

Shooting for the Moon with Offenbach

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Within the Romantic repertory that the Palazzetto Bru Zane has championed since 2009, so-called ‘light’ music has taken on an increasingly important role, which is no more than justice, given its significance in the nineteenth century. No, great Romantic music did not consist only of Meyerbeerian operas and avant-garde piano trios: operetta, café-concert, chanson and popular dance music also reflect the evolution of French musical taste, a history of the art of entertainment, and – very often – the great literary and musical skills of the creators of this repertory. Offenbach was indisputably the dominant figure in the world of light music, and therefore deserves consistent advocacy respecting the highest artistic standards. Which is why, since 2018, the Palazzetto Bru Zane has made Offenbach one of the key threads of its programme, successively reviving *Maître Péronilla*, *Madame Favart*, *Les Deux Aveugles*, *Lischen et Fritzchen*, *La Périchole*, *Le 66!* and the ‘original’, pre-premiere version of *La Vie parisienne*. It has also supported the Opera Rara recording of *Fantasio* and the critical edition of *Le Roi Carotte* used for a new production at the Opéra de Lyon a few years ago. Finally, the success of Jodie Devos’s ‘Offenbach Colorature’ recital on the Alpha Classics label provided the opportunity for an artistic and editorial partnership whose success confirmed music lovers’ interest in the composer.

Having embarked on the exploration of this vein, the Palazzetto Bru Zane was bound to give an enthusiastic welcome to the proposal of the Centre Français de Promotion Lyrique (Génération Opéra since November 2021) to bring together as many theatres as possible in the co-production of a new staging of *Le Voyage dans la Lune* (1875), featuring a double cast of soloists. It is too often forgotten that this work does not belong to the

opéra-bouffe genre but is a *féerie*, a much more ambitious type of spectacle (with, in the case of *Le Voyage*, more than a dozen set changes and two extended ballets) in which Offenbach distinguished himself on several occasions. The Palazzetto Bru Zane was involved in the project in three ways: first, as co-producer of the staging; secondly, as producer of the recording presented here; and thirdly, as publisher of the score. The latter corresponds to the first version of the work (1875) as documented in the vocal score published during Offenbach's lifetime. Two previously unpublished numbers have been introduced at the beginning of Act Two and expand the episode of the spectacular arrival on the Moon. The production prepared by Olivier Fredj and his team was for a time paralysed and then reformulated for reasons linked to the Covid pandemic: it was necessary to make several cuts, which though unfortunate from a strictly musicological point of view are compensated by the greater dynamism they inject into the dramatic continuity. The present recording now complements this staging by providing an opportunity to hear the music in its entirety along with the key scenes of spoken dialogue (shortened on disc to make the musical experience more fluid for the listener).

The theatres collaborating on this co-production are the Opéra Orchestre national Montpellier Occitanie, Opéra Grand Avignon, Clermont Auvergne Opéra, the Théâtre impérial – Opéra de Compiègne, the Opéra de Limoges, the Opéra National de Lorraine, the Opéra de Marseille, the Opéra de Massy, the Opéra de Metz Métropole, the Opéra de Nice Côte d'Azur, the Opéra de Reims, the Opéra de Rouen Normandie, the Opéra de Toulon Provence Méditerranée, the Opéra de Tours, the Opéra de Vichy, and L'Avant-scène opéra / Neuchâtel. The French Ministry of Culture, the Mécénat de la Caisse des Dépôts and the Fondation Orange also provided their support. We would like to thank all concerned for their investment in the project and most especially Raymond Duffaut, President of the CFPL at the time it was being mounted, for his determination, his commitment and his energy. May he see in this recording a modest tribute to his outstanding career in the operatic world and to his unfailing support for younger generations.

LE ROI V'LAN, PAR GILL



Gill, 'Le Roi V'lan', *L'Éclipse*, 14 November 1875.
Jérôme Collomb Collection.

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