865 ) . However , until Fatinitza in 1876 , Suppé did not write a full @-@ length operetta , and , despite the successes of his shorter works , neither he , nor other Viennese composers such as Giovanni von Zaytz , were able to compete with Offenbach for popularity throughout the 1860s .

Offenbach 's dominance was finally challenged with the arrival of Johann Strauss II upon the scene in the 1870s , with works such as Indigo und die vierzig Räuber , Der Karneval in Rom , Die Fledermaus , and others serving to develop and codify the genre Suppé had begun laying out .

Suppé finally tried his hand at a full @-@ length operetta in 1876 . F. Zell ( a pseudonym for Camillo Walzel ) and Richard Genée , who had previously adapted the French play Le réveillon into Strauss 's Die Fledermaus ? the " most celebrated of all Viennese operas " according to the musicologist Andrew Lamb ? returned to French sources , adapting Eugène Scribe 's libretto from Daniel Auber 's La circassienne ( 1861 ) into Fatinitza . The work premièred at the Carltheater on January 5 , 1876 , and would prove to be an international success .

= = Roles = =

Note : This article uses the names found in the original German libretto . Translations of Fatinitza may change characters ' names to a greater or lesser extent .

= = Synopsis = =

Before the piece begins , Wladimir Samoiloff , a young Russian Lieutenant , had an adventure in which he ended up disguising himself as a woman ( who he named Fatinitza ) , and met with the hot @-@ tempered elderly General Kantschukoff , who fell in love with his disguise . Wladimir , however , is in love with the General 's niece , Lydia .

The opera opens on a camp of Russian soldiers near Rustchuk , where Wladimir has been assigned . His friend , Julian , a special newspaper correspondent , is mistaken for a spy and dragged to the camp , but Wladimir defuses the situation . Julian and Wladimir reminisce about his Fatinitza disguise , which eventually leads the soldiers to consider some amateur theatre , to relieve the boredom . As no women are present , Wladimir resumes his Fatinitza disguise .

The General arrives , and recognises " Fatinitza " as his lost love , and Wladimir finds himself needing to play along in order to protect his men from the general 's anger at the theatrical costumes , which are not the regulation uniform . His niece Lydia soon arrives , and recognises

Wladimir under the disguise . Julian tells the two that Fatinitza is Wladimir 's sister . The general temporarily leaves the three to see how the other soldiers are getting on , but , as the first act ends , a band of bashi @-@ bazouks manage to catch the camp by surprise , and take " Fatinitza " , and Lydia prisoner . Julian scrambles the Russian soldiers to return the attack , but the General refuses to allow them to fire , lest they hit Fatinitza .

The second act opens in the Turkish fortress , run by Izzit Pascha . Pascha has four wives , and wishes to add Lydia to his harem . His wives are highly upset at this , and " Fatinitza " persuades them to aid in his and Lydia 's escape , revealing his true identity at the end .

Julian and a Russian Sergeant , Steipann , arrive to attempt to negotiate Lydia and " Fatinitza " ' s freedom , but Pascha will only release Lydia . However , Wladimir is able to pass on a message , and , while Julian distracts Pascha , Steipann arranges for the soldiers to slip into the fortress , effecting a rescue .

However , all is not well with the love triangle as the third act opens . The General sent out news of rewards should Fatinitza be found , and has now received word that she has been found ( much to Julian and Wladimir 's confusion ) . As Lydia lives with him , the General , unaware of Wladimir 's love for her , but wanting to be alone with Fatinitza , has promised Lydia in marriage to an old , crippled friend of his , who had the advantage of being available for marriage . He does not want to break his word to his friend , but when Wladimir announces he has promised his " sister " to one of his friends , the General agrees to break Lydia 's betrothal if Wladimir will break Fatinitza 's .

The promised Fatinitza arrives , but turns out to be an old woman of the same name . Julian and Wladimir produce a letter from the " real " Fatinitza , " discovering " that she died of grief when separated from the General . In her memory , he gives his niece to " Fatinitza 's brother " .

= = = Legacy = = =

Although rarely performed today , at the time , Fatinitza was an international success . The composer , lyricists , and theatre would reunite for two more international successes in their next two productions : Boccaccio ( 1879 ) , Suppé 's best @-@ known and most popular operetta ; and another cross @-@ dressing army opera in Donna Juanita ( 1880 ) . However , after these successes , Suppé 's later operettas proved less popular with audiences , and , according to the musicologist Andrew Lamb , were also of lower quality .

The work was translated back to French by Felix Coveliers for a production at the Fantaisies @-@ Parisiennes in Brussels , which opened on 28 December 1878 , despite concerns from Scribe 's widow . However , in Paris , she refused permission for the Gaîté to mount the work in that form , and the directors of the Théâtre des Nouveautés , Boulevard des Italiens therefore procured a much altered libretto from Alfred Delacour and Victor Wilder , and in this form the Paris première was produced at that theatre on 15 March 1879 , with costumes by Grévin , running for 59 nights . Revived in April 1882 , the production received 55 more performances , with Marguerite Ugalde in the title role .

Other early translations include an 1876 Czech translation by E. Züngel for a performance in Prague ; two Swedish versions for 1876 Stockholm performances by A. Lindgren and E. A. Wallmark , respectively ; an 1877 Italian translation by V. A. Bacichi for a performance in the Teatro Sannazaro , Naples ; English translations for the Alhambra Theatre , London in 1878 by H. S. Leigh ; and by J. B. Polk for an 1879 New York production ; an 1879 Polish translation performed in Lemberg ; a Portuguese translation by Ed . Garrido and A. Azevedo for an 1881 Rio de Janeiro production ; an 1887 Estonian translation performed in Tartu , and an 1899 Croatian translation by V. Badali? , for a Zagreb production .

= = Recordings = =

1910 : Fatinitza selection ( musical excerpts in English ) : Luigi Ruffini , Maria Costa , Ruth Peter , soloists ; Associated Light Opera Company ; Eugene Plotnikoff , conductor ; Arthur Pryor 's Band . New York : Associated Music Publishers A @-@ 448 ( matrix ) / A @-@ 450 ( matrix ) ; 2 sound

discs ( 20 min . , 40 sec . ) ; analogue , 33 1 / 3 rpm , mono ; 16 @-@ inch distributed electrical transcription recordings ; vertical recording ; production level cataloguing ; Library of Congress .

2006 : Stephanie Houtzeel , mezzo @-@ soprano ( Wladimir / Fatinitza ) ; Steven Scheschareg , baritone ( General Kantschukoff ) ; Bernhard Adler. bass @-@ baritone ( Izzet Pascha ) ; Zora Antonic , soprano ( Lydia ) ; Christian Bauer , tenor ( Julian von Goltz ) ; Chor des Lehár Festivals Bad Ischl ; Franz Lehár @-@ Orchester ; Vinzenz Praxmarer , conductor ; dialogue version by Leonard C. and Sabine Prinsloo ; programme notes and synopsis in English , German and French ; cpo 777 202 @-@ 2 ( 2 CDs ) .