

Giroflé-Girofla

[Opera bouffe, in three acts; text by Vanloo and Aterrier. First produced at the Théâtre des Fantasies Parisiennes, Brussels, March 21, 1874; in Paris, November 11, 1874; in New York at the Park Theatre, 1875.]

PERSONAGES.

Don Bolero d'Alcarazas, a Spanish grandee. Marasquin, banker. Mourzook, a Moorish chief. Giroflé, } Girofla, } Don Bolero's twin daughters. Aurore, their mother. Pedro, the page. Paquita. Pirate Chief. Godfather. Godmother. Fernand. Guzman.

[Cousins, bridesmaids, pages, pirates, Moors, etc.]

The scene is laid in Spain; time, the last century.

The opening scene of "Giroflé-Girofla" which, with "La Fille de Madame Angot," made the reputation of Lecocq as an opera-bouffe composer, introduces Don Bolero d'Alcarazas, a Spanish grandee, and Aurore, his wife, also their twin daughters, Giroflé and Girofla, who, being of marriageable age, have been hastily betrothed, Giroflé to Marasquin, a banker to whom Don Bolero is heavily indebted, and Girofla to Mourzook, a Moorish chief who has made regular demands upon Don Bolero for money on penalty of death. By the double marriage he expects to get rid of his obligations on the one hand and avoid the payment of the enforced tribute on the other. Giroflé is married as arranged, but Girofla, who was to have been married the same day, is abducted by pirates before the ceremony can be performed. When Mourzook arrives and finds he has no bride, he is in a terrible rage, but is quieted down when, after a little manoeuvring by Aurore, Giroflé is passed off on him as Girofla and is thus to be married a second time.

In the second act the wedding festivities are going on and both bridegrooms are clamoring for their brides. No word is heard from Admiral Matamoras, who has been sent to capture the pirates. Don Bolero and Aurore resort to all kinds of expedients to settle matters and pacify the irate banker and the furious Moor, and besides have much trouble in restraining Giroflé from flying to her Marasquin. At last she is locked up. She manages to get out, however, and goes off with some of her cousins for a revel. Her absence is explained by a report that the pirates have carried her off also, which adds to the parents' perplexity as well as to the fury of Marasquin and Mourzook. At last Giroflé appears in a tipsy condition and is claimed by both. The act closes with the report that Matamoras has been defeated, and that the pirates have carried Girofla to Constantinople.

The third act opens on the following morning. The two would-be husbands have been locked into their apartments. Marasquin has passed a quiet night, but Mourzook has smashed the furniture and escaped through the window from his chamber. The parents assure Marasquin that even if Mourzook returns he will have to leave that afternoon, and suggest that there can be no harm in letting him have Giroflé for his wife until that time. Marasquin reluctantly consents, and when Mourzook returns and Giroflé is presented to him as Girofla, a ridiculous love scene occurs, which Marasquin contrives to interrupt by various devices. Finally the return of Girofla is announced, and Matamoras with his sailors appears, leading her by the hand. Explanations are made all round, the parents are forgiven, and Mourzook is satisfied.

The music is lively throughout and oftentimes brilliant, and of a higher standard than usually characterizes opera bouffe. The most taking numbers are the ballad with pizzicato accompaniment, sung by Paquita, "Lorsque la journée est finis" ("When the Day is finished"); the concerted ensemble, "À la chapelle" ("To the Church"); the grotesque pirates' chorus, "Parmi les choses délicates" ("Among the Delicate Things to do"), and the sparkling duet for Giroflé and

Marasquin, "C'est fini, le mariage" ("The Marriage has been solemnized"), in the first act: the bacchanalian chorus, "Écoutez cette musique" ("Listen to this Music"), leading up to a dance; a vivacious and well-written quintette, "Matamoras, grand capitaine" ("Matamoras, our Great Captain"); a fascinating drinking-song, "Le Punch scintille" ("This Flaming Bowl"), and the andante duet "O Giroflé, O Girofla," a smooth, tender melody, which is in striking contrast with the drinking-music preceding it and that which immediately follows the chorus of the half-tipsy wedding-guests, "C'est le canon" ("It is the Cannon"): and the rondo, "Beau père une telle demand" ("Oh, my Father, now you ask"), sung by Marasquin, and the duet for Mourzook and Giroflé "Ma belle Giroflé" ("My Lovely Giroflé"), in the third act.