

Jacques Offenbach

LES CONTES D'HOFFMANN

December 19, 2009

Production

Bartlett Sher

Set Designer

Michael Yeorgan

Costume Designer

Catherine Zuber

Lighting Designer

James F. Ingalls

Choreographer

Dou Dou Huang

Production a gift of the
Hermione Foundation and
the Gramma Fisher Foundation,
Marshalltown, Iowa

Additional funding from
Mr. and Mrs. William R. Miller

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CONDUCTOR **James Levine**

OLYMPIA **Kathleen Kim**

ANTONIA/STELLA **Anna Netrebko**

GIULIETTA **Ekaterina Gubanova**

NICKLAUSSE/THE MUSE **Kate Lindsey**

HOFFMANN **Joseph Calleja**

FOUR VILLAINS **Alan Held**

Coming soon!

January 9 *Der Rosenkavalier*

January 16 *Carmen*

February 6 *Simon Boccanegra*

March 27 *Hamlet*

May 1 *Armida*

Visit www.metopera.org/HDLive for tickets and
participating theaters.

PROLOGUE Hoffmann's room and Luther's tavern in the opera house. The poet Hoffmann is in love with Stella, the star singer of the opera. Lindorf, a rich counselor, also loves her and is confident to win her for himself. Hoffmann enters and sings a ballad about a disfigured dwarf named Kleinzach. During the song, his mind wanders to recollections of a beautiful woman. When he recognizes Lindorf as his rival, the two men trade insults, but Hoffmann's Muse, who has assumed the guise of his friend Nicklausse, interrupts them. Hoffmann begins to tell the stories of his three past loves...

ACT I The inventor Spalanzani has created a mechanical doll named Olympia. Hoffmann, who thinks she is Spalanzani's daughter, has fallen in love with her. Spalanzani's former partner Coppélius sells Hoffmann a pair of magic glasses through which he alone perceives Olympia as human. When Coppélius demands his share in the profits the two inventors expect to make from the doll, Spalanzani gives him a worthless check. Olympia captivates the assembled guests with the performance of a dazzling aria, which is interrupted several times in order for the doll's mechanism to be recharged. Hoffmann, watching her through his glasses, is enchanted. He declares his love and the two dance. Olympia whirls faster and faster as her mechanism spins out of control, until Hoffmann falls and breaks his glasses. Coppélius returns, furious about the worthless check. He tears Olympia apart as the guests mock Hoffmann for falling in love with a machine.

Intermission

ACT II Antonia sings a plaintive love song, thinking of her dead mother, a famous singer. Her father, Crespel, has taken her away in the hopes of ending her affair with Hoffmann and begs her to give up singing: she has a weak heart and the effort will endanger her life. Hoffmann arrives and Antonia joins him in singing until she nearly faints. Crespel returns, alarmed by the arrival of the charlatan Dr. Miracle, who had treated Crespel's wife the day she died. The doctor claims he can cure Antonia but Crespel forces him out. Hoffmann, overhearing their conversation, asks Antonia to give up singing and she reluctantly agrees. The moment he has left Miracle reappears, urging Antonia to sing. He conjures up the voice of her mother and claims she wants her daughter to relive the glory of her own fame. Antonia can't resist. Her singing, accompanied by Miracle frantically playing the violin, becomes more and more feverish until she collapses. Miracle coldly pronounces her dead.

Intermission

ACT III The Venetian courtesan Giulietta joins Nicklausse in a barcarole. A party is in progress, and Hoffmann mockingly praises the pleasures of the flesh. When Giulietta introduces him to her current lover, Schlémil, Nicklausse warns the poet against the courtesan's charms, but Hoffmann denies any interest in her. Having overheard them, the sinister Dapertutto produces a large diamond with which he will bribe Giulietta to steal Hoffmann's reflection for him—just as she already has stolen Schlémil's shadow. As Hoffmann is about to depart, Giulietta seduces him into confessing his love for her. Schlémil returns and accuses Giulietta of having left him for Hoffmann, who realizes with horror that he has lost his reflection. Schlémil challenges Hoffmann to a duel and is killed. Hoffmann takes the key to Giulietta's boudoir from his dead rival but finds the room empty. Returning, he sees her leaving the palace in the arms of the dwarf Pitichinaccio.

EPILOGUE Having finished his tales, all Hoffmann wants is to forget. Nicklausse declares that each story describes a different aspect of one woman: Stella. Arriving in the tavern after her performance, the singer finds Hoffmann drunk and leaves with Lindorf. Nicklausse resumes her appearance as the Muse and encourages the poet to find consolation in his creative genius.

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