



Chateau Elysée

5930 FRANKLIN AVENUE
HOLLYWOOD

Gainsborough's Duchess

by Albert Coates
libretto by C. Reginald
Furness

The Opera plays in the late 18th Century. dramatic
version
The action takes place within 24 hours. production
by
Valter

1st Scene

The Gainsborough family are expecting the Duchess of Devonshire to come & sit for her portrait meanwhile Molly, the elder of Gainsborough's two daughters has managed (with the help of Peggy, her younger sister & James the man-servant) to see Mr. Fischer ~~with~~ whom she is in love & who has been forbidden the house by both her parents. During the interview the Duchess is announced & Fischer is unable to escape & must therefore hide underneath the sofa. During an ensuing scene he is discovered by the Duchess who sees the real love between the two & promises to help to obtain Gainsborough's permission for their marriage - she meanwhile invites them all to a Garden Fete at Ranelagh that evening -

2nd scene.

The scene opens in Gainsborough's studio - where he is painting a portrait of Miss Foyle - a harpist. He is doing this in order to exchange the portrait for Miss Foyle's harp, but ^{she was a fine musician herself} the lady - who has a tender passion for Gainsborough - thinks that he is in love with her. A stormy scene ensues between them in which Gainsborough is finally obliged to kiss the lady in order to obtain the harp - This tender moment is seen by the Duchess as she enters the studio & who has meanwhile been kept waiting, longer than usual! - An amusing scene now takes place between the Duchess & Gainsborough. She does all she can to make the sitting as difficult as possible is extremely capricious & finally on her complaint that the portrait does not make her youthful enough & the hat in the portrait does not suit her, & therefore tells Gainsborough to remove the hat! Gainsborough assures her Grace that she might ^{like to} have the hat painted in again ^{at the next sitting} in case he removes it. She assures him that any how he must now remove it! - Gainsborough objects & in a temper blackens the face in the portrait her Grace is ^{upset} furious but nevertheless is secretly amused - as she admires & is extremely devoted to Gainsborough.

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2nd Act. 1st scene.

The Garden at Ranelagh.

a beautiful moonlight scene of great charm & poetry.
 The two lovers discuss the blackened portrait & are overheard by Miss Foyle - who sees an opportunity of revenge on Gainsborough ^{who has also been snubbed by the Duke} & as ^{meeting} ~~seeing~~ Lord Beechmaster - tells her ^{the whole tale} ~~the blackened portrait & the romance between the Duke & Gainsborough~~ ^{the Duke} ~~her~~ ^{of the Duchess} ~~to remove the black from her portrait~~. This tale rapidly becomes more & more exaggerated. As the evening progresses the Duchess is chosen Queen of the May. ^{as it is the 1st of May} there is much dancing ^{& hilarity} of the Prince (afterwards George IV) makes his appearance. In this scene there are two beautiful lyrics are "Nightingales" in which records have been taken of real nightingales & are used with the orchestra ~~and~~ in the accompaniment to the song and "Most beautiful Goddess of the night" which begins by Gainsborough becomes a duet between himself & the Duchess.

2nd Act. 2nd Scene.

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The Prince's Supper Party.

The Prince has been asked by the Duchess to give his protection to the young couple, (Fischer & Wyle) ^{so} in his presence the ~~young couple~~ ^{them} to the assembled guests Gainsborough discerns in the betrothed pair - his daughter Wyle - Beechmaster sees an opportunity in provoking the Duchess by telling her that as she was so generous to Wyle - Gainsborough might be induced to remove the black from her portrait! the Duchess feels that Gainsborough has been spreading reports about her & the scene ends with her insulting Gainsborough before the assembled guests - Gainsborough in his turn has a duel with Lord Beechmaster in which he ~~beats~~ ^{forces} his lordship to drink a toast to the "servile maids" of old England! - He finally smashes his glass on the ground & furiously leaves the supper room. but not before he has been persuaded by the Prince to show him the portrait the next morning -

3rd Oct. Scene 1



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The Duchess' Boudoir -

The Duchess has just returned from Ranelagh
 She is perturbed at the prospect of the Prince
 & the court visiting Gainsborough's studio to see
 the spoiled portrait. She realises her affection
 for the great painter & feels she would like to
 keep him to, if necessary, repaint the portrait
 before he is disgraced & therefore in a beautiful
 scene she decides to go early in the morning &
 take her sitting as usual & in spite of seeming
 ridiculous - she will face the whole world!
 in her efforts to protect Gainsborough

3rd Oct. Scene II

Early morning

The Duchess enters ^{her Boudoir} as the strains of
the May day songs ~~pass along~~ ^{are heard} under her
windows. The Duke enters. The Duchess
feels the interview will not be pleasant
& pretends a headache. The Duke objects
to the scandal he has heard with regard
to the Duchess & Gainsborough but cannot
be too serious as the Duchess reminds him
of his affection for Lady Betty Foster, niece to
his ^{own} discomfort! When the Duke leaves the
room various acquaintances of the Duchess
are announced who have come to tell her
that Gainsborough should be permitted to
insult her ^{by} pretend to be scandalized
but ^{are} secretly ^{inquisitive} interested as to further news
The Duchess meanwhile is losing patience
& finally upsets them all by telling her maid
to bring her dress as she intends to visit
Gainsborough to set by her portrait as usual!

3rd Act Scene III 

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The scene opens in Gainsborough's Studio
 The Bailiff has come to remove the furniture
 as the bills have not been paid. ^{Mrs. Puffin} ^{dismissed}
 Mrs. Gainsborough is in tears, ^{the bell}
 Miss Foyle & Fischer enter & also
 Gainsborough. The Artist has ordered Miss
 Foyle & his family to be present as he wishes
 to know who spread the scandal.
 The scandal is finally brought home to
 Miss Foyle & Gainsborough gives her
 portrait to the Bailiff to sell in order
 to pay the bills. Miss Foyle is horrified
 but rushes out to pay for her portrait.
 Meanwhile Mrs. Gainsborough discovers that
 Foyle & Fischer are betrothed & becomes almost
 hysterical. Gainsborough asks them all
 to leave the studio & ^{gazes} ~~looks~~ at the
 spilt portrait in a beautiful way
 "Lady Fisdain" he proceeds to clean it
 a simple task as he had only smeared
 lamp black onto the portrait which a damp
 cloth can remove in a moment!

as he has finished it suddenly
 the Duchess appears at the door, un-
 announced. A beautiful scene takes
 place now which is interrupted by James
~~the announcement~~ ^{her} ~~emb.~~ ^{of the arrival of} ~~that~~ the Prince &
 his courtiers ^{who} are about to enter the studio.
 Gainsborough shows the portrait to the
 Prince who is astonished at the
 exquisite beauty of the work. & tells
 Gainsborough he wishes to be his next
 sitter. The courtiers meanwhile not
 knowing what has been taking place
 find there is something wrong with the portrait
 & are curiously surprised - but
 nevertheless are hurried into speech by
 Lady March who whispers "Braz dantes
 bray" - which he accordingly does! -
 The Prince takes his leave & the Duchess
 & Gainsborough are left alone he ^{kisses} ^{her}
 her hand & in great reverence & respect
 calls her "his" Duchess & Guardian Angel.
 The Duchess bends her head & utters
^{knowing} touches the top of his head with
 her lips - ~~this is the~~
~~Curtain~~ after moments
 of ~~most beautiful music~~ which
 speaks to these two people -

~~This closes~~

the

The opera closes with most exquisite music & the Curtains fall leaving us to our own thoughts & realising ^{again} that the greatest love between these two people had reached its zenith in sublime understanding & self-sacrifice. & what remained to the future ^{is} ~~was~~ the unperfected portrait of the "Duchess of Devonshire" & Thuma Gair-bruon