Leo Fall - Die Rose von Stambul (2011)

Disc 1 *1. Act I Scene 1: May your dreams be filled with ecstasy (Bul - Bul, Women, Djamileh) - Scene 2: Is Kondja awake (Desiree, Bul - bul) - Scene 3: My dear, lovely Mademoiselle Desiree (Kemal Pasha, Desiree) 00:05:36 2. Act I Scene 4: Morning sun now beckons you to rise (Bul - bul, Women, Kondja) 00:05:33 3. Act I Scene 5: Oh, good morning (Women, Kondja, Midili) 00:04:21 4. Act I Scene 5: Another heartfelt song (Kondja, Midili, Emine) 00:02:40 5. Act I Scene 6: A foreign gentleman is here! (Djamileh, Midili, Kondja, Fridolin) 00:03:42 6. Act I Scene 6: Duet: A faithful daughter of tradition (Midili, Fridolin) 00:04:54 7. Act I Scene 7: Girls, I'm so happy (Kondja, Desiree, Bul - bul, Midili) 00:02:07 8. Act I Scene 8: Fair daughters of Circassia (Bul - bul, Achmed) 00:04:08 9. Act I Scene 9: A thousand greetings dear, young man (Kemal Pasha, Achmed) 00:02:30 10. Act I Scene 10: My beloved Kondja (Kemal Pasha, Kondja, Achmed) 00:02:33 11. Act I: Finale: Have you heard this little song (Kondja, Achmed) 00:07:26* Disc 2 *1. Act II Scene 1: We are all here for a joyous occasion (Men, Women, Achmed, Fridolin) - Scene 3: My future son - in - law (Kemal Pasha, Achmed) 00:03:19 2. Act II Scene 4: Let me offer my warmest welcome (Achmed, Durlane, Fatme) - Daughters of tradition, delicate and quiet (Achmed, Women) 00:03:37 3. Act II Scene 5: I have to take a peek into the bridal chamber (Midili, Fridolin) 00:02:54 4. Act II Scene 5: Duet: I've never kissed a man before (Midili, Fridolin) 00:04:49 5. Act II Scene 6: Behold, the radiant and lovely bride draws near (Women, Men, Achmed, Kondja, Kemal Pasha) 00:04:27 6. Act II Scene 6: Sir, I am ready (Kondja, Achmed) 00:06:17 7. Act II Scene 7: I'm still a little bashful (Fridolin, Durlane, Women, Midili) 00:04:39 8. Act II Scene 8: Kondja we are finally alone (Achmed, Kondja) 00:03:45 9. Act II Scene 8: Will you dance (Kondja, Achmed) 00:06:03 10. Act II: Finale: Who thinks about time when you're happy (Achmed, Kondja) 00:08:14 11. Act III Scene 1: Everything must go like clockwork tonight (Hotel Director, Band Leader) - Scene 2: Schatzi! (Fridolin, Midili) 00:02:17 12. Act III Scene 2: Goodness knows how much I've tried (Midili, Fridolin) 00:02:27 13. Act III Scene 3: Where on God's green earth am I (Mr. Muller, Bell Hop) - Scene 4: Are Mr. and Mrs. Fridolin Muller staying here (Kondja, Bell Hop, Midili) 00:04:07 14. Act III Scene 5: Attention please! (Hotel Director, Achmed) 00:01:23 15. Act III Scene 6: Two eyes full of yearning (Achmed) 00:04:15 16. Act III Scene 7: Unbelievable! - Scene 8: Now listen - Scene 9: Achmed has gone crazy - Scene 10: Fridolin! - Scene 11: Oh no - Scene 12: Oh no, here she is (Fridolin, Achmed, Mr. Muller, Midili) 00:06:30 17. Act III Scene 12: Trio: Oh daddy (Fridolin, Midili, Mr. Muller) 00:02:04 18. Act III Scene 13: Your intimate, romantic dinner (Hotel Director, Achmed) - Scene 14: It's just as I told you (Hotel Director, Kondja, Achmed) 00:03:42*

Kondja Gül – Kimberly McCord, Soprano Midili Hanum – Alison Kelly, Soprano Fridolin Müller

– Erich Buchholz, Tenor Achmed Bey – Gerald Frantzen, Tenor Mr Müller Sr – Robert Morrissey, Bass Bül-bül / Durlane – Sarah Bockel, Mezzo-soprano Fatme – Malia Ropp, Soprano Emine – Julia Tarlo, Soprano Djamileh – Nicole Hill, Soprano Güzela – Khaki Pixely, Mezzo-soprano Desirée – Michelle Buck, Soprano Kemal Pasha – Chris Guerra, Baritone Bell Hop – Eric Casady, Baritone Hotel Director – Aaron Benham, Tenor Band Leader – Josh Prisching, Baritone Chicago Folks Operetta John Frantzen - Conductor

The youth and early career of composer Leo Fall parallel those of his more famous contemporary, Franz Lehár. Both were born in the provinces of the Austro-Hungarian Empire—Fall in what is now the Czech Republic, Lehár in Hungary; both were sons of military bandmasters and composers; both attended major conservatories while still in their early teens (Fall in Vienna, Lehár in Prague); for a brief period, they even both played the violin in the orchestra of the 50th Austrian Infantry Regiment under the direction of Lehár's father.

Fall's father, meanwhile, had settled in Berlin, where young Leo joined him, playing in his father's café orchestra. Soon, he was working in cabarets as a piano accompanist. After serving as an operetta conductor in Hamburg and Cologne, he returned to Berlin, where he composed and conducted for revues and cabarets. In 1906, he gave up conducting and moved to Vienna to focus on operetta composition. The decision quickly paid off. In 1907 and 1908, he made a name for himself with three hit shows: Der fidele Bauer (The Merry Peasant), Die Dollarprinzessin (The Dollar Princess), and Die geschiedene Frau (The Divorcée, later produced in England as The Girl in the Train). With the onset of World War I, Fall and his librettists, Julius Brammer and Alfred Grünwald, found an entertaining subject for a show that was set in Ottoman Turkey, which was allied with Austria at the time.

The European encounter with the Ottoman Empire and Turkish culture was long a popular subject for opera, as exemplified by such works as Mozart's The Abduction from the Seraglio (1782) and Rossini's The Italian Girl in Algiers (1813). In 1916, this fascination with the Orient found its way into the world of operetta with The Rose of Stambul. Leo Fall's sparkling masterpiece enjoyed a fifteen-month run, making it the most successful operetta produced in Vienna since Lehár's The Merry Widow eleven years earlier.

The work's popularity is easy to understand. The librettists confected a plot that offers comedy, mistaken identity, cultural misunderstandings, exoticism, and, of course, a romance that must overcome various obstacles. As was typical of the era, the romantic lead couple alternates with the comic couple, and a few supporting characters provide additional hi-jinks and hilarity along

the way. (There's even a gruff, humourless businessman from Northern Germany (Mr Müller Sr); the Viennese audience must have taken a special delight in poking fun at him.)

The main reason for the show's success, however, was the music. Fall sets the scene in the overture with a Turkish march—a musical reference that contemporary Viennese audiences would have understood. He later uses the same modal theme in Kondja's opening aria. There is another brief Turkish march during the wedding scene; the rest of the show, musically speaking, is European. Fall was a master at writing memorable melodies and, in particular, the waltzes that the Viennese public demanded. He gave them three of these in The Rose of Stambul: "Love in the Viennese Fashion" (CD 1, [8]); "A Waltz That's Played So Fine" (CD 2, [6]); and "O Rose of Stambul" (CD 2, [9]). They were all hits.

Fall was not only a great songwriter, however. Like his colleague and sometime rival, Lehár, he was interested in pushing the musical boundaries of the operetta genre. Lehár was an admirer of Puccini (who returned the compliment); Fall's favorite composers were Brahms, Wagner, and Richard Strauss, and one can hear echoes of their music, and that of Tchaikovsky, in The Rose of Stambul. Listen, in particular, to the finales of Acts I and II. It is here that Fall is able to develop his musical material more extensively and illustrate the changing emotional climate of the action, going well beyond the customary format of arias, duets, and ensemble pieces and into a more through-composed, operatic realm.

The Rose of Stambul was brought to America in 1922 by the Shubert brothers. As was so often the case, they presented it in a "Broadway-ized" version. Songs by Sigmund Romberg were interpolated into the show, the male lead was rewritten for a baritone instead of a tenor, and the plot was altered. To our knowledge, the work was never performed in the United States in its original version. The US première of The Rose of Stambul was produced by Chicago Folks Operetta in 2011, with a new translation that was faithful to the original German text. For that production, and for this recording of it, we have not changed a note of Fall's marvellous music.
---Hersh Glagov, naxos.com

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