



The Guide to Musical Theatre

COUNTESS MARITZA

Music by Emmerich Kalman, adaptation by Nigel Douglas and Ronald Hanmer.

Professional Version: book and lyrics by Nigel Douglas

Theater an der Wein, Vienna - 28 February, 1924

Shubert Theatre, Broadway - 18 September, 1926 (321 perfs)

Palace Theatre, London - 6 July, 1938

Sadler's Wells - 17 February, 1983

SYNOPSIS

Tassilo, the new bailiff on Countess Maritza's estate, is an impoverished young Baron who has taken the job incognito to pay for his sister's education. Temperament and pride delay the inevitable happy pairing-off of Maritza with Tassilo, and his sister Lisa with another nobleman from Maritza's set of friends. Manja, the fortune-telling gypsy, typifies the strong Magyar flavour of the attractive score which features such well-known songs as "Play Gypsy".

STORY

Once the overture has set the scene - Countess Maritza's large country estate on the Hungary/Bulgaria border - the young gypsy fortune-teller Manja reveals there is something unusual about the new bailiff, Béla Török: he is not what he seems to be. Török is in reality Count Tassilo Endrödy-Wittenburg, whose family has become impoverished, obliging him to take the job of bailiff under a false name. Tassilo hates his new humiliating circumstances and laments his unkind fate, and the way it has robbed him of his previously well-heeled life.

Tassilo has a busy time ahead of him. Countess Maritza, the young, beautiful but strong-minded owner of the estate, is about to arrive for a supper which will celebrate her engagement. Maritza, however, has no intention of giving up her freedom in order to marry. To put off her suitors, she has invented a fiancé, Baron Koloman Zsupán, a fictional character whose name she has taken from Johann Strauss' 1891 operetta *The Gypsy Baron*. Tassilo, as bailiff, is in charge of organizing all the varied details of the supper for Maritza and her 30 guests.

Tassilo is horrified to see that his sister Lisa is among Maritza's guests and begs her not to reveal his identity. Lisa's presence does, however, give her and her brother a chance to reminisce about their childhood.

To Maritza's amazement, a real-life Zsupán arrives, all set to marry her and take her off to his own estates in Varasdin, Yugoslavia. Despite herself, Maritza is quite attracted to Zsupán but, with so much jollity and happiness, Tassilo feels sadder than ever. Maritza rethinks her position and is again resolved to avoid marriage. When Manja reads her palm and predicts that she will fall in love within four weeks, this is not at all what Maritza wants to hear. She cancels her plans to return to Budapest, where would-be suitors are always prowling after her and, instead, remains on her estate. There, she fancies, she will be safe from predatory males who want her money. Baron Zsupán has also reconsidered and finds he prefers Lisa to Maritza. Lisa reciprocates his feelings.



In spite of herself, Maritza is attracted to her bailiff and wonders how things would be if she were not a noblewoman out of reach because of her exalted position, but more like his equal, a simple village girl whom he could love. Maritza's fantasy is rudely interrupted by Prince Popolescu, an elderly admirer, who tells her that Kólök is really a nobleman in disguise. Popolescu hints that this is a trick to get hold of her money. In addition, the Prince has mistaken Lisa for the bailiff's girlfriend and that infuriates Maritza even more.

Maritza insults Tassilo but, though appalled by her conduct, is too proud to apologize. She knows she must make peace and keeps Zsupán and Popolescu occupied with work as she ponders

The next day, Tassilo arrives to wind up his estate work and say goodbye. Though obviously in love, he is as proud

as Maritza and neither will take the initiative towards reconciliation. Maritza, however, has thought of a way round the problem. She writes a reference for Tassilo which is no reference at all, but a marriage proposal. "Though as a bailiff you won't do," the note runs, "As a husband I would welcome you." Tassilo, delighted, accepts this unusual invitation. He takes Maritza in his arms, Zsupán does the same with Lisa, and all ends happily as they 'Waltz Our Worries Away'.

CAST

Principals: 3 female, 3 male

- Countess Mariza
- Prince Moritz Dragomir Popolescu
- Baron Koloman Zsupán, a landowner from Varasdin
- Count Tassilo Endrödy-Wittenburg
- Lisa, his sister
- Karl Stephan Liebenberg
- Princess Bozena Cuddenstein zu Chlumetz
- Penizek, her valet
- Ilka von Dambössy Grasuvesko, a cavalry captain
- Tschekko, an old servant of Mariza
- Berko, a gipsy
- Manja, a young gipsy girl
- Sari, Mariska, Ersika, village children

Guests, society people, dancers, gipsies, country folk

MUSICAL NUMBERS - Broadway

1. Brown-Eyed Girl
2. (Come at the) Call of Love (Al Goodman)
3. Dear Home of Mine, Goodbye
4. Don't Tempt Me
5. Flirtation Dance
6. Golden Dreams (Harry K. Morton)
7. Gypsy Passion
8. Hola, Follow, Follow Me (Song of Greeting)
9. I'll Keep on Dreaming
10. In the Days Gone By
11. Love Has Found My Heart

MUSICAL NUMBERS - Sadler's Wells

1. Overture
2. Luck is a Golden Dream
3. How Do You Do?
4. Vienna Mine
5. Set the Gypsy Music Playing
6. Childhood Memories
7. Let's Go to Varasdin
8. Play Gypsy (Finale, Act I)
9. When I Start Dreaming
10. Corks Are Popping
11. Be Mine, My Love, Be Mine
12. Finale, Act 2
13. Nut Brown Maiden From the Prairie
14. Waltz Our Worries Away
15. Finale, Act 3

INSTRUMENTATION:

flute, oboe, bassoon, 2 clarinets, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, percussion, harp, strings. Professional Version: 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, 3 percussion, harp, stage music, strings

DISCOGRAPHY

Sadlers' Wells Opera - CDTER 1051