

Fatinitza

[Opéra comique, in three acts; text by Zell and Genée. First produced in Vienna, January 5, 1876.]

PERSONAGES.

Count Timofey Gavrilovich Kantschakoff, Russian General. Princess Lydia Imanovna, his niece. Izzet Pasha, governor of Rustchuk fortress. Capt. Vasil Staravieff. Lieut. Ossipp Safonoff. Steipann, a sergeant. Vladimir Samoiloff, lieutenant of cavalry. Julian, special war correspondent. Hassan Bey, leader of Bashi-Bazouks. Mustapha, guardian of the harem. Vuika, a Bulgarian. Hanna, his wife.

[Soldiers, Bashi-Bazouks, Cossacks, slaves, moujiks, etc.]

The scene is laid at Rustchuk and near Odessa; time, the last century.

Franz Von Suppé has been styled the German Offenbach, though the styles of the two composers differ widely. His operas are more purely comic operas, or operettas, than burlesques. He made his first success with an operetta, "Das Mädchen vom Lande" ("The Country Girl"), produced in Vienna in 1847, and his next work, a musical comedy called "Paragraph 3," made him known all over Germany. His entire list of light operas, musical farces, and vaudevilles includes over one hundred and sixty titles, but of these only two or three are well known in this country. "Fatinitza" is the best known, and is universally popular.

The story is an interesting one. Vladimir Samoiloff, a young lieutenant in the Russian army, while masquerading in girl's costume under the name of Fatinitza, encounters a Russian general, Count Timofey Kantschakoff, who falls desperately in love with him. He manages to escape from him, and subsequently meets the General's niece, the Princess Lydia, whom he knows only as Lydia, and the two

fall in love. Hearing of the attachment, the General transfers the young officer to the Russian outposts. The first act opens in camp at Rustchuk. Julian, a war correspondent, has just been brought in as a spy, but is recognized by Vladimir as an old friend. They plan private theatricals, in which Vladimir takes a female part. The General unexpectedly appears at the play, and recognizes Vladimir as his Fatinitza. When the opportunity presents itself, he resumes his love-making, but it is interrupted by the arrival of Lydia, whose noble rank Vladimir learns for the first time. Any danger of recognition, however, is averted by the correspondent, who tells Lydia that Fatinitza is Vladimir's sister. The dotting old General commends Fatinitza to the Princess, and goes off to inspect his troops. In his absence some Bashi-Bazouks surprise the camp and capture Lydia, Vladimir, and Julian, leaving the latter behind to arrange a ransom.

The second act opens in the harem of Izzet Pasha, governor of the Turkish fortress. Vladimir, in his female attire, and Lydia are brought in as captives, and the Pasha announces to his four wives that Lydia will be the fifth. Julian then arrives with the Russian sergeant, Steipann, to arrange for the release of his friends. The Pasha offers to give up Fatinitza, but declares he will retain Lydia. Steipann returns to the General with the Pasha's terms, carrying also a secret message from Julian, who has discovered how the Russians may capture the Turks. Julian remains with the Pasha, who gives him many entertainments, among them a shadow pantomime, during which the General and his soldiers rush in and rescue their friends.

The third act opens in the General's summer palace at Odessa. He has promised his niece to an old and crippled friend of his, but Julian once more straightens out matters by convincing the General that the real Fatinitza has died of grief because she was separated from him. Thereupon he consents to his niece's union with Fatinitza's brother, Vladimir.

The principal numbers of the first act are Vladimir's romance, in the sentimental vein, "Lost is the Dream that bound me"; the reporter's (Julian) jolly descriptive song, "With my Notebook in my Hand"; the pompously martial entrance song of General Kantschakoff, "Thunder! Lightning! who goes there?" which forcibly recalls General Boum's "Pif, paf, pouf" song in Offenbach's "Grand Duchess"; Lydia's sleighing-song, "When the Snow a Veil is flinging"; and the quartette in the next scene, "Not a Look shall tell," in the mock Italian style. The second act opens with the characteristic toilet chorus in the harem, "Washing, dressing, brushing, combing." The remaining most striking numbers are Izzet's song and dance, "I pine but for Progress"; the pretty duet for Vladimir and Lydia, "New Doubts, New Fears"; the effective sextette, "'Tis well; then learn that this young Russian"; the brilliant kismet duet for Izzet and Julian, "We are simply what Fortune pleases"; the sextette in the finale, "Silver Tinklings, ringing brightly," known as the Bell Sextette; and the characteristic music to the Karagois, or Turkish shadow pantomime, which forms a second finale. The leading numbers of the last act are Lydia's bell song, "Chime, ye Bells," accompanied by the ringing of bells on the stage, and distant shots; the trio for Lydia, Vladimir, and Julian, "Again, Love, we meet," which is one of the most effective bits in the opera; and the brilliant closing chorus, "Joy, Joy, Joy, to the Bride."