

 Severance Hall

Tuesday evening, **March 2**, 2010, at 7:00 p.m.

Thursday evening, **March 4**, 2010, at 7:00 p.m.

Saturday evening, **March 6**, 2010, at 7:00 p.m.

Monday evening, **March 8**, 2010, at 7:00 p.m.

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# COSÌ FAN TUTTE

## OSSIA LA SCUOLA DEGLI AMANTI

(“Women Are Like That, or The School for Lovers”)

*Dramma Buffa* in Two Acts

music by **Wolfgang Amadè Mozart** (1756-1791)

to a libretto by **Lorenzo Da Ponte** (1749-1838)

based on an original scenario

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Conducted by **Franz Welser-Möst**

Original Zurich Opera Production by **Sven-Eric Bechtolf**

set design by **Rolf Glittenberg**

costume design by **Marianne Glittenberg**

lighting design by **Jürgen Hoffmann**

Staged at Severance Hall

by **Timo Schlüssel**

scenery by **Gil Gerity** and **John S. Bukala**

lighting by **Christopher Shick**

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Sung in Italian with projected English supertitles

English Captions by Jonathan Dean

English Captions for *Così fan tutte* owned by Seattle Opera © 2010

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IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

**Ferrando**, a young officer in love with Dorabella . . . . . **JAVIER CAMARENA**, tenor  
**Guglielmo**, a young officer in love with Fiordiligi . . . . . **RUBEN DROLE**, baritone  
**Don Alfonso**, an old philosopher . . . . . **ANTONIO ABETE**, bass-baritone  
**Fiordiligi**, from Ferrara, sister of Dorabella . . . . . **MALIN HARTELIUS**, soprano  
**Dorabella**, from Ferrara, sister of Fiordiligi . . . . . **ANNA BONITATIBUS**, mezzo-soprano  
**Despina**, the sisters' maid . . . . . **MARTINA JANKOVÁ**, soprano

with the

**CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA OPERA CHORUS**

**Robert Porco**, director

as townspeople, soldiers, singers, ladies and gentlemen, servants

and with **ENRICO CACCIARI** playing continuo on the fortepiano

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*Malin Hartelius's appearance with The Cleveland Orchestra is made possible by a contribution to the Orchestra's Guest Artist Fund from the **Kulas Foundation**.*

*Cleveland Orchestra opera performances are made possible in part through the generous support of **The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation**.*

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Setting: **Naples, Italy**

**ACT ONE**

**INTERMISSION** (30 minutes)

**ACT TWO**

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The performance will end at approximately 10:50 p.m.

**RADIO BROADCAST**

*These performances are being recorded for broadcast as part of regular Cleveland Orchestra programming on WCLV (104.9 FM). The opera will be broadcast on WCLV on **Sunday afternoon, April 11**, beginning at 3:00 p.m. and also on **Saturday evening, July 31**, beginning at 8:00 p.m.*

# COSÌ FAN TUTTE

## SYNOPSIS

### ACT ONE

The philosopher Don Alfonso and two young men enter into a debate regarding the constancy of women. Guglielmo and Ferrando are so convinced of the fidelity of their betrothed, Fiordiligi and Dorabella, that they accept Don Alfonso's proposal to bet one hundred gold coins on their constancy. Don Alfonso intends to prove to them that their fiancées are like all women — faithless. His only condition is that the men do his bidding for 24 hours. Guglielmo and Ferrando insouciantly accept his demands.

The sisters Fiordiligi and Dorabella await their fiancés in a state of joyful anticipation. Don Alfonso arrives ahead of the two men and — apparently dismayed — tells the sisters that Guglielmo and Ferrando have unexpectedly been drafted into military service. The couples have only a short time to bid farewell — perhaps forever, the young ladies fear.

The sisters' maid, Despina, pokes fun at the young women's pain at the separation — nothing, she says, is easier than replacing a lover. Fiordiligi and Dorabella are appalled. Don Alfonso bribes Despina into helping him to gain access to the young women. In exotic disguise, Guglielmo and Ferrando now attempt to make a conquest of their lovers, but are brusquely rejected. They already demand their stake from Don Alfonso, but the

twenty-four hours have not yet passed.

Certain of success, the men again launch an attack. In front of the two sisters, who lament their fate, they claim to have poisoned themselves in despair at their unrequited love. Disguised as a doctor, Despina revives the seemingly dead men.

### ACT TWO

Despina warns the girls of the inconstancy of men, and intercedes in favor of the unknown admirers. Dorabella and Fiordiligi finally allow themselves to be persuaded to agree to another meeting. They assure each other that they intend to enter into a flirtation, and rapidly agree which partner each should take. Dorabella chooses Fiordiligi's fiancé, Guglielmo, while Fiordiligi opts for Dorabella's intended, Ferrando.

At a party organized by Don Alfonso and Despina, the two men feign timidity. Fiordiligi takes the initiative and persuades Ferrando to join her on a walk. The men find the partner swap initiated by the girls deeply unsettling. Dorabella, left alone with Guglielmo, succumbs to his advances. By contrast, Fiordiligi flees from Ferrando, although she has to admit to herself that the stranger is by no means unappealing to her.

Ferrando accepts his defeat and tells Guglielmo of Fiordiligi's constancy; however, he then learns that Dorabella has yielded to Guglielmo. Fluctuating between fury and desperation, Ferrando collapses. Guglielmo, who demands his stake from Don Alfonso, has to accept being told that the experiment is not yet complete.

No longer sure of her feelings, Fiordiligi intends to follow Guglielmo to the battlefield in order to remain true to him and, if need be, to die at his side. To dissuade her from her plan, Ferrando threatens suicide; Fiordiligi's resistance fails and she admits her new passion.

Cut to the quick, the two men think of revenge, but Alfonso, who has won his bet, recommends that they marry their fiancées, whom they do love, after all.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella are ready to enter the married state with their new lovers. Despina, disguised as a notary, presents the marriage contracts. Scarcely have the girls signed them than a march heralds the return of their former betrothed. Fiordiligi and Dorabella are utterly petrified. With cruel satisfaction, Ferrando and Guglielmo gradually expose the intrigue, until they reveal themselves as the exotic lovers. Despina is now also aghast, while Don Alfonso attempts to reestablish the status quo.

## At a Glance: *The Opera*

*Così fan tutte* is the last of three collaborations between Mozart and librettist Lorenzo Da Ponte, following on *The Marriage of Figaro* (1786) and *Don Giovanni* (1787). Mozart wrote *Così fan tutte* on a commission from Emperor Franz Josef II. The work was premiered on January 26, 1790, in the Burgtheater in Vienna.

The opera is in two acts, consisting of approximately 190 minutes of music plus intermission. Mozart's score calls for an orchestra of 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, and strings, plus fortepiano continuo.

## PRODUCTION

Timo Schlüssel, *Stage Director*

Johanna Moeslinger,

*Assistant to the Stage Director*

Enrico Cacciari,

*Musical Assistant / Répétiteur*

Philip Kelsey, *Prompter / Rehearsal Pianist*

Tito Muñoz and James Feddeck,

*Assistant Conductors*

Robert Porco, *Director, Opera Chorus*

Betsy Burleigh,

*Assistant Director, Opera Chorus*

Joela Jones, *Chorus Accompanist*

Joseph Short, *Technical Director*

Romanina Campea, *Production Manager*

Jill Harbaugh, *Production Stage Manager*

Thomas Humes, *Assistant Stage Manager*

Christopher Shick, *Lighting Design*

Derek Hons, *Vari-Lite Operator*

Verena Giesbert, *Wardrobe*

Jeffery Gryczan, *Wardrobe Assistant*

Allison Mizerski-Hanks,

*Principal Makeup Artist*

Amy Wright,

*Assistant Principal Makeup Artist*

*With Special Thanks to:*

*Opera Cleveland and Lisa Kish*

*Natural History Museum*

## INTRODUCING THE OPERA

# Men & Women Intimacy & LOVE

**COSÌ FAN TUTTE** was the third and last of three brilliant collaborations between Mozart and librettist Lorenzo Da Ponte. As Ronny Dietrich discusses (*beginning on page 37*), the plotline of this opera had a variety of precedents, but it was Da Ponte who boiled everything together, doubtless with some useful suggestions from Mozart. As David Wright explains (*beginning on page 47*), Da Ponte had only recently started writing operas, but had quickly found that he had a natural ability for sizing up and writing about human situations and personalities. The young composer he was working with for *Così* had an equal gift for translating into music human frailties and foibles, chance decisions and changing emotions, everyday moments and momentous events.

The three Mozart-Da Ponte operas represent an important era of transformation in Western culture. As Franz Welser-Möst and stage director Sven-Eric Bechtolf see these works, they embody the very soul of the Age of Enlightenment — and, more importantly, they delineate a progression of Mozart and Da Ponte’s changing relationship with the Enlightenment. *The Marriage of Figaro*, clearly a comedy, embraces ideals of human equality. *Don Giovanni* wrestles with more violent and troubling aspects of love. *Così fan tutte* is written at a more personal level, its main characters wrestling with their innermost hopes and desires — for friendship, fidelity, and love. While this intimacy puzzled early audiences, who expected operas to be “bigger,” *Così* has finally come into its own in recent decades, as people everywhere more openly discuss and question the most intimate aspects of our daily lives.

*The Marriage of Figaro* (1786), presented a year ago at Severance Hall, was the first of Mozart’s three masterful collaborations with Da Ponte. *Così* was the last, premiered in 1790. The middle gem, *Don Giovanni* from 1787, will follow here at Severance Hall during the 2010-11 season.



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

## Exploring love and fidelity

BY RONNY DIETRICH



**IN THE LIBRETTO** printed for the first performance of *Così fan tutte* in 1790, the opera was referred to as a *dramma giocoso*. Mozart called it an *opera buffa* in the catalog he kept of his own works. In using that designation, Mozart was suggesting that his work belonged to a genre that had originated in Naples — the same city where *Così* takes place — in 1639 and gradually conquered every operatic stage in Europe. The plots of these *opere buffe* always used the same slapstick elements: crazy intrigues, grotesque disguises, inopportune arrivals, embarrassing discoveries, and the same variations about fidelity and infidelity, male jealousy and female fickleness.

Mozart received the commission for *Così fan tutte* after the August 1789 Viennese revival of *The Marriage of Figaro*, apparently from Emperor Joseph II himself, although this cannot be proven. An assertion that enjoyed a certain currency in the mid-19th century, to the effect that the Emperor had chosen the subject himself, has more recently been definitely proved false. According to this story, Joseph had been amused by an incident that had supposedly occurred during the Carnival season in 1788, at the beginning of the Turkish war. Here a gentleman with a great deal of life experience made a bet with two officers, claiming that the fidelity of their fiancées would be undone within 24 hours, if the officers followed his instructions and courted each other's betrothed. The gentleman won his bet, thereby proving the inconstancy of the female soul.

While it is true that Da Ponte did not work from a well-established literary model — as he had done with splendid success both in *Figaro* and *Don Giovanni* — we do know a few sources from which he drew



material. His libretto contains definite allusions to the ancient myth *Cephalus and Procris*, which he knew from Book 7 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and which had served for moral instruction in matters of marital fidelity throughout the Middle Ages.

The opera's comparison between fidelity and the Arabian phoenix (everyone knows it exists, yet no one has ever seen it) comes from Metastasio, who had first used this metaphor in 1731 in his *Demetrio*, an opera written in tribute to the Imperial court in Vienna. There, however, it refers to the fidelity of lovers of both sexes. It was Da Ponte who turned the *fede degli amanti* ("the faith of lovers") into *fede delle femmine* ("the faith of women").

The names of the female protagonists in the opera were derived from *Orlando furioso*, Ariosto's version of the test of fidelity. In Canto 43 of the epic, Fiordiligi ("the flower of fidelity") sinks down on the grave of her slain husband in order to be united with him forever. Dorabella ("the beautiful gift") is a variant of Doralice, Rodomonte's fiancée, who leaves him for another man. And in Canto 25 we meet the Spanish princess Fiordespina ("thorny flower"), who falls in love with the maiden Bradamante disguised as a man. The latter episode was also cited in "The Story of Pauline" in Giacomo Casanova's *Memoirs*.

The authors evidently enjoyed including references to their own time period (even though the specific era of the action is not specified). The place is Naples, yet Da Ponte made the two sisters Fiordiligi and Dorabella *dame ferraresi*, ladies from Ferrara. This was, no doubt, an homage to his own mistress, the singer Adriana Ferrarese del Bene, who sang the role of Fiordiligi in the first performance. A reference to another well-known contemporary appears in the finale to Act I, where Despina disguises herself as a doctor who cures the two men's pretended poisoning with a magnet. Here Da Ponte and Mozart paid tribute to Dr. Franz Anton Mesmer, who used magnetism (not very successfully) in therapy. As a twelve-year-old boy, Mozart had written his pastoral singspiel *Bastien and Bastienne* for Mesmer, who was also an avid musician (and from whose name the term "mesmerized" was soon derived). This stage piece, Mozart's first Viennese opera, was premiered in the doctor's garden theater.

Yet, for all these apparent sources, we know nothing about the real genesis of *Così fan tutte*. The work is never mentioned in Da Ponte's otherwise very detailed memoirs. On Mozart's side, all we know is that on December 31, 1789, he invited Franz

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MUSIC BY

**Wolfgang Amadè  
MOZART**

BORN

January 27, 1756  
Salzburg

DIED

December 5, 1791  
Vienna



LIBRETTO BY

**Lorenzo  
DA PONTE**

BORN

March 10, 1749  
near Venice

DIED

August 17, 1838  
New York City

Joseph Haydn and Michael Puchberg to “a little rehearsal” of the opera. For the rest, the authors’ letters and other writings are completely silent. All we know is that Mozart, who was having great financial difficulties at the time, received 200 ducats for *Così* — twice the usual fee for an opera.

The premiere took place at Vienna’s Burgtheater the night before Mozart’s 34th birthday, on January 26, 1790. The *Journal des Luxus und der Moden* said tersely: “The music is by Mozart — that, I believe, says everything.” The run ended abruptly with the Emperor’s death on February 20. Only a few theaters — Dresden, Prague, and Vienna — played the piece in its original form after the premiere. Soon, there began a series of revisions to the opera, extending over the next hundred years — a process with almost no parallels in the history of opera. At issue was the “improbability and frivolity” of the libretto. Friedrich Ludwig Schröder summed up the prevailing opinion in 1791: “*They all do like that.* A singspiel by Mozart; it is a miserable thing that debases all women. It can please no female spectators and therefore cannot have any success.”

In fact, it was not until the 1970s that *Così* was seen again as Mozart and Da Ponte had written it. In Franz Welser-Möst’s opinion, the long neglect of the original form had to do with Mozart’s radical approach to the concept of love. In the course of his Da Ponte trilogy, Mozart consciously moved closer and closer to the core meaning of this word, fraught with so many interpretations.

In *The Marriage of Figaro*, love is still equated with the institution of marriage and the characters are integrated into a social and political context. In *Don Giovanni*, love stands for sexual license. Only in *Così* is the question asked as to how we actually deal with our emotions. For conductor Welser-Möst, one astonishing thing is the precise distinction between true feeling and formal emotion. Both are examined very closely in the music. What both couples believe they are feeling as love in Act I are only formalities, as Mozart shows by allusions to the baroque theory of affects, and Da Ponte by certain word choices. Real feelings first appear in the Act I terzettino “*Soave sia il vento*,” which points far into the future with its almost impressionistic gestures as well.

In Act II, we witness the emergence and evolution of feelings. On his journey towards the center, Mozart went a step beyond *Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*, illuminating the very hearts of the four young people. At the end, what’s at stake is no lon-

ger the battle of the sexes, but rather the conflict taking place within each and every character. Nowhere else did Mozart use the instruction *sotto voce* (“under voiced,” giving emphasis by lowering the voice, as if telling a secret) so frequently, and nowhere else do we see such disruptions and such clashes of emotional worlds. As striking examples, Franz Welser-Möst cites the first entrance of Fiordiligi and Dorabella. Their duet is in A major, in stark contrast to the preceding trio of the men in C major. In the finale to Act I, the transition from the floating B-flat major, accompanying the men’s awakening, to the D major of the concluding Allegro, is equally bold for the time.

In the Finale to Act II, one is struck by the many attempts to stop the action, yet the unfolding of the drama can no longer be hindered.

Mozart’s incredible psychological sense for the inner processes of his characters can also be noticed in the recitatives. Franz Welser-Möst and the staging team agreed that all the usual cuts should be “reopened” and sung in performance. It is fascinating to follow how tightly knit the discussions thus become, especially where the women are involved.

Stage director Sven-Eric Bechtolf, in collaboration with set designer Rolf Glittenberg and costume designer Marianne Glittenberg, has set the action in the year the opera was written — 1790, one year after the outbreak of the French Revolution. This background gives a deeper understanding of the story being told, which is reminiscent of some experiments that, during the waning days of the *ancien régime*, had almost degenerated into a kind of social game.

Well known even today (mostly through its different film versions), the play *Les liaisons dangereuses* by Pierre-Ambroise-François Choderlos de Laclos (1782) is one of the most important descriptions of the mores of the time. In this work, a conniving marquise suggests to a vicomte that he seduce the fiancée of the marquise’s ex-lover before the planned wedding day. If the vicomte succeeds, the marquise has promised him a night of love.

There are even closer parallels to *Così* in the one-act play *La dispute* by Pierre Carlet de Marivaux. The question being debated there is whether it was man or woman who brought infidelity into the world. Since the philosophical speculation between a prince and his lover remains fruitless, it is decided to perform an experiment that, in keeping with the spirit of the time, hopes to obtain an answer to the metaphysical question

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through empirical observation. The prince makes arrangements to raise two girls and two boys with no contact to people their own age. Upon reaching sexual maturity, two couples are formed. Their relationships, the Prince hopes, will allow him to draw consequences regarding *le premier âge du monde* and *les premières amours*. This human experiment, like many others from that era, is connected to the effort to understand the entire history of humanity through the evolution of individuals. In the end, the experiment shows that both sexes are perfectly seduceable.

In *Così fan tutte*, the chaos of feelings, into which Mozart and Da Ponte plunged only their female protagonists in the two earlier operas, now hits all participants in equal measure. And what's even more important for Sven-Eric Bechtolf, the authors of *Così fan tutte* don't judge anyone, even though it may appear otherwise at first. If one wants to think in moral categories at all, one is forced to blame everyone at the end. Don Alfonso and Despina have turned two young couples into playthings in an intrigue, only to justify their own prejudiced views on men and women. Ferrando and Guglielmo first lie to their fiancées and then cheat on them. Fiordiligi and Dorabella throw their moral scruples overboard for the sake of a little diversion, only to suddenly lose their hearts in the process.

The reference to the *opera buffa* genre, mentioned earlier, is, in fact, a sophisticated move to mislead the audience. In Act I, the principles of this genre work wonderfully, with the officers' disguises and Despina's appearance as a doctor. Yet in Act II, the types derived from the *commedia dell'arte* are transformed into real flesh-and-blood people. Unlike the characters in *Figaro* or *Don Giovanni*, those in *Così* have no backgrounds, no biographies. Only the music lends them, gradually, a character and a profile. Their first entrances are almost clichéd — Don Alfonso, the serene, cool philosopher; the two belligerent officers Ferrando and Guglielmo, offended in their male pride; Fiordiligi and Dorabella, two giggling girls in love; and Despina, the nervy maid. The lines of the two officers and the two young ladies mostly proceed in parallel motion, and without much individuality even there.

The girls' different temperaments don't come to the fore until their two big arias in Act I. Yet even here Mozart withholds a deeper look inside. Their effusive pledges of fidelity, expressed through exaggerated, almost comical *opera seria* mannerisms, appear insincere and in contradiction with their deeper feel-

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ings. Wearing masks in the truest sense of the word, the two men likewise reveal nothing about themselves — indeed, they show their worst possible side, offering the girls rather little temptation to begin with.

This Mozartian opening corresponds to a formal structuring of the libretto that couldn't be more symmetrical. This symmetry also determines Rolf Glittenberg's stage setting. Rather than concentrating on the places described in the libretto (a café, a garden on the shore, a pretty room, a large and festively ornamented hall, a boat on the water decorated with flowers), Glittenberg focuses on the characters. In his interpretation, the opera is anything but realistic. As in the Zurich Opera productions of *Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*, Glittenberg once again fashioned a single space with shifting interior, encompassing the entire action within a universe that contains everything.

The space for *Così fan tutte* was inspired by the architecture of Andrea Palladio (1508-1580). This artist, referred to as the “Aristotle of architecture,” made his impact less with whimsical individuality than with his classical, clear, and transparent formal language, realized in numerous works, and influencing the later, so-called revolution-era architecture, precisely at the time in which the direction team has set the opera. Marianne Glittenberg's costumes hark back to the same era, representing the simplest form of rococo. Opulence and bombast are avoided in every respect, and every historical detail denotes special significance.

In keeping with the overall structural symmetry of the opera, Act II, like Act I, begins with a trio — the three men in Act I, the three women for Act II. And, to an even greater extent than in his earlier operas, Mozart lets his actors do the interpreting. Up to this point, we don't know whether Ferrando and Guglielmo are trying to seduce their own fiancée or their friend's partner. Sven-Eric Bechtolf found it instructive, however, that in the disguise scene of Act I, it is Dorabella and not Fiordiligi who responds to amorous entreaties. It is only in Act II that the women's choice begins to fall on the opposite partner.

Mozart further added to the confusion by giving the “right” couples the “wrong” voice types, so that the matching voices only find one another after the switch has taken place — soprano and tenor, mezzo and baritone.

In this way, Mozart reaches heights that far exceed anything that has happened before: the personal symmetries ex-



plode, although they survive in the external formal structure of the opera. This is also the moment where Mozart looks deeply into the souls, deeper than words could ever describe. In the words of Sven-Eric Bechtolf, Mozart was the last composer who knew exactly what both heaven and hell looked like.

And so we come to the scene where Guglielmo has to tell his friend that he has succeeded with his friend's fiancée. Here the director thought of a Snoopy cartoon. Late one winter day, Charlie Brown and Schroeder stand by the window and watch Snoopy in the garden. Charlie: "Look, Snoopy is crying like every year when the snowman melts." Schroeder: "Yet that doesn't stop him from eating the carrot."

All three of Mozart's Da Ponte operas, Sven-Eric Bechtolf says, are about our dispositions in "love," and our dispositions as human beings in general. If *Figaro* merges politics with the most intimate sphere to create a utopia of a paradise on earth, at least for a moment, *Così* drives home the sad disillusionment of our condition, similarly to the cruelty of the human experiment in Marivaux's play. This helps explain the indignation the opera aroused for so long, as well as its rejection. It is one of the most difficult things in the world to look oneself in the face, or, to say it more precisely, in the heart.

What started in the spirit of the *opera buffa* becomes a drama that can no longer be controlled, and if *Così fan tutte* proves anything, it is not that all women are unfaithful, but rather the fact that the heart has its own reasons, which may run counter to all reason. With that, Mozart and Da Ponte called the Enlightenment philosophy of their time into question in a very fundamental way.

—RONNY DIETRICH © 2009  
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English translation by Peter Laki

Gottfried Amadi Mozart!