

THE RALPH OPERA PROGRAM PRESENTS

COSÌ FAN TUTTE

BY WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART



Colorado State University

APRIL 1 AND 3, 2022 | GRIFFIN CONCERT HALL

COSÌ FAN TUTTE

BY WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

CAST:

Fiordiligi: Lauren Bumgarner

Dorabella: Emily Anderson

Despina: Mykayla Fitzpatrick

Ferrando: David Silvano

Guglielmo: Deklin Herman and John Lindsey

Don Alfonso: Matt Doole

PRODUCTION TEAM:

Stage Director: Tiffany Blake

Conductor: Wes Kenney

Music Directors: John Carlo Pierce and Alaina DeBellevue

Rehearsal Pianist: Juhyun Lee and Hyeji Seo

Scenic Designer: Price Johnston

Costume Designer: Erin Carignan

Lighting Designer: Laurel Ladzinski

Projections Designer: Doster Chastain

Stage Manager: Lauren Boesch

PROGRAM NOTES

Così fan tutte (“So do all of Them”) Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

At the time of its composition and first performance, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s *Così fan tutte*, ossia la scoula delgi amanti met with an unfortunate setback. The premiere occurred in Vienna in 1790 and ran for a total of seven performances before the death of Emperor Joseph II halted all stage performances. After a proper mourning period had passed, *Così fan tutte* found its way back into the theatre just a handful of times in the same year. After 1790 it was not performed in the city again until after Mozart’s death. The opera was not received as favorably as Mozart’s other works, as critics claimed the production did not hold the same expected comedic flavor or humorous, dramatic flair. Mozart and his librettist Lorenzo de Ponte were no strangers to tales of romance tested by calls to infidelity, nor the blending of comedy with their drama. Just several years before 1790, Mozart and de Ponte had collaborated on *Le nozze di Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*, neither of which strayed far from the same fundamental elements revived in *Così fan tutte*. Despite this, *Così fan tutte* was seen as being a touch too silly or naïve—lacking the dramatic depth of the other two operas, which were regarded as more “appropriate” for a man of Mozart’s talents.

E in donne pretendete Di trovar fedeltà? And in woman you expect To find fidelity?

Quanto mi piaci mai, semplicità! How I love such simplicity!

In spite of its tentative beginnings, *Così fan tutte* has comfortably found its place in the present-day opera repertoire. No stranger to the stage, it has been re-imagined in many modern settings. *Così fan tutte*, by the nature of both its title and plot, still gains some scrutiny from the audience and critics for what is bold-facedly a story of infidelity brought about by trickery, manipulation, and the idea that no woman is truly faithful. Even the familiar opera fan might squirm just a bit at an indelicate portrayal of how the women characters are treated. Yet in a skillful performance, the undertones of misogyny might be outweighed by the plot, which makes a fool of both the male and female leads. Nevertheless, the opera is, at its heart, a dramatic comedy with a reputation of being silly and strangely charming, with music that is sure to please the audience.

Ferrando and Guglielmo, the men in the two relationships, enter the stage threatening Don Alfonso, proclaiming that he must fight them for disrespecting their fiancés. The orchestra is fast paced and stately to match their anger and nobility as they defend the honor of their women. Still, throughout this scene the music is not tense even for its drama; the tone does not set up Don Alfonso to be run through for his allegations. The music helps portray that this is a serious moment for Ferrando and Guglielmo, but not for Don Alfonso, who is older and more jaded, and is simply looking to rile up his younger counterparts.

At the introduction of the women leads, Fiordiligi and Dorabella, the orchestra plays a softer and romantic theme as the two women look adoringly at portraits of their men. The music is simple and sweet while they speak fondly of those they love. At times, when the women become more excited, the tempo shifts into faster running string lines. These moments do not evoke tension but add a certain sense of frantic exuberance, the sound of young and headlong adoration. By contrast, the introduction of Despina, who feels much like Don Alfonso when considering the idea of love coupled with absolute loyalty, presents an almost mocking motif. The music works to highlight her disbelief that the other women are so distraught at the idea of Ferrando and Guglielmo being sent off to war. The strings play alternating themes of short, almost playful figures contrasted by swells that sound more emotionally strained as Despina speaks of how unfair it is that men expect fidelity while they themselves leave and surely are unfaithful. It is in ways such as this that Mozart's genius shines through, as he uses musical lines to match the personalities of the primary characters. While not always considered Mozart's most famous work, *Così fan tutte* employs masterful elements of timing, musicality, and humor to create an entertaining and suspenseful opera. The audience can expect comedy from the inherent ridiculousness of misunderstandings and trickery, as well as an understanding of the fickle and difficult nature of love and loyalty.

— Program notes by Francesca Lujan

SYNOPSIS

Act I

In an Italian café, two army officers, Guglielmo and Ferrando are arguing with their friend, Don Alfonso. Alfonso contends that “all women are the same” and will cheat if given the opportunity. Guglielmo and Ferrando insist that their fiancées, Fiordiligi and Dorabella, are would never cheat on them. Alfonso suggests a wager: he will prove that the women are fickle, but they will have to follow his exact instructions with no equivocation. The men agree and commit to pretend to be called off to war and to return in disguise to attempt to woo the other's lover.

After meeting the two sisters who clearly have an affection for these two men, Alfonso delivers the heartbreaking—and false—news that their betrothed men have been called to war. The sisters share a heartbreaking lament with their lovers. The lovers embrace and the men depart.

The ladies share their terrible news with their maid, Despina, who encourages them to let loose while their fiancés are gone to battle, since they may not even come back. The sisters leave in a huff, offended by her suggestion. Don Alfonso arrives and convinces Despina to sway the girls into the arms of the “new” men, promising a reward if she is successful. The two fiancés arrive disguised as Albanian soldiers. Don Alfonso attempts to convince the ladies that these men, who are old “friends” of his, are worthy of having around. Fiordiligi becomes infuriated, demanding that they respect the women's fidelity.

The ladies make their way out to the garden where they lament their lovers being away from them. Suddenly the “Albanians” appear, and in a lustful rage pretend to ingest poisons, faking their own outrageous symptoms as the women and Don Alfonso try to get help. Despina comes to the garden and points out that they should get a doctor quickly to help keep the men “alive.” The doctor (Despina in disguise) arrives on the scene and applies a multitude of outrageous and unorthodox methods on the two men who are on the brink of “death.” The men are roused and after a few more faulty attempts to win over the ladies, they begin to celebrate as their betrothed are still evidently faithful.

Act II

Despina once again encourages the ladies to channel their womanly instincts. The sisters begin to soften toward her philosophy and decide to give in to their growing interest in the handsome strangers. Don Alfonso and Despina arrive with the soldiers and encourage the couples of them to speak with one another. Ferrando and Fiordiligi go on a walk in the garden. The disguised Guglielmo proclaims his affections for Dorabella, giving her a locket, replacing the one which Ferrando had given her. Meanwhile, Ferrando is having a more difficult time trying to woo Fiordiligi, who then expresses doubts and uncertainty.

The two men meet up and compare notes. Guglielmo reveals that Dorabella has not been faithful. Ferrando is furious but conflicted because he still deeply loves Dorabella. Fiordiligi enters the parlor, lamenting her situation. Ferrando surprises her and, in a moment of weakness, she succumbs to his advances.

The two couples are ready to embark on their marriages. A fake nuptial agreement is drawn up by a notary (again, Despina in disguise). The women sign the agreement and are interrupted by the sound of a military band announcing the “return” of their fiancés. In a panic, the ladies force the Albanians to hide. Ferrando and Guglielmo enter and are “confused” by their lovers’ distress. Despina and the nuptial contract are “discovered”, and the ladies beg for forgiveness. The men reveal that they themselves had been in disguise the entire time. Don Alfonso urges the two couples to forgive each other and laugh it off, stating “Happy are those who look on the bright side of life!”

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY ORCHESTRA

WES KENNEY, Conductor

ANNIE SMITH, Graduate Teaching Assistant

Violin I

Landon Fennel, *concertmaster*
Madison Kubala, *asst. concertmaster*
Annie Smith
Chloe Hesskamp

Violin II

Mary Fox**
Rhea Chan*
Tim Patawaran
Devon Mayes

Viola

Shawn Murphy**
Percy Slovut*
Madelyn Reynolds
Emily Rowe

Cello

Avery Smith**
Laurel Ave*
Kristin Weninger

Bass

Thomas Hasler**
Max Johnson*

Flute

Rebecca Needham
Jenna Moore

Oboe

Jacquelyn Olivera
Pablo Hernandez

Clarinet

Rachel Phillips**
Richard Galbreath

Bassoon

John Parker
Kyle Minthorn

Horn

Sean Brennan**
Kathlyn Dixon

Trumpet

John Pirillo
Enzo Barrett

Percussion

Thomas Landewee**

** Principal

* Assistant Principal

+ Guest Performer

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COSTUME SHOP MANAGER Elise Kulovany

CUTTER/DRAPER Becky Evans

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER Matt Grevan

SCENIC CHARGE ARTIST Heidi Larson

MASTER CARPENTER Johnie Rankin

AUDIO ENGINEER Chris Carignan

ASSOCIATE SET DESIGNER Bo Burkhardt

ASSISTANT SET DESIGNER Charlie Williamson

ASSISTANT LIGHTING DESIGNER Chris Spreng

ASSISTANT PROJECTIONS DESIGNER Ashley Schountz

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER Annie Hennen

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PAINT SHOP – Arina Bratkovska, Mya Coca, Peyton Farnum, Rachel Garrison,
Sarah Lepiere, Danielle Ranisate

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Logan Volkert, Peter Young

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Lorna Stephens, Tiernan Troyer, David Walters

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DECK CREW – Tiana Fuentes, Jaxon McMichael

LIGHT BOARD OPERATOR – Marin Stumpf



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