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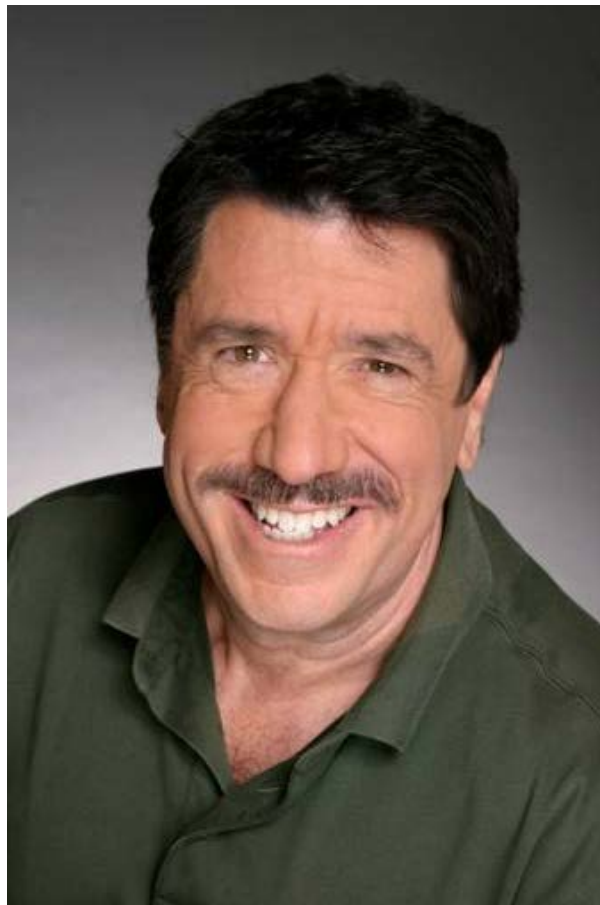
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AWARD-WINNING DIRECTOR MARC JACOBS WILL DIRECT O.S.J. "DIE FLEDERMAUS"

By Iride Aparicio



Director Marc Jacobs

SAN JOSÉ, CA—MARC JACOBS wanted to be an actor since he was 8 years old. He started acting at the **Boston Children's Theatre** in Boston, where he is from, and began directing at age 17 when his

High School, in Palo Alto, California where he was living, produced the drama, *The Miracle Worker*. “At the same time we (his High School) were doing *The Music Man*,” Marc tells **CULTURAL WORLD BILINGUAL** in an interview, “and I had auditioned for the lead. I was very disappointed because I did not get it until my drama teacher asked me: *Would you like to co-direct the show?* That was how it all started.”

Marc discovered the impact that opera had in the audience after studying music and dramatic art in college and seeing the magnificent productions of óperas in England, when he was there. When he returned to the United States he began directing ópera scenes at UCLA. The first complete ópera he directed was the one-act opera *Soeur Angelica*. Years later, after directing many dramas, óperas and hundredths of musicals all over the United States, the award-winning director, **MARC JACOBS**, returns to this city to direct “DIE FLEDERMAUS” for Opera San José.

Based on a French vaudeville play and a German comedy, “**DIE FLEDERMAUS**, (The BAT) premiere at Theater an der Wien, in Vienna on April 5, 1874. The operetta became the most celebrated work of **Johann Strauss**, (1804-1849) the favorite of the European opera houses and the one most loved by the audience who enjoyed the plot of mistaken identities and light-hearted deceit and its music: the wonderful waltzes that entices people to stand up in front of their seat and dance.

During rehearsals, **MARC JACOBS** discusses his concept of the work with us.

MARC: My concept of **DIE FLEDERMAUS** is that it is a piece where everybody is lying to everybody else. It is also a piece about people who are desperate to brake from their regular lives and have fun. As I was looking at the libretto, I found that there is a lot of imagery about birds and caged birds and things like that, so when I was planning the work I found **DAVID SCOTT MARLEY** who had done a modern translation of **DIE FLEDERMAUS** in Berkeley, which I did not see but was told it was marvelous. I contacted **SCOTT** and it gave me a chance to talk about the characters, who these people are (their back stories). I think that he (**MARLEY**) did a wonderful job of making these people (the characters) into real people: (letting us know) where are they coming from, what they want and why they act as they do.

I also got a chance to talk with O.S.J.’s set designer and I told him about this imagery of cage birds (you get a little bit of this in the original, but we expanded the idea a little a bit) after I realized that she (Rosalinde Eisestein) was sort of a second string opera singer who had the chance of really making it big but chickened out and left opera to get married to a wealthy banker. That she left her career because she was afraid. So I said, (to the set designer) Can we make her house in the first act look like a bird guilder (gold) cage?

For the second act (Prince Orlofsky’s party) I told the designer that what I wanted was for the Prince to have created a magnificent artificial forest inside his palace for his costume ball. My idea was to allow the caged bird (Rosalinde) a chance to fly free in the forest (the party). And of course, in the third act, which takes place in a jail, they all ended up as jail birds. So we followed the imagery (of the cage) through the operetta and it really works well.

Another thing that we have done to Prince Orlofsky’s party is great. As you know, Orlofsky is a person who is easily bored and constantly looks for ways to surprise his guests, so I have a lot that is going on in that party because that is where the characters find out who they really are. By putting on disguises, they reveal to themselves more of their true nature that what they knew.

There is also a part during the party where Orlofsky presents all these famous singers and I wanted to do something different. I learned that Strauss wrote this polka called *The Thundering and Lighting polka* so I put every single person on stage dancing it. I brought **ROBYN TRIBUCI** a wonderful choreographer who had worked with me in musicals before, and she created a complete

show stopper.

Marc continues:

We also decided to have an act drop, the first thing that the audience sees when the curtain goes up, that is actually a column of **THE TIMES** (the newspaper) that has articles about all the main characters, which means that even before the overture is over the audience gets the sense of who these people are and how their lives are going to intercept. This is going to be an overture when people spends more time reading than listening to the music.



A scene from Prince Orlofsky's party

Photo courtesy O.S.J.

That is my basic concept of the work and I am real excited because I am working with a great cast and a great team at O.S.J. I am really happy that I have a chance to create a new production with top notch people. I got lots of ideas.

CWB: Is there something you would like to add?

MARC: I did the **FLEDERMAUS** before at Opera Madison in Madison Wisconsin and I always wanted to do it again. It is my first time directing for this company so I am very happy with the way the show is coming out.”

DIE FLEDERMAUS sang by the marvelous cast of singers of Opera San José, conducted by its music director, **DAVID ROHRBAUGH** and conductor **BRIAN NIES** and under the stage direction of Director **MARC JACOBS**, promises to be wonderful.

DIE FLEDERMAUS, with two different casts, will play from 11/ 10 to 11/25 at the **CALIFORNIA THEATRE IN S.J.** For information and to order tickets go to <http://www.operasj.org> or call the Opera San Jose Box Office at 1-408-437-4450.

