

The University of Alberta  
Department of Music

The  
Merry Wives  
of Windsor

An Opera by Otto Nicolai (1810-1849)  
after the play by Shakespeare

Thursday, November 15, 1979

Saturday, November 17, 1979

8:00 p.m.

Convocation Hall  
Arts Building

# The Merry Wives of Windsor

(sung in English)

An opera in two Acts

Music by Otto Nicolai

Libretto by S.H. Mosenthal, after Shakespeare

English version by Josef Blatt

## Cast (in order of appearance)

Mrs. Ford (Alice) ..... Elsie Achuff  
Mrs. Page (Meg) ..... Kathy Megli  
Mr. Page ..... Robert Mast  
Slender ..... Don McMann  
Mr. Ford ..... James Raycroft  
Fenton ..... Tim Mallandaine  
Dr. Cajus ..... Dan Bagan  
Sir John Falstaff ..... Alan Ord  
Ann Page ..... Mardene Francis  
A Neighbor ..... Bryan Butler

There will be one intermission of 15 minutes  
between acts.

## CHORUS MEMBERS

Soprano: Crystal Fleuty, Elvira McInerney, Brenda  
Spencer, Debbie Giese, Ardelle Ries, Patricia Swan

Alto: Laurie Pawlowski, Jan Mitchell, Beth Raycroft,  
Silver Bropst, Donalee Inglis, Jean Matheson

Tenor: Bryan Butler, Bob Gagnon, Sandy Whiting,  
Wayne Karpoff, Fred Malchuk, Ed Mortimer

Bass: Steve Halls, Dominique Roy, Gordon Maxwell,  
Barry Regehr, Darwin Werner

## Dancers

Stephani Achuff, Doreen Burr, Debbie Coldrick,  
Susan Kinley, Susan Kasakoff, Melinda Morrall,  
Pamela Giuffre, Jane Youngberg

## Production Staff

Music Direction ..... Alfred Strombergs  
Stage and Production Direction ..... Alan Ord  
Set Design ..... Gordon Lindstedt  
Costume Design and  
Construction ..... Betty Kolodziej  
Chorus Master ..... Larry Cook  
Choreography ..... Margaret Flynn  
Technical Direction ..... Clive Alcock  
(Convocation Hall)  
Stage Manager ..... Liz Amsden  
Assistant Stage Manager ..... Stephanie Dea  
Properties Mistress ..... Marilyn Stetsko  
Rehearsal Pianist ..... Nancy Millions

The Department of Music gratefully acknowledges the  
assistance and cooperation of the Edmonton School of  
Ballet and F.J. McDaniel Company.

## The Saint Cecilia Opera Orchestra

### Violin I

Dolya Konoval (Concertmaster)  
Barbara Shipman, Neil Miskey, Cherie Larson,  
Murray Vaasjo, Lisa Korinek

### Violin II

Cathie Hudson, Monica Oelke, Mark Ellestad,  
Amelia Kaminski, David Bacon, Ann Mallandaine

### Viola

Andrew Bacon, Wendy Halferdahl,  
Brian Bacon, Sabina Qureshi

### Cello

Rebecca Denson, Barbara Morris,  
Janet Dougan, Patricia Morris

### Bass

Diana Brulhart, Catherine Garneau

### Flute

Maureen Crotty, William Damur

### Oboe

Delane Peters, Marla McCready

### Clarinet

Murray Dineen, Nancy Townend

### Bassoon

John Feldberg, Douglas Jahns

### Horn

Margaret Bunkall, Kevin Robertson,  
Ken Howe, Elaine Stepa

### Trumpet

Dawn Hage, Mitchell Howard

### Trombone

Ivan Mast, Brian Piel, Craig Hoskins

### Piano

Nancy Millions

### Timpani

Mark Arneson

### Percussion

Jay Walbaum

### Orchestral Assistant

Paul Horne

## ACT ONE

### Scene One: A Court

Mrs. Ford informs her friend, Mrs. Page that she has received a crude love letter from the unattractive and corpulent, Sir John Falstaff. Outraged, the women decide to teach him a lesson. They leave. Mr. Page and Mr. Ford enter, accompanied by two suitors of Mr. Page's daughter, Anne—timid Slender and blustering Dr. Cajus. Anne's true love, Fenton, appears and asks Mr. Page for her hand. The penniless suitor is rudely rejected, but defiantly vows he will wed Anne despite every obstacle.

### Scene Two: Mr. Ford's House

Mrs. Ford awaits Falstaff. She and Mrs. Page have sent an anonymous note to her husband informing him of her rendezvous with Sir John. A large basket is brought in. Later, the frightened Falstaff is stuffed into it and dumped into the River. The women's plan works out perfectly; the jealous Mr. Ford is embarrassed in front of his neighbors.

## ACT TWO

### Scene One: A Tavern

Ford, disguised as a "Mr. Brook" visits Falstaff at the Garter Inn. He seeks Sir John's help to gain the favor of Mrs. Ford and offers him a purse for his assistance. Ford discovers that Falstaff had been at his home the preceding day, and that his wife has invited him to visit her again this very afternoon.

### Scene Two: A Garden

Anne's two unwanted suitors, Slender and Cajus, unknown to each other, plan to meet her during her daily walk in the garden. When Fenton arrives, they are forced to hide. The lovers, unsuspectingly watched, reaffirm their affection.

### Scene Three: Mrs. Ford's Room

Falstaff has just arrived when Mrs. Page announces the unexpected approach of Mr. Ford. Quickly, the resourceful women disguise Falstaff as an old woman, a relative of Mrs. Ford's maid. Mr. Ford has forbidden her presence in his house and in his anger, beats her mercilessly. He confidently searches for Sir John, but is again unsuccessful and ridiculed.

## Scene Four: Outside Mr. Page's House

The wives have informed their husbands of Falstaff's letter and his subsequent punishments. Ford has been forgiven his unwarranted jealousy. They decide to play another trick on Sir John. There is to be a masquerade and the wives are to meet him disguised as the legendary hunter, Herne, in the Forest. Mrs. Page, alone with Anne, gives her a red elf's costume to wear. Cajus will then recognize her and they can elope. After Mrs. Page departs, Mr. Page enters with a green elf's costume. He has a similar plan; but it is Slender with whom Anne is to run off. Anne decides to give the costumes to Slender and Cajus and steal away with Fenton.

## Scene Five: Windsor Forest

The townspeople, disguised in various attire, await Sir John. He appears as Herne, with large antlers on his head. Mrs. Page and Mrs. Ford join him. When the ghosts approach noisily, the women run away leaving the terrified Falstaff to face his tormentors alone. He tries to hide in vain, and is pinched, stabbed and mocked. Sir John repents, the masqueraders are revealed and the opera ends on a note of laughter and merriment.

Otto Nicolai was born in Koenigsberg, East Prussia on June 9, 1810. By 1849, when *The Merry Wives of Windsor* had its premiere, he was well known to the public, both as principal conductor of the Imperial Opera in Vienna and for his two operas *Il Templario* and *Il Proscritto*. His contract with the Vienna Imperial Opera required that he compose a German opera. After an extended search for a suitable libretto he finally chose the Shakespearian comedy and began *Die Lustigen Weiben von Windsor* in 1845. After many delays caused by his heavy work schedule and several illnesses he finally completed the opera only to be informed that the Imperial Opera would not perform it because it was a year late in its completion. Nicolai subsequently resigned from the Imperial Opera and accepted the offer of the King of Prussia to conduct at the Royal Opera House. The opera received its first performance in Berlin on March 9, 1849. Early performances of the opera did not meet with high critical acclaim but it grew steadily in popularity. Today the opera is recognized as one of the most delightful of all German comic operas.