

## **The Mascot**

[Comic opera, in three acts; text by Chivat and Duru. First produced at the Bouffes Parisiens, Paris, December 29, 1880; first American production, Gaiety Theatre, Boston, April 12, 1881.]

### PERSONAGES.

Bettina, the Mascot. Fiametta, daughter of Prince Lorenzo. Pippo, a shepherd. Lorenzo, prince of Piombino. Rocco, a farmer. Frederic, prince of Pisa. Parafante, sergeant. Matheo, innkeeper.

[Peasants, lords and ladies of court, soldiers, etc.]

The scene is laid in Piombino, Italy; time, the fifteenth century.

The story of "The Mascot" is charmingly romantic, and much more consistent and coherent than the usual plots of the comic operas. The first act opens with a vintage festival. The peasants are all rejoicing except Rocco, the farmer, who has had bad luck. Pippo, his shepherd, whom he had sent to his brother for help, returns with a basket of eggs and a letter in which he informs Rocco that he has also sent him Bettina, his turkey-keeper, who will bring him prosperity, as she is a mascot. Pippo, who is in love with Bettina, waxes eloquent over her charms, but when she comes she is coldly received by Rocco and ordered to go back. As she is preparing to leave, Prince Lorenzo, his daughter Fiametta, Prince Frederic, and others of a hunting-party arrive and stop for refreshment. Prince Lorenzo, who is one of the unlucky kind, learns by chance of Bettina's gift, and determines to take her to his court; but Rocco objects. The Prince, however, gains his consent by promising to make him Lord Chamberlain. The party sets off homeward with Rocco in good spirits and Bettina sad, while poor Pippo is left behind disconsolate.

The second act opens in the palace at Piombino, where a festival is to be given in honor of the marriage of Fiametta to Prince Frederic of Pisa. Among the attractions of the fête is an entertainment by a troupe of actors and dancers, the most prominent of whom is Saltarello, in reality Pippo in disguise. The lovers discover each other and plan an escape; but Rocco, who has recognized Pippo, frustrates their scheme by disclosing his identity to the Prince, who orders his arrest. The situation is still further complicated by the fickle Fiametta, who has fallen in love with Pippo and tells him that Bettina is false and is about to marry Prince Lorenzo. At last Pippo and Bettina have a chance to meet, and they make their escape by leaping through a window into the river.

The last act opens in the hall of an inn in Pisa. There has been a war between the two princes, and Frederic has defeated Lorenzo. Pippo has been a captain in the Pisan army, and Bettina, disguised as a trooper, has fought by his side. They reveal their real names to Frederic, and declare their intention of marriage. During preparations for the wedding Prince Lorenzo, Fiametta, and Rocco, who are travelling about the country as minstrels to make their living, owing to the misfortunes of war, meet the bridal party at the inn. After mutual explanations Fiametta returns to her old lover Frederic, and Pippo and Bettina are married. The Mascot brings good luck to them all at last.

The most interesting numbers in the opera are the drinking-song, "All morose Thoughts now are flying"; the legend of the Mascots, "One Day the Arch Fiend drunk with Pride," sung by Pippo and chorus; Bettina's song, "Don't come too near, I tell you"; the quaint duet for Bettina and Pippo, "When I behold your Manly Form"; the charming coaching-chorus, "Come, let us now be off as quick as a Bird," sung by Bettina and chorus in the first act; the chorus and air of Saltarello, "Hail, Princesses and Lords"; the pretty duet, "Know'st thou those Robes," for Bettina and Pippo, and the concerted finale of the second act; the stirring rataplan, "Marking Time with Cadence so Steady," the entrance of the refugees preluding the grotesque "Orang-Outang

Song," sung by Fiametta and chorus, and the graceful arietta following the entrance of the wedding-party in the last act.